



## Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

### Introductions

- Participants - Mary Sarris, Karen Pelletier, Tonja Mettlach, and Raija Vaisanen

### Meeting goals/objectives/additional members

- The committee agreed that its initial goals are to draft and send to the members for input and the Board for approval an issue selection policy. Next the committee would begin to focus on creating a state and federal public policy agendas for MWA.
- Additional committee members are needed so Tonja and Raija will work on outreach. In addition, will use the newsletter and website (once live) to provide timely updates to members about committees activities and will always publish call times so that any member can participate.

### Issue selection policy - see draft documents

- The committee was in agreement that this type of document would be helpful.
- Karen talked about the Worcester Jobs Fund and how they set thresholds/determine what good jobs are.
- There was a brief discussion about soliciting member feedback and input on the document.
- The committee took a politically complicated issue (IRAPs) and used it as an example to walk through the proposed matrix to see what potential questions/considerations were missing. Mary talked about ensuring an issue, legislation or policy be something that the association thinks needs to be addressed. Must be a relevancy/adrenaline factor.
- Tonja and Raija to make some edits to the proposed issue selection document and resend to the committee for comments/edits.

### NSC funding opportunity

- Tonja shared a possible small funding opportunity from the National Skills Coalition on a new supportive services academy. The application can be viewed [here](#). The committee agreed that it was worth learning more.
- After the meeting, Tonja reached out to Kaitlyn Bean at SkillWorks and Kathie Mainzer with The Strategy Group. They are in the process of learning more about the funding opportunity and welcomed the idea of MWA partnering with them on this potential project. Tonja to update the committee once she learns more.

### Future meeting schedule

- As the committee begins its work, it will meet (phone call only) monthly. Tonja and Raija will work on additional outreach in order to engage more members in the committee's work.



## Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

### Introductions

- Participants - Teri Anderson, Bob Bower, Karen Pelletier, Joe Peters, Mary Sarris, Vianelis Rodriguez, Kathleen Weislein

### Update

- Tonja provided an update about the close-out FY19 HWM proposed supplemental budget. It included additional funding for career centers, DCS, and WCTF. MWA to send out a full update to members.

### Committee charter - feedback, comments

- Discussion -
  - The draft charter is very government focused. No real discussion about having private and corporate philanthropy in supporting this work. We should also prioritize development of partnerships with non-governmental organizations.
  - Good start and agreement that the document should be a living document.
  - Should also include a statement that the Committee will communicate with the councils about public policy and priorities.

### Issue selection document - additional feedback, Committee approval

- Discussion -
  - Reminder that at the career center council meeting two points were raised -
    - Winnability - that we are taking positions for long term success.
    - Level of support - might not take a stand on all issues but may take a position just to educate.
- A question was raised about how the Committee takes votes and positions on issues. Tonja/Raija to talk to Governance about this and report back to the Committee.

### FY21 budget

- FY21 budget will be here before we know. We will need to start talking about strategy, line item numbers, collateral, etc.
- What are the major roadblocks to compiling data
  - Moses issues.
  - Outcome data and more information about the manufacturing regional strategic planning (led by EOHED). Updating legislators on what has been done could be good.
  - Apprenticeships
  - Limitations to wage-match data - does not include outcomes for every non-WIOA program or every participant





## Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, November 15, 2019

### Notes -

#### **Introductions**

- Participants: Chris Albrizio-Lee, Mary Sarris, Ron Iacobucci, Joe Peters, Raija Vaisanen, and Tonja Mettlach

#### **FY19 Supp Budget Update**

- Still no real update.
- House and Senate still locked in a disagreement on a procedural move the Senate used to approve its Supp and a tax policy difference in the two bills.
- Next week is the last week of formals until January. Hope is that the bill is passed before legislature recesses.

#### **Committee charter - approval by committee (for MWA board approval in December)**

- Tonja went over the Committee Charter document and asked for any additional feedback. Indicated that the MWA Board would vote to approve this document at the December board meeting.
- Joe reminded the group that these are living documents so we can reevaluate them over time.
- Tonja/Raija to update the document to address Chris' suggestions (see below) and will recirculate to the committee for review and approval.

#### **Issue selection document - approval by committee (for MWA board approval in December)**

- Tonja went over the Issue Selection document and asked for any additional feedback. Indicated that the MWA Board would vote to approve this document at the December board meeting.
- Chris brought up a suggestion - either for the committee charter or the issue selection document or both - that the committee should be thinking about the issue around access, opportunity, equity and inclusion. Metro North WB staff has been discussing these issues and how they impact taking stances, like a social media post or on an issue that could appear "too political".
- Tonja/Raija to update the document to address Chris' suggestions and will recirculate to the committee for review and approval.

#### **Feedback from recent legislative meetings**

- Senator Comerford: Tonja provided an update on the meeting Tonja, Teri Andersen, and Patricia Crosby had with Senator Comerford. Great strategic meeting. Focused on the career center line item, why it is important, how the lack of increased funding as impacted the system, with a particular focus on the Franklin/Hampshire area. Received some great feedback from the Senator on next steps for FY21 budget and follow up. Senator Comerford was also gracious enough to file

an amendment during the Supp budget process so we talked to her about that process. Tonja, Teri and Patricia to continue to follow up with the Senator on next steps.

- Senator Lovely: Mary and Tonja provided an update on the meeting Tonja, Mary Sarris, and Stan Usovich had with Senator Lovely. This meeting also focused on the career center line item. Senator Lovely is very supportive and asked for additional information so she can include it in her budget letter which she will be starting to draft in December. We also reiterated how important the Supp funding is, particularly to the North Shore who anticipates running out of training funds and could use the additional career center money for training. Tonja to follow up with the Senator's staff on additional information for their budget letter.
- Representative Garlick: Greg Bunn and Tonja had a meeting with Representative Garlick's staff (Rep was unexpectedly tied up in another meeting). In the meeting Greg provided an overview of what the board and career center in the region do. The goal of the meeting was to help the Representative and her staff better understand the resources and work that is ongoing in the district. We learned that Rep Garlick is very interested in human services workforce issues. Will build on this relationship given the Rep's position on Ways and Means.
- Representative Roy (manufacturing focused): Tonja, Jeff Roberge, Kelly French, Patricia Crosby, Lorraine Albert, and Peter Farkas met with Rep. Roy to provide an update on the manufacturing activities statewide. Each region gave an update on their activities and we talked about the EOHEd manufacturing line item. Tonja to follow up with Rep. Roy with any next steps.
- Looking to schedule meetings with: Lesser, Hay, Jehlen, Michlewitz and Rodrigues.
- Ron shared that he asked that Rep. Mariano (Majority Leader) supported the career center line item in the Supp budget

#### **FY21 budget**

- Career center briefing - a quick update was provided to the committee on the Career Center Council meeting earlier this week. The CCC recommended that MWA host a briefing at the State House in early 2020 on career centers. The committee was in agreement that this was a good idea. Tonja to reach out to Senator Comerford to get scheduled. Looking for late January/early February.
  - Ron: ID large number of people who could reach out to legislators. Don't we have a lot of supporters?
- Collateral - Tonja provided an update on what MWA is thinking of in terms of collateral. MWA to send out an outline later this month. Can be supplemented locally. MWA will ask some USWA members about the types of arguments they've found successful in advocating for workforce system funding.
- Data -
  - The committee discussed the rebrand and whether EOLWD has done a 2nd survey to understand if any changes in name recognition. Tonja wonders whether focusing on investing in the rebrand is one way to talk to the Secretary about increasing support for career centers.
  - Chris - mentioned that on data, we have to be careful if only focusing on placement data. Career centers are set up to be high volume service organizations. They are seeing so many people, many who don't want/need their services to get a job but still have to go. So they could be providing great services to a lot of people but the data might not look great because of challenges with follow-up on job placement etc.
  - Chris also mentioned that their career center has started collecting qualitative surveys from businesses and job seekers about their experiences with the center. While the sample size is small, the feedback is glowing. Maybe a way to relate those personal business stories to lawmakers.

- Ron asked a question about the allocation formula for the career center line item. Tonja suggested he follow up directly with Teri for some more specifics.
- Recommendations for priority line items - Tonja asked the committee to start thinking about line item recommendations for the FY21 budget, particularly, the career center line item.

**Next Steps:**

- MWA will update the Issue Selection document and send that and the Committee Charter to the entire Public Policy Committee for review and approval.
- MWA will continue to set up meetings with key legislators and invite local staff to attend.
- MWA to reach out to Senator Comerford to book a date for the career center briefing.
- MWA to provide an outline on proposed collateral for FY21 and what MWA will provide. MWA will look for some examples from colleagues in USWA. These MWA documents will focus on providing the “one voice” on these issues but can be supplemented locally with good local impact data and testimonials.



## Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Notes -

### Introductions

- Participants: Chris Albrizio-Lee, Patricia Crosby, Ron Iacobucci, Mary Sarris, Karen Pelletier, John Drinkwater (for Bob Bower) MA AFL-CIO, Vianelis Rodriguez, and Kathleen Weislein

### FY19 Supp Budget Update

- Tonja provided an update on the FY19 close out supp. The comptroller has put a new and final deadline on the Legislature. The House and Senate have until 3pm on December 11th to reach a compromise on the FY19 close out supp or the Comprotler will transfer all funds into the stabilization fund. Tonja indicated she will provide an update to committee and membership tomorrow after the deadline.
- **Update** - since the public policy call, and as everyone should be aware, the House and Senate agreed to a close out FY19 supp budget bill. This bill which has since been signed by the Governor did include some additional career center and WCTF funding.

### Update on GE announcement

- Mary provided an update on the recent announcement of GE funding for workforce development on the North Shore, including how discussions began and who some of the key players were.
- GE Foundation is funding a \$2.5M grant to launch an Advanced Manufacturing Training Expansion Program (AMTEP) focused in Lynn and the North Shore. The program will help address the skills gap in the region by supporting and coordinating manufacturing training for residents and connecting them to full-time employment to meet the needs of manufacturing employers (adult focused but helping to fill the voc-tech schools in the area).
- This funding will tie in closely with a large capital skills grant to Lynn Vocational Technical Institute to expand their shop, also includes Gloucester High School and North Shore Agricultural & Technical School.
- NAMC (which is the North Shore, Metro North, Merrimack Valley, and Greater Lowell workforce boards) has been dubbed the implementation lead and is responsible for working across the three schools. Career centers are a partner to provide counseling to adult learners.
- Goal is to triple the training footprint and build sustainable capacity to create a “ready-to-work” pipeline. The five-year initiative will be funded in multiple phases, with the goal to train more than 900 high school students and adult learners by 2024 while these training levels after the GE Foundation funding ends.
- In addition to NAMC and the North Shore’s vocational schools, additional partners include the Essex County Community Foundation, which is a non-profit organization that will administer the program’s funds, and the North Shore Community College, which will provide educational support for adult students. The program will also launch an advisory committee of stakeholders, including

representatives from manufacturing companies, to ensure the initiative is designed to meet the needs of the region.

- This is a good private/public sector model where lessons learned could ideally be translated to other regions.

### **FY21 budget updates/discussion**

- Tonja provided an update on the beginning of the FY21 budget process in order to provide some context for the Committee's ongoing discussions.
- Each year, the Legislature and Administration have to come to a consensus figure on projected revenue growth, one they use that to build the next year's fiscal budget. At last week's consensus hearing, FY21 projected revenue growth was presented by various economists and other experts.
- Tonja referred the group to the article included with the agenda for today's call (copied below for any of might of missed it). In the article, one thing that many experts kept testifying to was how the lack of skilled workers is impacting/will continue to impact economic growth in Massachusetts. Tonja asked the group for thoughts about how we can present ourselves as one way to address this issue/capitalize on an interest in workforce development.
  - One idea was to have a brief one pager that outlines the challenge/issue that needs to be resolved and then how we are addressing it and what funds are needed. Make our members one solution to a stated problem.
  - Other thoughts - multi year funding is critical. The stops and starts/late starts to programs makes it difficult to keep good programs going year after year. Another example was the EOHED manufacturing money. Great source of funds but hard to make a 5 year strategic plan when money is not guaranteed year after year and subject to appropriation. This leads to whether we should have a conversation as a group around funding cycles and any changes we might want to propose.
- Tonja updated the group that the **Career center briefing has been confirmed for 2/26 at 11:00 a.m. in room 428.**
- **Update** - Through Senator Comerford's office we have confirmed the following co-hosts: Senator Lovely and Representative Vega. We are also in talks and likely to have Representative Ferrante. Through this Committee, we will begin flushing out details for the event at the January Committee meeting.

### **Economic development bill**

- Tonja opened up an initial conversation about the economic development bill that will be developed this spring and how we want to engage/what the process should be on collecting feedback and developing ideas.
- Teri Anderson was not on the call but she recently had the opportunity to testify in front of Rep. Ferrante and it would be helpful to know how that went/want she learned. Tonja will follow up with Teri.
- A question was asked about what is going on at the state level on health care - would be helpful to know what the state's plan is on investing in that sector (given that we know how they are approaching IT (apprenti) and advanced manufacturing).
  - An update was provided that folks thought the state was in a fundraising mode with the private sector but that we would follow up and get more information.
- Bob Bower then updated the group about new developments in apprenticeship and the state rapid response team. He thought it could be a good idea to get Patrick and other folks in front of the entire MWA membership.

- Tonja let the Committee know that while we are running out of time, we will come back to this as it is an opportunity (outside the budget process) to potentially get additional resources into the system.

#### **Updates for MWA Board meeting on 12/12**

- Tonja updated the Committee that on Thursday, she would present the Issue Selection Document and Committee Charter to the Board for approval.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Next Committee call to be held on January 14th, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.
- The Committee, MWA staff, and the MWA Board needs to settle on FY21 proposed funding levels for MWA's priority line items. In particular, the career center item. **If you have thoughts on the line item - please follow up with Tonja ASAP.** Tonja to also reach out to both Councils to get their input.
- Tonja/Raija to follow up on the status of the statewide health care collaborative and any next steps.
- Tonja to follow up with Comerford's office on briefing and to update the Committee in January.

*STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, DEC. 5, 2019.....With an aging workforce and a low unemployment rate, Massachusetts faces a tight labor market, creating a dynamic that could limit the state's future economic growth.*

*That was one of the main messages economists delivered to lawmakers on Wednesday, at an annual Ways and Means Committee hearing that launches the state budget-writing process. Economists who testified projected a slower revenue growth rate than in the past two years, offering estimates that ranged from 0.8 percent to 3.5 percent.*

*As the hearing progressed, the number-crunching gave way to gave way to broader discussion about constraints on the labor force and potential policy responses. Experts pointed to housing affordability, congestion relief and education as possible keys to unlock untapped potential.*

*"The one recurring theme we heard over and over, that the greatest threat to future growth is demographics, an aging workforce and a workforce that does not have the numbers to sustain any more robust growth," Senate Ways and Means Chairman Michael Rodrigues said after the hearing.*

*Revenue Commissioner Christopher Harding characterized the Massachusetts unemployment rate as "impressively low," forecasting a rate of 2.8 percent this fiscal year, and said that job growth may come at a slower pace than it has in the past.*

*"This could drive up wages, this could do all kinds of things that have a direct impact on business here in the commonwealth, because there's a limited talent pool in order to achieve the growth these businesses want to achieve," Harding said, after Sen. Cindy Friedman asked if there was any cause for concern with such a low unemployment rate.*

*The state's workforce talent pool is further constrained by demographic shifts. As the population gets older, people aged 65 and older -- often more experienced and productive workers -- will be leaving the workforce at an "accelerated pace," while the number of people between the ages of 16 and 64 flattens out, according to the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation.*

*MTF President Eileen McAnneny called the tightening labor market the "largest drag" on the state's economy.*

*McAnneny called it "critically important" for the state to figure out how to provide more affordable housing options to attract young workers.*

*"When we talk about demographics, you can't have the conversation without mentioning the cost of housing," she said. "As young people decide where to locate in this increasingly global and mobile world, the cost of housing really is an impediment."*

*The median home sale price in Massachusetts over the first ten months of 2019 hit \$400,000, according to sales data from The Warren Group, up 3.9 percent over the same period in 2018.*

*Similarly, UMass Dartmouth professor Michael Goodman said the "biggest threat" to the trajectory of the state's economy is "our capacity to grow." Goodman, who said it took him two and a half hours to commute to the State House from his New Bedford home, said economic growth has been concentrated in the greater Boston area, but "stifling congestion" and a high cost of living leave the opportunities in that region out of reach to many Massachusetts residents.*

*Creating more regional balance and yielding the full potential of other metro areas "will require a concerted and sustained effort to improve the physical, the institutional and the civic infrastructure of communities that have not yet had the opportunity to fully benefit from or fully contribute to what is now the longest period of economic expansion in our state on record," Goodman said.*

*"To the extent that we can do that, we can exceed some of the expected slow growth that, given demographic and economic conditions, appears to be what we're in for for the foreseeable future," he told lawmakers.*

*On transportation, Goodman said, the more time people spend stuck in traffic, waiting for a bus, "waiting for the T to restart" or simply trying to access service in an area served by a regional transit authority is "reducing our ability to get stuff done, which I think doesn't help the larger effort."*

*A \$1.5 billion, seven-year school funding overhaul Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law last week targets much of its investment to areas with higher poverty rates, including cities that also have low property values and higher numbers of students who are learning to speak English.*

*Goodman called it a "major step in the right direction" to invest in K-12 schools, "particularly urban K-12 education where I think we've got the most wasted talent in that talent pipeline in public education."*

*"So if those dollars get to where they need to go and we get better outcomes, it will be better all around," he said.*

*Alan Clayton-Matthews, a Northeastern University economics professor, said spending on schools can positively affect future labor force growth.*

*"There is a large untapped potential in our labor force across the commonwealth of kids who are more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to go on to college and are more likely to develop higher skills, and the education reform spending will help boost the labor force in that regard as well," he said.*

*Looking beyond the state policy level, Senate budget chief Rodrigues said he also sees a need to "reassess our immigration policies."*

*"We don't have enough of a workforce that's currently in the state, what do we need to do to have the workforce move into the state?" he told the News Service.*

*-END-*