

MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board
Quarterly Meeting
March 29, 2023
HYBRID Meeting

Call to Order: 2:01pm

Presiding Officer: Danielle McFadden

Attendees: Danielle McFadden, Elizabeth McKiernan, Nancy Ludwig, Cynthia Smith, Cathy Byrnes, Ryan Foley, Tom Raiche, Stephanie Cronin, Judy Bower, Kevin Kelley, Karen Frederick, John Person, John Palmieri, Stephanie Lee, Kimberly Bodkin, Ed Starr, and Jill Davis.

Staff: Kevin Coughlin, Jessica Bunting, Cathy Sturtevant, Hunter Berube, Gabriela Boscaja, Shannon Norton, Nancy Gagnon, Shaun McCarthy, Heather Donovan, and James Foley. A record number of attendees at 27.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Danielle welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda.

II. Approval of prior minutes

Danielle requested that the Board review the prior meeting minutes. With no comments or questions, Danielle requested a motion to accept the December 2022, minutes. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No. Vote: Unanimous.

III. Updates from the MHGLWB Executive Director

Kevin informed everyone that John Palmieri is the newest member of our Executive Board, congratulations and welcome. He also updated everyone that the Fiscal Year 2023 WIOA Local Annual Operating Plan has been approved by the Commonwealth of MA. Kevin clarified to the Board the Role Responsibilities between the Workforce Board and the Career Center. Workforce Board: Strategy and Leadership, Future Vision, Governance & Oversight, and Grants & Budget Approval. Career Center: Implementation of Board-Approved Annual Plan.

There have been three official monitorings that are now complete. Yearly monitoring, Fiscal, and WIOA operational monitoring of Career Center. There was also an auditing of the Workforce Board monitoring process of the Career Center. There is an exit call scheduled with Judy Bower, Field Management Officer, Dept. of Career Services on 3/30. Judy recommended an action item for the Workforce Board: Develop their own Board "Standard Operations Procedures" for the June meeting.

IV. Connecting Activities - Cathy Sturtevant

Cathy shared with the Board the upcoming Job Fair on 4/13 at Lowell High School. There will be about 35-40 employers present. There was another job fair that was cancelled because of weather, and she is working with Tewksbury High School to reschedule it. Overall Connecting Activities is working on strengthening school relationships with Guidance and Career Departments. The High School Education Senior Internship Program (HSEIP) and STEM Grants have been successful in allowing CA Staff into new schools. Finally, the Employer Appreciation Breakfast is scheduled for June 28, 2023.

V. Grant Updates – Hunter Berube

Hunter shared with the Board that we have received conditional approval for a \$2M Grant for YouthWorks Employment & Training Program. This is the highest amount in Greater Lowell Workforce Board history! Congratulations Hunter! It will give training to 446 young adults ages 14-25 in the Early Childcare Education, construction, and Certified Nursing Assistants fields.

We also received another grant for \$200,000 for training and work placement, it is a Re-entry WF Development Demonstration Program. Re-entry citizens (Ages 25+) will receive training and work placement in the Social Services and manufacturing industries. Hunter told the Board that the Workforce Board and the Career Center worked together successfully, and it was a great collaborative effort.

VI. Mobile career center – Jessica Bunting

Jessica shared with the Board the timeline for the Mobile Career Center Bus since January. The Workforce Board worked closely with Greater Lowell Tech to discuss the Bus project. In February a Bus was purchased from the LRTA and delivered it to Art Cornellier, Greater Lowell Tech's Transportation and Manufacturing CTE Chairperson. The Bus was given a routine inspection, so it was roadworthy. Title and Registration were attained from RMV. In March Rehab work began at the Tech through their Automotive Dept and Automotive Collision and Refinishing Dept. Now the CADD design of the interior workstations is underway, and the students will finalize the branding and tech update after that.

The Workforce Board has worked closely with the Career Center to establish the usage, logistics and increased visibility of MassHire through the Bus with a completion target period of May. They will give another update and have more photos to show at the next Board Meeting coming up in June.

VII. PILOT PROJECT UPDATES – Kevin Coughlin

The Workforce Board is working on a Transportation initiative including pilot projects with Greater Lowell Tech High School, Middlesex Community College, as well as transporting Lowell resident adults to and from employment in the Devens and Greater Lowell region. The next Transportation meeting is scheduled for 4/19.

Another Workforce Board initiative is the City Workforce Development. The Board aims to expose high school students to careers & skills (hard & soft) and college students will be introduced to city professions. The Workforce Board will work to provide paid internships & summer work at the City Dept. They will offer Tuition reimbursements, as well as work with Returning Veterans to assist in housing down payments. The next Workforce Development meeting is scheduled for 4/12.

VIII. JOB FAIRS - Shaun McCarthy

Shaun shared with the Board a summary of past in-person recruitments with the following companies: Express Employment Professionals, Home Instead, American Training on-site, MA Department of Correction, and Lowell Community Health Center. In addition there are upcoming recruitment opportunities with the following companies: Lowell Community Health Center, production Line Support, Robert Half Talen Experts, and Lighthouse Professionals. There are two in-person job fairs scheduled for 4/25 and 5/9-10.

POP UP CAREER CENTER / Chelmsford Works: MassHire Lowell Career Center is partnering with the Town of Chelmsford to hold a monthly drop-in Career Center at Chelmsford Town Hall. It will be scheduled for the last Tuesday of the month from 12-7 pm. A mini-resource room where people can register to become MassHire Members, resume assistance, job search, etc. will be set up. Future events include workshops, recruitments, and job fairs. It was launched 3/28/23 and 6 job seekers and 1 employer attended. Special thanks to Lisa Marrone, Chelmsford Business Development Manager, who worked closely with Shaun on this.

IX. SUMMER WORK Experience – Heather Donovan

Heather updated the Board on an update to the YouthWorks Programming Eligibility, now open to low income 14–25-year-olds residing in Lowell, Dracut, Tyngsboro, Westford, Billerica, Chelmsford, Tewksbury and Dunstable. The YouthWorks Department purchased a van, and it will be used to run a van crew of youth to clean up parks and green spaces. Please email Heather.Donovan@masshirelowellcc.com if you or your company is interested in hosting participant/s to come in the van and work at your worksite.

X. SUCCESS STORY with Jim Foley, video

James shared a 3-minute video that he created highlighting a success story of an employed individual who received training through Commcore and CTI funding. Our Market Maker, Will Ren, bridged the gap and connected employees with training and employers in need.

XI. Upcoming Meetings

Performance Committee: April 20, 2023

Next Board Meeting: June 14, 2023, 2-3:30pm

XII. Adjournment

Danielle motioned to adjourn. Thank you.