



GREATER LOWELL WORKFORCE BOARD

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MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board
September 22, 2022
Hybrid Meeting 8:00-9:20 AM

Call to Order: 8:03 AM

Presiding Officer: Maureen Fitzpatrick, Vice-Chair

Attendees: Kimberly Bodkin, Judy Bower, Judy Burke, Kevin Coughlin, Stephanie Cronin, Jill Davis, Ryan Farley, Maureen Fitzpatrick, Karen Frederick, Chris Hayes, Erika Irby, Charlene Jancsy, Kevin Kelley, Vicky Kong, Nancy Ludwig, Danielle McFadden, Elizabeth McKiernan, John Palmieri, John Person, Cynthia Smith, Quorum *present*.

Staff: Kevin Coughlin, Katy Gentile, Cathy Sturtevant, Abby Seripais, Beatriz Sierra, Gabriela Boscaja, Shannon Norton-Calles, Heather Donovan, Mike Durkin, Jim Farley, Nancy Gagnon, and Tim O'Connor.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Maureen Fitzpatrick, Vice-Chair welcomed everyone in person and remote for joining the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. Maureen recognized new board members Ryan Farley from Spin Craft and Erika Irby from Thermo Fisher thanking them for volunteering to join the board and for Erika taking on Summer Interns.

II. Approval of June 16th, 2022, Minutes

Vice-Chair Fitzpatrick requested that the board review the June 16th quarterly meeting minutes. With no comments or questions and a quorum present, Vice-Chair Fitzpatrick requested a motion to accept the June 16th, 2022, minutes. Motion made by Charlene Jancsy; seconded by Nancy Ludwig. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No. Vote: Unanimous.

III. FY 2023 Budget Funding – Gabriela Boscaja, Fiscal Manager

Gabriela Boscaja, Fiscal Manager presented an overview of FY'22 vs. FY'23 Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Allocations requiring board votes.

- Adult increased 27.6%
- Dislocated Worker increased 13.0%
- Youth increased 23.7%
- With a total increase of 20.6%

Gabriela explained that the Fiscal Year 2023 grand total is **\$6,512,744.85** and how it will be expended.

Vice-Chair Fitzpatrick requested a motion to approve the FY'23 Budget. Motion made by Judy Burke to approve the budget; seconded by Charlene Jancsy. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No. Vote: Unanimous.

Maureen Fitzpatrick asked with the Opioid crisis in Massachusetts will there be additional funding in the future. Assistant Director Katy Gentile explained that we cannot re-apply for the same grant

money but there is money with re-entry. Gabriela stated that we are always looking for new grant opportunities.

IV. WIOA Transfer of Funds – Gabriela Boscaja, Fiscal Manager

Gabriela Boscaja explained the FY'23 request to transfer \$185,000 from adult to dislocated worker funding. Increased funding in the dislocated worker allocation will assist the Career Center with meeting the enrollment and training goals.

Vice-Chair Fitzpatrick requested a motion to approve the transfer of \$185,000 from adult to dislocated worker funding. Motion made by Elizabeth McKiernan; seconded by Ryan Farley. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No. Vote: Unanimous.

V. FY'23 Annual Plan

Director Coughlin went through how the annual plan comes together. It is a collaborative review, how the money will be spent. The Board has an excellent working relationship with the Career Center. Assistant Director Gentile gave an overview of the proposed annual plan and the goals associated.

Cynthia Smith asked if ages are tracked for the performance and outcome goals. Yes

Chris Hayes asked if the goals compare to last year. Yes

Nancy Ludwig asked if there were any shifts in the demographics. Nancy Gagnon, Career Center Manager explained that the center is seeing more people coming in that are under employed.

Nancy Ludwig asked how their skill levels were. Nancy Gagnon responded that she has career advisors that work with the higher-level customers.

Judy Burke, MCC asked if they are seeing more customers wanting remote jobs. Yes.

Maureen Fitzpatrick, Vice-Chair thanked everyone for there questions.

Vice-Chair Fitzpatrick requested a motion to approve the Annual Plan. Motion made by Danielle McFadden; seconded by Charlene Jancy. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No. Vote: Unanimous.

VI. New ITA Policy – Raise amount \$7,000 to \$10,000

Assistant Director Katy Gentile explained that the MHGLWB has the authority to increase the ITA cap limit based on participant needs and for specific grants and has considered several factors in determining the maximum amount allowable per participant for training:

- The population to be served
- Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the workforce
- Skill levels of participants
- Barriers to employment AND
- Lengths and types of training needed

All WIOA participants regardless of education level will be limited to \$10,000 for training services.

Cynthia Smith asked if there is a limit on the spending. Career Center Director Shannon Norton-Calles informed the Board that 30% of the budget must be spent on occupational trainings.

Chris Hayes asked if the ITA money is for the youth also. Yes

Vice-Chair Maureen Fitzpatrick gave kudos to the staff for their technical knowledge.

Vice- Chair Fitzpatrick requested a motion to increase the ITA policy from \$7,000 to \$10,000. Motion made by Judy Burke to increase the ITA policy; seconded by Cynthia Smith. All in favor? Yes. Opposed? No Vote: Unanimous.

VII. MassHire Lowell Career Center Report – Shannon Norton

- **WIOA Convening and MassHire Awards**
- **Career Center Updates**

Shannon Norton-Calles spoke about the WIOA convening conference held at the DCU center in Worcester on September 14th & 15th. MHLCC had two finalists for the MassHire Awards. Respect Finalist was Madeline Colon Rivera, Career Advisor working for the Jobs Plus Program through the Lowell Housing Authority. Madeline assists residents of the housing authority back to work and their rent stays the same. Madeline was the winner in her category.

Daphne Nichols, Career Advisor was also a finalist for Collaboration. Betty McKiernan, Director of Lowell Adult Education spoke about the great work Daphne does with her presentations and how she is always encouraging her customers.

Shannon Norton-Calles – Summer Youth Program

- Total Enrolled: 175
- Total Wages: \$390K
- # Of Worksites: 44

Shannon explained that the Youthworks is year-round, and that youth will be placed throughout the year.

VIII. Training Program Highlights – Career Technical Initiative

Katy Gentile gave an overview of the training programs:

- Shawsheen Technical School - 11 welding slots
- Minuteman High School – Robotics 2 slots
- Center for Manufacturing Technology – Machining 6 slots
- Greater Lowell Technical High School – Carpentry and Welding 20 slots
- Nashoba Tech – Auto Tech and Plumbing 20 slots
- Middlesex Community College – Certified Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Google IT and Technical Writing – combined 31 slots

Nancy Gagnon worked with Lawrence and Salem helping them fill their numbers. Judy Burke commented on how Greater Lowell is so above other Career Center's.

Shannon Norton-Calles mentioned that most of the trainings are provided at night so that customers can still work during the day.

Maureen Fitzpatrick thanked everyone for their hard work.

VIII. MHGLWB Grant Updates and Program Highlights

Katy Gentile gave a brief update on grants we have received.

- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Connecting Activities/School to Career – provides career readiness and work-based learning experience to students at 8 partner high schools. Awarded - \$328,424. Also received an additional \$28,500 from DESE/Connecting Activities to enhance employer engagement/private sector engagement for student internships with a STEM focus.
- CDBG/City of Lowell – Youth Work Experience - \$15,000 to enroll low-income Lowell residents in the fall work experience program.
- Executive Office Education – Stipends for STEM Internships \$150,000
- Boston Foundation, Susan Schiro & Peter Manus – Provide intensive, post job placement follow-up services to low-income individuals to ensure they maintain employment for two years - \$90,000.

Katy Gentile spoke about the Behavioral Health Expansion Grant through Commonwealth Corporation and a shout out to Joe Gardner from Middlesex Community College. Thirteen (13) Lowell House employees attended Middlesex Community College Addiction Counseling Program and received their credential as a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

Katy Gentile gave an overview of the HSSIEP Program (High School Senior Internship Education Project). HSSIEP is a State funded program (Covid Relief funding). The program, which flows through the DESE aims to give students a paid, work-based learning opportunity working alongside a K-8 teacher. The goal is to expand the growth of the student to teacher pipeline.

Nancy Ludwig asked if we knew how many of the students went onto study education in college. Katy said the program is new, but we might be able to find out.

Judy Burke mentioned the supplemental instruction program at MCC. Maybe the Lowell High students go onto Middlesex and take advantage of the Learn and Earn Program.

Vice-Chair Maureen Fitzpatrick spoke about the career speaker series at Lowell High School that Lowell General was involved with prior to Covid. Lowell High is going to start the speaker series again.

IX. Board Updates – Kevin Coughlin

Executive Director Coughlin spoke about the New Communication Plan:

- Goals: Raise the visibility of the Workforce Board and the Career Center in the region
- Define Clear Messaging and audiences
- Develop the identity of the organizational expertise on workforce topics

Target groups: Board of Directors, Federal and State Legislators, State and Federal Officials, Lowell Officials, Training and Service Providers, Public and Private Foundations, Employees, Partnering Agencies, Unemployed, underemployed, advancing with training, 7 service area officials (Town Managers, Selectmen, Economic Development), Media and Unions.

Executive Director Coughlin introduced Tim O'Connor and Jim Foley who are the social media expertise in the building. Tim O'Connor stated that Shannon has always encouraged social media.

Newly hired Jim Foley spoke on the new form of branding – Story Telling. Kevin Coughlin thanked Tim and Jim and spoke about the great collaboration between the Board and the Career Center.

Kevin introduced Cathy Sturtevant, Youth Program Manager to speak on the re-organization of the Youth Council.

Priority is to rebuild and reorganize the Youth Council. We would like to have at least two students involved with the Council. We will meet four times yearly. Also form a Youth Advisory Committee – 2 students from each of our partner schools that can give recommendations to the Youth Council on what the needs of the youth are. Goal is to bring more private employers to the Council. December is our goal for the first meeting,

Kevin Coughlin discussed the Youth Focus Group that was held and how young people get their news: TikTok and Instagram were the top two. E-mail not as much.

Kevin gave an update on the Workforce Board Staffing and that there are three (3) open positions posted.

Kevin spoke about the Enhanced Veteran’s Outreach – need to increase reaching out to veteran agencies throughout our Cities and Towns. Spoke about the Bridge Club and dealing with veterans with addiction.

Kevin spoke about Future Priority Discussion Issues:

- Provide transportation – opportunity for the workforce board to try some new creative things.
- Significant amount of money through Broadband for training - \$8.68B. This is money from the federal government back to Massachusetts.
- City of Lowell/Education Partners – Internships/post graduate municipal work

Start with an internship postgraduate – possibly help with tuition.

Good Pilot Program and hopefully create a model program.

Kevin thanked the Board Members and the Career Center and a special thanks to Assistant Director Katy Gentile for all her hard work.

Next meeting will be held at the MCC – Nesmith House on December 8th, 2022, in person.

Assistant Chair Maureen Fitzpatrick made a motion to adjourn. Judy Burke seconded the motion. All in favor? Yes
Opposed? No.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:17 A.M.