



GREATER LOWELL WORKFORCE BOARD

Full Board Meeting Thursday, 09/18/2025 1-2:30pm (Hybrid)

Attendees: John Palmieri, Dawn Beati, Judy Burke, Danielle McFadden, Jill Davis, John Burrows, Allison Carter, Jon DaSilva, Melissa Desroches, Chris Hayes, Luce Lopez, Tom Raiche, Tracey Meek, Jean Tzchazou, Nancy Ludwig, Christopher Dick, Carl Howell, Brian Chapman

Kevin Coughlin, Shannon Norton, Hunter Berube, Judy Bower, Cathy Byrnes, Heather Donovan, Shaun McCarthy, Susan McQuaide, Cathy Sturtevant, Nancy Gagnon, Gabriela Boscaja, Kennes Mor, Anita Tonakarn-Nguyen (Office of Representative Arciero)

I. Welcome, Call to Order (pm)

John Palmieri called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM, confirming that a quorum was present. The minutes from the previous meeting held on June 26, 2025, were presented for approval. Nancy Ludwig motioned to approve, and Judy Burke seconded – motion approved.

II. Report of the Chair, John Palmieri

1. Reaffirm Votes of the Executive Committee

- **Approval of Annual Plan**
- **Approval of Integrated Budget - \$10,290,337**
- **Approval of Transfer of Funds – Transfer \$160,000 from the Adult Program to the Dislocated Worker Program.**

Shannon asked the chair to be recognized and asked to make a correction to the budget amount. She shared that the amount submitted to DCS was \$9,976,337 and did not include the additional \$314,000 to the Workforce Board. The additional amount was not included in the Integrated Budget as it is coming out of the Reserve Funds and not grant funded. Kevin added that the board would have access to the additional funding.

Shannon questioned if any other of the Executive Committee votes would be ratified by the full board. She referred to the appointment of Austin Ball and the additional Workforce Budget items. Kevin responded that they are not on the agenda and will be ratified at a later date.

VOTE: John Palmieri, with the Board's consent, consolidated all votes of the Executive Committee to one motion. Motion to approve by Christopher Dick, seconded by John Burrows. Passed with approval from all voting members. Dawn Beati abstained.

DISCUSSION: Following the vote, Judy Burke asked how much is in the Reserve (Rainy Day) Account. Kevin Coughlin reported that there was an accumulation of \$4.2M in this account. Judy

then asked how much would be needed cover expenses if the Career Center were to close. Shannon responded that the amount is approximately \$1M.

Judy also asked what the \$314,000 from the Reserve Fund would be used for. Kevin explained that these funds would support Workforce Board initiatives.

2. **New Committees and Chairs:** John Palmieri recognized the new committee chairs and added they will be reaching out for participation on the committees.
 - Performance and Opportunities Committee – Chair, Kimberly Bodkin
 - Fiscal Budget and Grants Committee – Chair, John Palmieri
 - Youth Committee – Chair, Melissa Desroches

III. Report of the Executive Director, Kevin Coughlin

A. **New Initiatives:** New Workforce Board Initiatives were presented by Kevin Coughlin and include:

- i. **Health Care Institute** – The mission is to focus on developing employment and training strategies in Greater Lowell's priority industry – healthcare.
- ii. **Phase II Transportation Pilot Program** – to assist in providing employees with transportation to and from work. Phase II will include working with third party suppliers such as Uber and Lyft. In first pilot 4,100 confirmed rides were provided.
- iii. **Strengthening Skills Partnerships** – Work to strengthen partnerships with regional training providers focusing on Vocational Schools, Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell.
- iv. **Apprenticeship Programs** – Working with the Career Center and Shaun McCarthy, develop partnerships with Labor, Private Sector, Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), and Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) to deliver training and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in the area.

B. **WIOA 4-Year Strategic Plan** – Kevin reported that the 4-year WIOA Strategic Plan has been accepted by State. The plan will be reviewed again in two years and remains valid through 2029. He thanked his staff for their work in completing this project.

C. **Department of Career Services (DCS) Field Monitoring** – The yearly monitoring of the Career Center by the Department of Career Services is scheduled for March 9-20, 2026.

IV. Report of the Career Center, Shannon Norton

- **Area Unemployment Rates:** Shannon shared the Greater Lowell areas unemployment rates and noted that long-term unemployment numbers are beginning to rise. This increase appears to be due to individuals requiring more time to secure employment, resulting in longer periods on unemployment benefits. The Career Center is reviewing its programs and services to address this issue

- **Career Center Report** – Shannon shared the Career Center Report comparing FY24 vs FY25. There has been a 9% increase in customers on top of the 11% from FY23 to FY24 resulting in a 20% increase over a 2-year period.
- **Awards and Announcements:** Shannon recognized Nicholas Campbell for being named Best Instructor by readers of the Lowell Sun. She also noted that nominations were submitted for MassHire Awards in the following categories: Modernization and Innovation, Job Seeker Collaboration and Emerging Leader.
- **Business Services Update:** Shaun announced that an Age-Friendly Job Fair will be held in Chelmsford September 24th, with over 20 employers expected to attend. He also reported that the Career Center is currently interviewing for a Business Services Representative to replace Tim Hovey.
- **Impact Report:** Shannon recognized Heather for the Impact Report which provides an overview of the Young Adult Career Center and distributed copies to Board Members.

V. Adjournment

John called for the adjournment of the meeting at 1:53 pm. Motion by Nancy Ludwig, seconded by Tom Raiche. Passed with unanimous approval.

VI. Next Full Board Meeting – December 11, 2025 (Nesmith House – in person only)

Minutes approved 12/11/2025