



GREATER LOWELL WORKFORCE BOARD

107 Merrimack St
Lowell, MA 01852
978.937.9816

MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board
March 10th, 2022
Zoom Meeting 8:00-9:15 AM

Call to Order: 8:03 AM

Presiding Officer: Ray Wrobel, Chair

Attendees: Kimberly Bodkin, Judy Burke, Beth Goguen, Maureen Fitzpatrick, Yovanie Baez-Rose, Charlene Jancsy, Cynthia Smith, Maureen Kriff, Nancy Ludwig, Elizabeth McKiernan, John Palmieri, Ray Wrobel, Danielle McFadden, Kevin Kelly, Cheryl Ann Bomal. *Quorum present.*

Staff: Katy Gentile, Meelynn Wong, Cathy Sturtevant, Abby Seripais, Beatriz Sierra, Jay Green, Nancy Gagnon, Shaun McCarthy, Shannon Norton

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Wrobel welcomed the group and provided an overview of the agenda. He highlighted that the Board would discuss the executive director transition and provide updates on the GLWB and Career Center activities.

II. Approval of December 16th, 2021, Minutes

Chair Wrobel requested review of the December 16th minutes. With no comments or questions and a quorum present, Chair Wrobel requested a motion to accept the December 16th, 2021, minutes. Motion made by Elizabeth McKiernan; seconded by Maureen Fitzpatrick. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No. Vote: Unanimous.

III. Quarterly Board update

Katy Gentile discussed finding a replacement for Peter Farkas. Lowell City Hall is in the process of posting the executive director role. Waiting for next steps from the city. Katy spoke about the WIOA youth RFP. Katy discussed the need for a scoring/readers committee for the RFP. Deadline for proposals will be April 21st. Monitoring of the Lowell Career Center has just finished up. Starting next week, the state monitor will review all documents and come up with a full report to give to Shannon Norton. Lastly, Katy recapped the Opioid Crisis Grant which ended on December 31, 2021. In total 156 participants were served with 77 people employed at the end of this grant. Meelynn Wong then discussed the Northeast Behavioral Health Grant which will run from January 2022 to December 2022. The hope is to train incumbent workers and to build and strengthen our behavioral health partnership. Meelynn spoke about nominations for board roles before the June board meeting.

IV. Lowell Career Center updates

Shannon Norton talked about the monitoring process. She stated that things went well and spoke about the Department of Labor possibly monitoring our site next fiscal year. The career center is now open to the public again with most services still virtual (i.e., workshops, business services). Shaun

McCarthy discussed the successful virtual job fair that ran in January. Over 130 job seekers in attendance along with 40 employers. More details to come on how many got hired during this event.

V. MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board Director Report

Meelynn Wong provided an overview of the current unemployment rates. Lowell's unemployment rate now stands at 3.3 % and Massachusetts's rate is at 3.5%.

Meelynn provided an overview of the labor force. We are almost at pre-pandemic levels and there is only a shortfall of 3,700 workers from pre covid. Job postings from the last 30 days showed that Healthcare has the most open roles with 722. While Accommodation and Food Services have about 667 open jobs.

Lastly, Meelynn provided an overview of upcoming events and meetings.

Upcoming Board Meetings: June 16th
September 22nd
December 8th

VI. Adjourn

Chair Wrobel thanked everyone for attending. The Chair asked if there was any other business. Seeing none, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Charlene Jancsy; seconded by Judy Burke. The meeting adjourned at 8:47 AM.