



**Massachusetts Workforce Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**
Stan Usovicz, Chair
Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:30 a.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees (all via Zoom):

Robert Corley, *NeighborWorks Housing Solutions*
John Drinkwater, *AFL-CIO (on behalf of Robert Bower)*
David Gadaire, *MassHire Holyoke Career Center*
Maddrey Goode, *MassHire Boston Career Center*
Karen Pelletier, *Worcester Chamber of Commerce*
Joseph Peters, *Universal Plastics/MassHire Holyoke Career Center*
Valerie Sutton, *Harvard University/MassHire Metro North Workforce Board*
Erin Travassos, *Eversource*
Stan Usovicz, *Verizon/MassHire North Shore Workforce Board*
Mary Sarris, *MassHire North Shore Workforce Board*

Absent -

Chris Kealey, *Massachusetts Business Roundtable*
Jim Oliveira, *MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board*
Suzanne Fernandes, *Mutual Bank/MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board*
Raymond Wrobel, *Align Credit Union/MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board*
Michael Weekes, *Providers Council*

Staff -

Raija Vaisanen, *MWA Associate Director*

Guests -

Abadur Rahman, *Federal Reserve Bank of Boston*
Cheryl Scott, *MassHire State Workforce Board*

Chair's Welcome and Introductions, Stan Usovicz

- Stan called the meeting to order at 11:35.

Approval of September Meeting Minutes, Stan Usovicz

- VOTE: Motion to approve the September 2020 board meeting minutes (David move, Valerie second).
 - Unanimous

Treasurer's Report, *Raija Vaisanen*

- Raija proceeded to provide the Treasurer's report to the Board.
 - We are 5 months into the fiscal year, and income and expenses are tracking at or below budget. We have collected 56% of membership dues to date or \$105,664.35. We have also received our contracts with EOLWD (WTFP \$) and MDCS and will be able to bill for the funds in the coming weeks.
 - Our health insurance renewed on December 1st. Our premium increase was minimal.
 - Financial Review with CLA has begun.
 - Stan asked when the financial review should be completed and Raija said it should be completed by spring 2021.
 - Stan asked if we were on track with receipt of membership dues compared to last year or prior years. Raija responded that we were either at the same pace or ahead of where we were at this time last year.

Racial Justice Update, *Raija Vaisanen*

- Raija offered a brief summary of MWA conversations with two separate DEI consultants this fall. (summary in board packet) Raija shared Chris Kealey's experience (he was unable to attend the meeting) with All Aces and his strong endorsement of their work.
- The following questions were posed to the board.
 - What type of DEI efforts are board members involved in at their organizations?
 - Are any board members interested in participating with Tonja and Raija in one of the options offered by these consultants?
- Valerie, Stan, Rob, Maddrey and Dave shared the efforts occurring within their own organizations and with other organizations where they serve on boards and councils.
- Valerie shared that her experience with an online asynchronous DEI training was challenging to keep up with and stay engaged in, so it would be important to understand how much time commitment would be involved.
- Several board members emphasized that they would be most interested in a consultant supporting us in development of an actionable plan.
- Maddrey also had very good things to say about All Aces' approach and said he believed we should focus more on racial equity than cultural competence in this work.
- Mary wanted to learn more about what kinds of training would be available through MassHire's DEI committee planning. She also is interested in both her workforce board and the local career center coming together on this work to see what they can build across both organizations, like the inclusivity ambassadors that Dave mentioned working on in his career center.
- Stan suggested there may be room for both level setting/learning and forward looking action planning in this work.
- Mary asked if there was funding in the budget for this work and Raija said that there was some money in this year's budget to begin the work.

- Next steps: Raija and Tonja will go back to the consultants to learn more details about All Aces online offering and also learn more about what they may be able to offer related to strategic action planning specific to MWA and our role in Massachusetts workforce development. Raija and Tonja will work to come up with a plan to share with the board at the next board meeting.

Reinventing Work Initiative Update - Guests: Cheryl Scott, Executive Director, MassHire State Workforce Board and Abadur Rahman, Sr. Community Development Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

- See slides attached.
- Mary shared that the regional planning process has led them to focus almost exclusively on industries and occupations that are “good jobs.” However, she is still looking for tools and approaches to take with employers in hospitality and retail, for example, that would help them improve the quality of their jobs.
- Erin shared an initiative that Eversource has piloted in CT in partnership with local community colleges, developing a 12 week evening and weekend training program to help develop a more efficient and equitable pathway into their entry-level gas line of work, which pays well and can lead to further advancement opportunities. They are hoping to bring the program to MA.
- Maddrey offered to share an example of a business that would be a good case of one that improved job quality with the Reinventing Work team.
- Joe shared his experience at Universal Plastics in Holyoke and how they have worked to help make the work, especially the more repetitive tasks, interesting, by helping workers connect to where the final product is going, etc. He was interested in seeing how one of the examples Cheryl shared about how job descriptions can elevate the professionalisation of a job.
- Karen shared that she would like the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce to be a partner with this initiative.
- Stan shared that he is on a committee of a group that is working with health care employers to improve entry level job quality and would connect Mary with it. Mary then shared that the Health Care Hub work in her region is focusing on how to improve CNA and other low wage jobs.

Associate Director Report, Raija Vaisanen

- Raija shared the good news that the MassHire Career Center line item was increased in the FY21 budget to \$5M, with the help of MWA advocacy work with Sen. Comerford’s office.
- Other workforce line items also fared favorably, particularly the Governors CTI initiative with \$4M and WCTF at \$10M.
- Tonja and Raija will be setting the calendar for 2021 in the next few weeks, including MWA Board meeting and committee dates.

Adjournment

- Stan thanked everyone for their participation.
- VOTE: Motion to adjourn (Karen motion, Mary second).
 - Unanimous