



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

Notes -

Introductions

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

Career Center Briefing, updates/discussion

- An update was provided on the career center briefing. The event will be hosted by Senators Comerford and Lovely and Representatives Vega and Ferrante. Secretary Acosta has also been invited to attend and speak. We will serve food and the event will start at either 10:30 or 11:00am depending on caucus (need to decide timing asap).
- The goal would be to provide a brief workforce 101 (what is a career center); talk about career centers as a resource and what they can do for constituents; and to have a job seeker and an employer talk about their positive experience with a career center.
- Committee members asked a few questions about the event/provided some thoughts:
 - Some regions might want to have meetings with their delegations afterwards. Can we help get rooms or how would that work?
 - Want to ensure we get legislators to weigh in on the budget line items.
 - We should be sure to talk about the low unemployment rate and the need to help employers get the talent they need.
- Next Steps:
 - MWA to follow up with Comerford's office on logistics and potential regional meetings.
 - MWA to create an invite and talk to both councils about securing a job seeker and an employer for the event.
 - MWA to create a draft detailed schedule of the event.

Congresswoman Trahan Event

- An update was provided and an invitation was extended to committee members to attend a workforce and education roundtable with Congresswoman Trahan in Lowell on January 21st, 1:30 PM.
- MWA would like to replicate these types of congressional roundtables across the state in the future.

FY21 Budget - Priority line items

- The committee discussed the MWA priority line items and the proposed funding requests for FY21 for - YouthWorks, WCTF, Connecting Activities, Advanced Manufacturing and Career Centers (there was a request that the career center line item not be listed last).
- Teri then provided an overview of the career center line item strategy and what the career center council is proposing.

- Feedback from Senator Comerford was to first develop some legislative champions that are willing to not just support amendments but champion them in the budget process. Next, the Senator suggested that Teri/Patricia write a letter of concern to their delegation (Teri to draft for their region but happy to share with other regions to replicate). Finally, Comerford talked about basic standard principles of organizing and that in the budget process career centers should be asking for what they actually need - which is \$10M - and negotiating from there.
- After Teri's comments, Mary brought up the need to go back to 2016 and articulate the amount of federal dollars the system has lost over the past 5 years. That number alone could help demonstrate why such a huge increase in the Career Center line item is needed.
- Next Steps:
 - Teri to draft the Letter of Concern for her delegation and Tonja to share with other regions offering to assist and suggest they draft similar letters for their regions.
 - Finalize career center amendment sponsors now (ones that will be real champions) so that we are prepared for the budget cycle.

Collateral for FY21 Budget

- The committee discussed the FY21 budget and what collateral MWA will provide for members. MWA is in the process of finalizing FY21 collateral and will get materials and information out to members by the end of January.
- Tonja suggested that in addition to materials MWA provides, regions have regional specific information to enhance and personalize their collateral to showcase regional impact. She emphasized that Sen. Lesser and other legislators have said they find district specific testimonials from employers particularly helpful.

Economic development bill

- Tonja provided an update from a meeting she had with Senator Lesser, Dave Cruise, Abel Vargas, and Patricia Crosby.
- One item that was discussed at the end of the meeting was the Senate economic development bill. Senator Lesser suggested MWA provide a wish list of possible policies we would like to see in an economic development bill -
- Two suggestions so far from committee: (1) additional money for DOT to continue to pilots they are doing for workforce/transportation; and (2) clarify apprenticeship expansion and the role of the workforce system.
- Next Steps:
 - Tonja to follow up with the committee and the broader MWA membership (and our colleagues at WSG) about a wish list for an economic development bill.



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Introductions

- Participants: Joe Peters, Karen Pelletier, Mary Sarris, Teri Anderson, Ron Iacobucci, Kathleen Weislein, Raija Vaisanen and Tonja Mettlach

Career Center Briefing Updates -

- Tonja provided an update on the career center briefing on 2/26. A building wide email has gone via Senator Comerford's office and included below is a draft timeline of the event:
 - **Welcome:** Senate/Rep hosts
 - **Remarks:** Secretary Acosta
 - **Career Center 101:** Teri Anderson
 - **Success story employer:** reached out to Springfield/Holyoke region
 - **Success story job seeker:** reached out to Metro North/Boston regions
 - **FY21 budget ask:** Tonja Mettlach, MWA and Rep. Vega
 - Thank you/questions
- Next steps: Tonja to provide the committee with a one-pager on the event that can be distributed to legislators/other individuals who might want to attend the event. Please invite your local legislators and if you are attending, let them know you will be at the event.

FY21 Budget

- The committee talked about the FY2021 budget and members were asked to provide any updates they have received from legislative meetings thus far. At the end of January, MWA emailed members an in depth budget update and included collateral and other important documents. Tonja to resend to committee to ensure every has a copy.
- Updates -
 - Teri provided an update of activities in her region including: (1) on the 25th the western MA delegation is meeting with the economic development committee again for a listening session which will be held at UMass Amherst. The session will be on all economic development issues, inviting workforce folks to come as well; and (2) on March 27th the Western MA Network to End Homelessness is hosting legislators to mainly talk about homelessness and housing programs but there will also be some workforce overlap.
- Tonja updated the committee on the possibility/likelihood of needing career center amendment sponsors for the FY21 budget. A recommendation was made that we consider reaching out to Ferrante and Comerford as the House/Senate sponsors. Tonja to follow up with Mary (Ferrante's district) and Teri (Comerford's district) to explore this more.
- There was a question about the \$10 million career center line item budget request and how we are justifying such a big ask - what is the result going to be and how many more people would we

serve? The committee talked about that being a good question and that is something regions will have to answer locally (using the one-stop formula, how much additional funding would you get if there was \$10M and what would you do with it).

- Another committee member shared the challenges a career center is facing as it relates to needing a line of credit to cover operations when public funds are not disbursed to the career centers on time. The problem is not just declining funding but an increase year over year in fixed costs, as well.
- Teri also shared an update on the FY19 supplemental funding they received through Senator Comerford and their local chamber (and therefore through MA Office of Travel and Tourism, and agency under EOHED). However, this money must be spent by June 30 and that is something that will be really hard to do. Timeline for spending this money appears different depending on what agency funding is coming through and that inflexibility/variability is difficult.
- Next Steps:
 - Tonja to work on putting together a summary sheet on what regions would do with the money.
 - Tonja to follow up with Mary on Ferrante.
 - Tonja to follow up with the committee to ensure everyone has the FY21 budget documents.
 - Tonja to follow up with Ron on some next steps for his region.
 - MWA will also request that regions share any custom one-pagers they develop.

Career Technical Initiative

- Tonja shared an update on a new career technical initiative that was included in the Governor's FY21 budget proposal. Not all committee members had heard about this new proposal so Tonja to re-send documents to the entire committee. It was then discussed about the committee taking a position on the initiative that could be sent up to the MWA Board for approval.
- Committee members then shared a few thoughts on the proposal -
 - Teri - thought it sounded like a good program but highlighted a few technical things that could be challenging (1) that a region might not get funded depending on whether there is a waitlist of its voc-tech school; and (2) issues that some voc tech schools have allowing training participants who have CORI's use their facilities.
 - Ron liked the idea of getting involved in this and supporting it. Could open a door of opportunity for MWA and our members to keep engaging with a broader audience.
- Next steps:
 - Tonja to share documents with the entire committee.
 - Tonja to set up a call in a few weeks to discuss initiative and get committee feedback and approval. Committee will use the MWA Issue Selection document to decide whether to take a position on this and officially support it.

Economic development bill

- Tonja provided an update from a meeting she had with Senator Lesser, Dave Cruise, Abel Vargas, and Patricia Crosby.
- One item that was discussed at the end of the meeting was the Senate economic development bill. Senator Lesser suggested MWA provide a wish list of possible policies we would like to see in an economic development bill.
- Two suggestions so far from committee: (1) additional money for DOT to continue the pilots they are conducting for workforce/transportation - and/or reiterate how important public transportation is for certain regions including Wetesrn MA; and (2) clarify apprenticeship expansion and the role of the workforce system.

- Other feedback Tonja has heard so far for possible inclusion in this type of “wish list”: (1) ensuring workforce programs continue to be aligned with EOLWD/Comm Corp - particularly in the clean energy space; (2) making the manufacturing EOHED line item a trust fund like WCTF so money can be spend from year to year; (3) ESOL recommendations that came out of a recent report from the Boston Foundation.
- Next steps
 - Joe suggested that MWA schedule a call in the next few weeks to discuss this item with all members so that we can be prepared to go back to Lesser with some information/list of workforce priorities.

DCS Draft Issuances:

- Tonja highlighted the two draft issuances that have been released by DCS over the past week. One relates to WPP Expansion and another to RSI (the documents were included as attachments to the 2.11 email to the committee).
- Teri provided some feedback based on her region and Mary later provided some feedback via email.
- At this point, MWA will likely not make comments on behalf of the members on either issuance but the committee should continue to think about how/if future comments on draft issuances by MWA would make sense.

Creating MWA’s Public Policy agenda

- Tonja began a discussion about MWA’s FY20 goal to create a public policy agenda. MWA to work on providing the committee with some examples of policy agendas from other organizations and a framework to consider as we craft one. Tonja also talked about needing to have committee input, but also input from the MWA Board, members, and other partners.
- Joe brought up that it would be good to find time to meet in person and that it would also be helpful to take an issue and talk about it as a group and think about how we would vet/use the issue selection document to take a position.
- Next Steps:
 - MWA to work on a framework document and pull sample policy agendas that the committee can review in preparation for next month’s committee meeting.
 - Consider using the CTI in our next meeting as an issue to walk through using the issue selection document.



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Notes -

Introductions

- Participants: Patricia Crosby, Ed O'Sullivan, Ron Iacobucci, Karen Pelletier, Joe Peters, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

COVID Updates

- The committee started the call with a discussion about COVID-19, what MWA is doing, with local areas sharing how they are responding. Tonja reminded the committee that the March MASSCAP/MWA convening had been postponed and all March and April MWA events would be virtual.
- Ron shared an update from a recent call with Alice and Patricia reminded the committee about an email from DCS with one contact point for new information/questions/etc on COVID-19.
- There was a talk about what, if any, signage the state would be providing and the importance on how the signs are worded.
- During the call it was shared with the committee that the Governor had just declared a state of emergency.

Career Center Briefing - any follow up?

- Tonja and Raija recapped the career center briefing and asked committee members to share any updates/feedback from the event. Tonja/Patricia and Teri to participate in a call with Senator Comerford next week.
- To do: Committee members expressed interest in getting the briefing materials electronically. MWA to send them to the committee.

FY21 Budget

- Raija updated the committee about the meetings she had taken over the past several weeks as a member of WSG:
 - Rep. Gregoire – Marlborough
 - Senator Jehlen, Senate Chair, Labor and Workforce Development
 - Rep. Hay, Acting House Chair, Joint Committee of Labor and Workforce Development
- Patricia shared the editorial that MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board had co-authored with Rep. Mark. Was a great way to engage a Rep. and help him to feel some ownership over an issue.
- Tonja updated the committee on securing a House sponsor for the career center amendment. Note - since this committee meeting took place, a lot has changed in our state due to COVID-19. For the next few weeks we will put off contacting Reps on this amendment as everyone is very focused on the pandemic and helping those most in need.

Career Technical Initiative

- The committee talked about the issue selection document and walked through MWA taking a position on the initiative. Tonja updated the committee on the special policy call that was held the week before and feedback received from the broader MWA membership.
- Overall consensus from the committee was that it is a very good idea on paper and all are very intrigued. Some Boards are putting this initiative in front of their local boards shortly for a vote.
- Since the Pioneer Valley had already had its local stakeholder meeting, Patricia shared with the group how the meeting went. Both Bob LePage and Jenn James attended the meeting. There were a lot of questions but this proposal is seen as a great opportunity for a region with few training providers. Would also give career centers more choices on where to send job seekers.
- Ed O'Sullivan from the North Shore shared with the committee that they will be presenting the CTI to their Board next week. He pointed out that the region has seen significant WIOA cuts, over 44% so this could be a great opportunity to get more training dollars in the region. However, they do have concerns as they want to ensure the expectations on career centers won't overburden them - particularly in light of the federal cuts.
- All committee members on the phone appeared to be in support of the proposal but MWA will continue to make notes of concerns as they arise.
- Committee to recommend to MWA Board at the March 31st meeting that the Board votes to support the proposal (with all concerns and possible issues/opportunities to be noted).

Economic development bill

- Tonja discussed the Governor's economic development bill which was filed on March 5th. At the time of the committee meeting, it was expected a hearing would be held within 30 days but at this point that is unlikely.
- Below are the workforce related items that came out of the special policy call and were recommended to be passed along to Senator Lesser (Note: these will be passed along but the timing and scope of the Senate economic bill will likely shift dramatically, though that remains to be seen).
 - Workforce transportation: Regionally, there are transportation gaps which make it hard to get job seekers to jobs. Big disconnect between where job seekers live and where the jobs are. This is even more of a challenge outside of Boston where there is limited public transportation. One example that was brought up was an old MassDOT grant which involved the local Council on Aging - took advantage of existing vans that weren't always in use.
 - Cliff effect issues: Continue to need wrap around services and supports to help those on public benefits get and keep jobs.
 - Mental health services for job seekers: At one time, career centers had federal funding to share mental health clinicians to support job seekers. Those positions have gone away and many career centers are seeing people who need more mental health assistance than a career counselor can provide. The clinicians were also very helpful for referrals.
 - Apprenticeship: Agreement to support MA and particularly Senator Lesser in expanding apprenticeship in MA. How does the workforce system support in scaling the apprenticeship system statewide? Continues to be a great tool in training and retaining workers and the education process will continue. While it takes some time to get employer buy in, the concept is a good one. Note - the Gov's economic development bill would allow EOLWD to name additional eligible occupations for the existing Registered Apprentice Tax Credit (RATC). This change will permit the tax credit program to respond to changing

workforce needs and market demands. We support this proposed change. MWA is in the process of collecting additional data on the RATC usage so far and how to continue to support.

- To Do: Tonja to touch base with Senator Lesser and staff this week to pass along these items. In addition, will keep the Senator updated as the impacts of COVID-19 on employees and employers become clearer in the weeks and months to come.



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Notes -

Introductions

- Participants: Patricia Crosby, Mary Sarris, Ron Iacobucci, Joe Peters, Robert Bower, Kevin Lynn, Teri Anderson, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

Committee Check-In:

- The committee started the call with a check in between committee members about how things are going and sharing any ongoing challenges.
- Joe shared updates about Universal Plastics and the pivot it has made to making PPE.
- Teri shared that the Career Center is still mainly focused on UI. A positive update for the day was that they were able to confirm that the DUA call center is operational and they can now update their website and start providing that number to those who lose their jobs in the region.
- Ron talked about the challenges in Quincy with UI and started a discussion about the state budget. Additional resources will be critical and MWA should put in the appeal now. In addition, Ron shared that we should start thinking about what happens when career centers open back up, what will it look like, and how the system should prepare.
- Bob - shared that building trades have thousands of people calling with issues getting UI. However, those who don't speak English continue to have significant barriers. Bob also shared that many members are reporting that they are not getting the safety equipment they need - and these are essential workers.
- Patricia - talked about working with board staff who are associated with various programs to think about ongoing programs and what does the summer look like? They are still recruiting for classroom based training and figuring out how to offer it online. Patricia shared a potential statewide issue related to small farms, fruit growers in particular, who do not have the needed migrant workers to pick their crops.
- Kevin - shared what is going on in Springfield and the need for state guidance on what happens next. Kevin just purchased six plexi enclosures to put around the front desk and in the resource room desks.
- Mary - talked about how busy it is. They are working with the manufacturing teams as they are now doing a lot of remote learning which isn't perfect but has kept them engaged via zoom or other type of learning platforms. They have surveyed their manufacturing partners who still say they need trained workers and hope that training will continue or restart after the pandemic. Looking into new funding opportunities as well.

Federal and FY21 Budget Update

- Tonja shared what MWA has been doing at the federal level in terms of coordinated advocacy to increase workforce funding. While there is no set timeline on when subsequent stimulus packages

might be passed, historically workforce funding has been bipartisan. MWA to stay engaged on the federal level and keep the committee updated.

- Next Steps: Tonja and Bob to talk to Congressman Kennedy and/or Congresswoman Trahan about joining a future MWA call.
- Tonja also shared a state budget update both on process and substance.
 - Process wise passage of an FY2021 budget cannot proceed as normal. Typically right now the House would be unveiling its budget, with amendments being filed this week, and the budget being debated the last week of April. The budget would then move over to the Senate. However, given social distancing rules, the House cannot have 160 Reps in the chamber debating a budget. The House, Senate and Legislature have not yet decided or released detailed information on what the new process could look like for this budget season.
 - Substance wise and based on a budget hearing that occurred earlier in the day, the House, Senate, and Administration must now revise its revenue projections for FY2021. The testimony presented was sobering and painted a picture of how difficult this budget will be.
- While many line items will likely have to be cut/level funded, there is an agreement that MWA must push for more funding for workforce, particularly given the increases in services that will be expected of the system as the unemployment rate rises and career centers open back up to the public.
- Next Steps: MWA to draft and share with the committee a letter for state leaders requesting additional investment in the workforce system. The committee discussed the letter being signed by as many MWA member organizations as possible.

Economic development bill

- Tonja shared with the committee that an economic development bill is likely to still happen but the timing of it and the scope is also likely to be dramatically different than what was previously suggested.
- Next Steps: Tonja to talk to Ferrante and/or Lesser about joining a future MWA call. MWA to reassess the recommendations it has made to the Lesser and think about any additional priorities.



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

Notes -

Introductions

- Participants: Mary Sarris, Karen Pelletier, Patricia Crosby, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

Federal Update:

- Relaunching America's Workforce Act - Tonja shared some information on RAWA and its importance even if unlikely to be touched by the Senate.
- 4th Stimulus Bill (HEROES Act) - Tonja updated the committee that the HEROES Act was passed last Friday (5/18) through the House of Representatives. This legislation proposed \$2.5 billion in federal funding for the workforce development system. First federal stimulus with workforce funding, however, it was crafted exclusively by House Democrats, and Republican Senators have said they will not begin to craft another round of COVID-19 response legislation until the beginning of June at the earliest.
- The committee then discussed:
 - The likelihood that the month of July will be very busy because the \$600 UI payment will stop. What does this mean for career centers and boards?
 - Question that businesses and others are thinking about is should the federal government extend supplemental UI payments or would businesses prefer that money go to those laid off to go back to training so they can get back to work? Career center is calling claimants all the time but people are only now starting to say they are interested in training.
 - Still don't have the WIOA allocations, will the state take less money like they did in 2009/2010?
 - Reopening and what does that look like?
 - After the recession businesses are always cautious to hire back. This will be slow.

Reopening:

- The committee briefly talked about reopening career centers:
 - Members felt that July could be busy and there might be some pressure to open at that point.
 - Difficult with all the increased sanitation and modifications for reduced capacity that have to be done at locations and no money for it.
 - Grants from other agencies (EOE, EOHED) - can that money be flexible? Where is that money going to be coming from? Tonja to follow up with EOHED.
 - Patricia then updated the committee on the EOHED manufacturing money. They are being very open minded and helpful.

- Trying to change contracts for training programs to tuition based versus cost reimbursable so that funds can be expended in this fiscal year, even if the training goes into the next.
- Concerns about how these programs will continue without staff to manage them if there is no budget passed in July/August.
- Unclear how some of these programs will work if 1/12th budgets are passed, though.

Increasing resources to the system:

- Tonja had two calls this week with the budget directors of the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means. In those calls, Tonja learned:
 - Big picture - While things are freefalling they still don't have the full revenue picture and might not have it for a long time. Looking at a \$5 to \$6 billion loss in FY21 alone. That doesn't include any revenue loss they might face in FY20 as they close out the year.
 - Timing of the budget is still really up in the air. Very focused on how to close out the year, do they have to touch the stabilization fund, and how much federal funds to use this year instead of next.
 - Unclear timing of FY21 budget. Short answer is it seems unlikely anything will be done for 7/1. If they did 1/12 of a budget it would be with reduced revenues.
 - Second round of conversations with members possible.
- Narrative - as a system we need to think about our strongest narrative and how to talk to legislators and stakeholders about the amount of work facing our system and what level of funding is needed to be successful.
- Data - UI data. Now that we are starting to get in some UI data - this should be shared locally. Give legislators a better understanding of the amount of local residents needing help getting back to work.
- Mary mentioned it would be helpful to also have UI data that shows how many businesses by industry have laid people off in a region - therefore understanding not where claimants live but where they work.
- Next steps:
 - Tonja to draft a template for a letter that regions could send to their federal delegation.
 - Patricia to finish drafting a letter that her board chair could sign and distribute to other board chairs in support of increased funding.
 - Tonja to draft a CEO letter per Ron's request and ask if his Mayor would take the lead on that letter.

MWA Annual Meeting Update:

- Tonja provided a quick update on how the replanning for the annual meeting is going and asked committee members for any feedback on speakers.
- Tonja asked about inviting Rep. Ferrante and Sen. Lesser to speak about the Economic Development bill in one session. Committee supported the idea.



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Introductions

- Participants: Mary Sarris, Robert Bower, Kathleen Weislein, Kevin Lynn, Ron Iacobucci, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

House Recovery Committee

- The committee discussed the new House Resilience and Recovery Special Committee, as one of the co-chairs is Leader Mariano. Ron and the new director of the South Shore Workforce Board had a conversation with the Majority Leader and he indicated he would be interested in any ideas we had on workforce development and recovery, particularly anything that would also help the community college system. The Committee discussed the priority being funding to the One Stop line item, as that funding is the most flexible and would allow regions to use it however is best for their region (training, staff hiring, etc).
- Bob Bower also shared that he had just gotten off a call with Chairman Cusack and Chairman Murphy, both members of the House Recovery Committee, and Bob provided an update on his call. In particular, Cusack is concentrating on revenue and all the issues and uncertainties surrounding it. He indicated they are trying to figure out what the gap is, how much money they need, and will be reporting back to the Speaker. Bob suggested that we invite Cusack to an upcoming MWA call.
- The Committee decided on some next steps. See below for details.

Federal Update

- Prior to the Committee meeting, there was a national call on workforce hosted by USWA, National Skills Coalition, and NAWB. Tonja and Raija provided an update to the committee on that call, particularly the call to action.
- On the call, it was emphasized that Congress, particularly Senators, need to hear from local workforce leaders on two things: (1) what things look like on the ground, what are you seeing, who are you serving, what is the data; and (2) what could you do with additional WIOA funding.
- This led the Committee to a conversation around data - particularly thinking about:
 - Those who are temporarily furloughed and think they will go back to their jobs, do we know who that is, how many people?
 - Is there a way to know which retailers and restaurants have opened and closed - that will help know how many jobs gained/lost.
 - Furlough v. permanent separation data - what is and is not included in the new MOSES report.

- Bob also talked about childcare issues and a recent conversation Tonja had with Bob, Community Labor United, and SEIU.
- Tonja shared some next steps as requested by NSC, NAWB and USWA. See below for details.

MWA Public Policy Agenda

- Due to time constraints the Committee began a conversation on next steps in developing a policy agenda, including starting a conversation around inequalities in workforce development.
- Kevin shared a great analogy comparing the workforce system to the ER: Instead of treating job seekers with “preventative care,” (skills training, job search etc.), the workforce system tends to see workers when they are on “life support.” The system needs resources to offer people when they have “sniffles” and not have to wait until the person is in dire straits.
- The Committee discussed challenges job seekers are facing around technology and digital literacy.
- The Committee also discussed the tensions between serving employers with lower-wage jobs but who need workers and helping people get better paying jobs with career pathways. Some thought this could be an interesting conference, or larger conversation to convene.
- This will be a body of work the Committee will concentrate on this summer/fall.

Next Steps

- Committee members (only one per region) are asked to draft a one-pager (bullets are fine) that lists two things:
 - What your region is currently doing to help job seekers and businesses.
 - To include: what your WIOA cut is this fiscal year, what the current unemployment rate in your region is, and how many more people/businesses you are serving remotely.
 - What you could do with more funding (here let’s concentrate on state funding)
 - This will then be shared with Leader Mariano and the recovery committee with the request for additional funding for the One Stop line item and an offer to meet with the committee to answer questions and provide additional information.
- Tonja sent out an action request to contact Senators at the federal level last week and will send out another reminder this week. Please contact Tonja with any questions.
- The Committee will try meeting every other month going forward in order to try to get additional engagement from members. Tonja to send out an updated meeting schedule in early July.

Budget Update:

FY21 Interim Budget:

Last Friday, June 19th, Governor Baker filed [H4806](#), a 1/12 budget for FY21. The bill was passed by the House and Senate this week and sent to the Governor for his signature. This bill does three things:

- Section 1 of the bill appropriates \$5.25 billion to maintain all necessary services through July 31, 2020.
- Section 2 of the bill allows the advancement of local aid payments to any city, town, regional school district, or independent agricultural and technical school that demonstrates an emergency cash shortfall.
- Section 3 of the bill extends capital accounts that would otherwise expire.

This will keep the state government open through July and give the legislature additional time to release its spending plan for FY21. It is still very possible that the spending plan released by the House will only cover part of the fiscal year and could be pre-conferenced by the House, Senate, and Administration. Note, for those of you trying to figure out FY21 appropriations for the One-Stop, Manufacturing, YouthWorks, Connecting Activities, etc., this document does not provide that level of information. This also means as of now, the local aid money does not include the extra money that districts were expecting under the Student Opportunity Act passed last year.

FY20 Supplemental Budget:

On June 22nd, the House Committee on Ways and Means released its version of Governor Baker's COVID-19 Supplemental Budget bill [H.4802](#). Governor Baker had filed this supplemental budget bill on May 12th and the House will take up this legislation today.

Majority of the funding in the bill applies to COVID-19 related costs including at least \$350 million to the purchase of personal protective equipment, \$139 million for rate add-ons to congregate care and other human service providers, \$111.4 million in supplemental payments to hospitals and health care providers, \$44 million on the state's contact tracing program, \$36 million on emergency child care, and \$45.6 million on early education grants. It also directs \$100 million in spending authorizations through the end of fiscal year 2021 to cover monitoring, treatment, containment and prevention of COVID. Much of the COVID-19 related costs the state expects to be reimbursed by the federal government. This legislation also directs additional funding to support affordable and public housing, emergency rental assistance, emergency shelter, and homelessness prevention, including:

- \$13.5 million for local housing authorities (7004-9005)
- \$2.5 million for family and individual shelters (7004-0101 & 7004-0102)
- \$85 million for field hospitals and shelters
- \$8 million for family and individual shelters (7004-0101 & 7004-0102)

- \$20 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) (7004-9316) to support a COVID-19 RAFT Response (CRR) program.
- \$1.5 million for Housing Consumer Education Centers (7004-3036)
- \$5.8 million for Permanent Supportive Housing (7004-0104)
- \$1 million for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (4000-0007)



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

Introductions

- Participants: Karen Pelletier, Joe Peters, Bob Bower, Ron Iacobucci, Kathleen Weislein, Patricia Crosby, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

House Recovery Committee

- Tonja updated the committee on the House's Resilience and Recovery committee who was holding a hearing on Tuesday. The topic the committee was addressing was the Commonwealth's economic recovery, and workforce training and development initiatives that can help displaced workers, reduce the unemployment rate, and spur economic growth. You can view the archived hearing [here](#). While the hearing was ongoing during the meeting, Tonja shared what testimony was presented so far.
- Through Ron, MWA was invited to submit written testimony and Tonja asked committee members for ideas on the testimony and for regions to submit additional information about what they are currently working on/seeing in their region and how additional funds for the workforce system could be helpful.
 - Karen suggested that MWA include some of the information around disparities in economic distress that was presented by MassInc at the MWA Board meeting.
 - Patricia suggested we remind the committee that we have the infrastructure in place with MassHire and that we don't need to create new or duplicative systems.
 - Ron shared that during the hearing it seemed that Majority Leader Mariano was focused on skill mapping between those out of work and the jobs available.
- Next Steps:
 - MWA, in coordination with Ron, will plan to submit testimony to the committee early next week.
 - Tonja would like to include regional profiles with MWA's testimony to give a better sense of what is happening in regions around the state as MA faces historically high unemployment and a need to provide virtual services to job seekers and employers.
 - If you would like to submit something, and it can be very short, please send it to Tonja by Monday, July 27th.

Economic Development Bill

- Tonja shared an update on the process and substance of a possible 2020 economic development bill. The bill had a hearing on June 26th and was reported favorably from the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies on July 15th. You can read MWA's post on the legislation [here](#).

- Tonja noted a few new potential training funds for local municipalities and urged members to learn more and talk to their local elected officials who would be the lead applicants on any potential funding from these sources.
- Bob Bower shared with the committee what he is hearing and that the real focus right now is with the policing bills that both branches are trying to pass before the end of formal sessions on July 31st. This could impact how many other issues get addressed and resolved by the end of session. There are big issues waiting to be addressed by both or one branch or another including:
 - FY2021 budget - note Governor Baker just filed another one-month interim budget bill which will fund state government through August 31st.
 - IT Bond bill - in conference
 - Police reform bill - Senate has passed, currently being debated by the House
 - Economic Development bill - currently in the House Ways and Means committee
 - Transportation bill - heading to conference committee
 - Healthcare bill - passed by Senate not House
 - Climate resilience bill - passed by House not Senate
- Next Steps:
 - Tonja to follow up with EOHED about the recently announced Community Block Grant Funding and the municipal bond authority included in the Economic Development bill relating to workforce development.

Federal Update

- Tonja gave an update on activities in D.C. as it is expected that the Senate will finally release its proposed COVID relief bill sometime this week. This could be the last opportunity this year to get increased WIOA funding outside the budget process.
- MWA will be connecting with our Congressional Reps./Senators asking that they support and advocate for workforce funding. We will also be engaging in a social media campaign and will share tips and tools with members so that you can tweet/engage as well.

MWA Public Policy Agenda

- Tonja shared MWA's plan this fall to have a few virtual convenings in order to have a conversation with more voices as we look to craft a workforce public policy agenda. Part of this work should/could include conversations around an equitable recovery post COVID and presenting recommendations to the Administration and Legislature.
- Committee members seemed in agreement with that idea and suggested we include a conversation around essential workers and how that term has been redefined during the pandemic. In addition, including a conversation around the lack of technology access for jobseekers and how COVID has exasperated these disparities.
- Next Steps:
 - Tonja and Raija to reach out to some partners and work on a plan to be executed this fall. Will follow up with the committee before the next meeting on a proposed process and plan for how to hold these virtual meetings.



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Introductions

- Participants: Karen Pelletier, Ron Iacobucci, Patricia Crosby, John Drinkwater, Rebecca Bialecki, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

State and Federal Policy Updates

- Federal COVID relief bill and appropriations: Tonja provided an update from D.C. on the status of talks over another federal COVID relief bill and FY21 appropriations. While things are changing weekly, the closer we get to the November election the less likely there will be an agreement on a COVID relief package. This is troubling for the public workforce system as the first three federal COVID relief packages did not include any direct funds for workforce development at the local level. Therefore, the system continues to operate with cuts in funding all while unemployment rates are historically high.
- Reimagine Workforce Grant: Tonja provided an update on the state's application for the federal Reimagine Workforce Grant. Committee members were also provided with an abstract of the grant application. MWA staff to update the committee once the state is notified whether it was selected to receive the grant.
- State bills in conference: Tonja provided an update on important legislation that remains under negotiation in the legislature including bills related to: (1) economic development; (2) climate change; (3) transportation; (4) health care; and (5) police reform. The economic development bill is the most directly relevant to MWA's work and we did submit testimony in support of various parts of the House and Senate bills. MWA will keep the committee and membership updated as bills advance out of committee and to the floor to be passed by the full Legislature.
- State budget: Tonja provided an update on the state budget for FY21 and the close out budget for FY20. Officials still expect a budget gap in FY21 but the revenue numbers for the first 2 months of FY21 were higher than expected. To date, the Legislature has passed an interim budget through October 31st. However, this budget only has a top line number and makes it difficult for members to know what particular line items will be funded at. We do expect budget updates in the coming weeks.
 - Patricia commented that the budget collateral that MWA's provides is really helpful and asked for updated collateral that can be shared locally.
 - The committee also talked about federal CARES Act funding and how some states have used this funding for the workforce system, including funds for job training. Ron shared that he is talking to his mayor and local legislators to try to get more information about what if any CARES funding is available. Tonja to follow up with

EOLWD to get an update but asked committee members to share any updates they might have. John shared that he knows at the municipal level many of the CARES funds are reimbursable, so some areas might not yet know how much they are going to spend/need (school districts in particular).

- Next Steps/Updates:
 - It was just announced that the Legislature and Baker Administration will hold a virtual economic roundtable on October 7th to “discuss the economic impacts and fiscal implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.” MWA will update the committee after this roundtable, particularly as it relates to the FY21 budget.

Comments - Public Input on the Development of a Federal Interagency Council on Economic Mobility

- Tonja shared with the committee the request for information from the Council of Economic Mobility at HHS. The request for comments was passed along from Doreen Treacy and Teri Anderson with a request that MWA provide comments on behalf of its members. The Council on Economic Mobility is a new federal interagency effort. The Council seeks to create an accountable and effective structure for inter-agency collaboration and to use federal authorities to promote family-sustaining careers and economic mobility for low-income Americans. The Council just published a [request for information \(RFI\)](#) to gather feedback from all of its stakeholders. Sample questions from the RFI include: “What are your suggestions for how to make federal workforce and work support programs work better together in your state or community at this time and in the long-term?” and “What do you think are the immediate barriers preventing federal workforce and work support programs from collaborating in your state or community? What are the long-term barriers?” Tonja asked the committee for examples of programs that have been successful or other partnerships with highlighting.
 - One suggestion made by a committee member pertained to Innovation Pathways and its mandate to work with MassHire and local employers.
- Next Steps:
 - Tonja to share MWA’s draft comments and solicit feedback from committee members. We hope committee members will provide feedback and also offer other suggestions of local partnerships/programs that help promote economic mobility.

MWA Public Policy Agenda

- NSC Agenda for an Inclusive Economic Recovery - Tonja shared NSC’s new agenda for an inclusive economic recovery which includes a helpful framework and ideas as MWA begins to craft its own public policy agenda.
- Tonja also outlined next steps for the committee in terms of crafting a workforce policy agenda for the next legislative session.
- Next Steps:
 - In October, MWA will share a public policy framework with the committee to solicit feedback and ideas. Tonja/Raija to also be available for 1 on 1 calls and check-ins as needed as this framework is developed.