



MASS WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION
ONE SYSTEM – ONE VOICE

Massachusetts Workforce Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Stan Usovicz, Chair
Tuesday, September 22, 2020 11:30 a.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees (all via Zoom):

Robert Bower, *MA AFL-CIO/CLU*

David Gadaire, *MassHire Holyoke Career Center*

Maddrey Goode, *MassHire Boston Career Center*

Chris Kealey, *Massachusetts Business Roundtable*

Jim Oliveira, *MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board*

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 -

Robert Corley, *NeighborWorks Housing Solutions*

Karen Pelletier, *Worcester Chamber of Commerce*

Joseph Peters, *Universal Plastics/MassHire Holyoke Career Center*

Suzanne Fernandes, *Mutual Bank/MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board*

Raymond Wrobel, *Align Credit Union/MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board*

Michael Weekes, *Providers Council*

Staff -

Tonja Mettlach, *MWA Executive Director*

Raija Vaisanen, *MWA Associate Director*

Minutes:

Chair's Welcome and Introductions, Stan Usovicz

- Stan called the meeting to order.

Approval of June Meeting Minutes, Stan Usovicz

- VOTE: Motion to approve the June 2020 board meeting minutes (Bob move, Chris second).
 - Unanimous

Treasurer's Report, *Tonja Mettlach*

- Tonja proceeded to provide the treasurer's report to the Board.
- FY20 Updates:
 - FY20 membership fees: MWA once again collected 100% of membership dues. We are thankful to see this type of support for the organization.
 - MWA ended FY20 under budget, with \$48,736.09 in net revenue. Much of our savings was due to the cancellation of in person events during the last quarter of the fiscal year, a time we typically spend the most on member meetings.
- FY21 Updates:
 - FY21 Membership Dues: As was voted on at the June board meeting, MWA lowered the total dues we are seeking from members in FY21 down to \$190,000 from \$200,000 (5% reduction). We have sent out all dues invoices and as of this morning have collected and deposited 19% of dues.
 - Our state contracts have been approved but we have not yet received budget sheets. Have reached out to DCS/EOLWD.
 - Only in the first quarter of FY21, but to date expenses are tracking at or below budget.
- VOTES:
 - Motion to accept the treasurer's report (Jim move, Valerie second)
 - Unanimous
 - Motion to undergo a financial review of FY20 (Jim move, Chris second)
 - Unanimous

Racial Justice Conversation, *Tonja Mettlach and Raija Vaisanen*

- Tonja introduced the conversation and asked members to refer to the framework document discussed in the board memo and included in the board packet.
- Valerie then shared some additional thoughts and asked board members to share: (1) thoughts and perspectives on racial equity and what role MWA should play; and (2) what their organization or them personally have been involved in:
 - Maddrey shared about what Goodwill has been doing including conversations around a collective lens for the work of the organization and career center. Maddrey personally is also part of equity groups related to healthcare, a charter school, among others. So far the most effective seems to be with the high school he is working with, gone through two rounds of consultants.
 - Stan shared about Verizon's law and policy group which is hosting weekly calls with topics on racial justice and equity. They either have a guest speaker or provide personal testimony of their own. Stan shared that it would be very beneficial to have these types of conversations with this board. If we try to bite off too much it will become a worthless exercise.
 - Dave shared that he is involved with two different groups, one for MassHire Holyoke and the other as part of the Western MA Network to End Homelessness. At MassHire Holyoke they have two consultants who are leading them through a short/long term process. This involves racial and economic ambassadors that will go

through a course to identify inequalities and how they get played out in communities. Relatively new and he'd be happy to share the concept paper that led to hiring the consultants. With the Western MA Network they are also working with a few consultants and are looking at the impact of racial disparities between the homeless population and the people who serve them. The homeless population is disproportionately comprised of Hispanic people compared to the local population, and those who serve them are primarily non-Hispanic.

- Chris shared what the Roundtable has been doing. For starters they have been having conversations both internally and externally. They have convened a number of conversations with Black and Brown leaders particularly around the [New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Justice Fund](#). In addition to listening and learning which is an action in itself, MBR is taking action and making commitments including: advancing the issues of the [Black Economic Council of MA](#) and supporting Black and Brown business organizations, strategic partnerships, and expanded opportunities for leaders from [The Partnership](#) to be members of the Roundtable's board to help diversify their own board. They are committed to using their platform to focus on ending discrimination and institutional racism. They are also working with their members to discuss their vendor/supplier pipelines and whether or not they could be working with more BIPOC owned businesses. They have also launched a new section of their regular news blast called "Expanding the Table" focused on this work. They are also partnering with [Conexion](#) on a joint convening.
- Jim shared that he is fine with MWA working with a consultant and thinks it is a great idea. A little skeptical but we can continue to work as a body and individually.
- Bob Bower shared about AFL-CIO's racial justice committee. They have not used any consultants yet. Bob also likes the idea of working with WIBs around the state in this work and continuing to advocate for programs like WCTF and Learn to Earn, and the Blue Economy/Wind Energy work in the Southeast. It is important to focus on helping young people just coming out of school access opportunities now, like apprenticeships.
- Mary shared that while her organization has not taken any strategic steps yet they have had a lot of conversations, including her last board meeting in the context of healthcare jobs and people who are stuck in low wage jobs. While they have budget constraints it would be great to get some help about how to make this a systemic conversation.
- Valerie then recapped what she had heard from Board members, particularly that we might not be ready to hire a consultant yet. She suggested a task force or some other group to think about what MWA should be doing and what the system is currently doing across the state.

Executive Director Report, *Tonja Mettlach and Raija Vaisanen*

- Tonja and Raija presented public policy updates, strategic priorities for FY21, and some additional follow up from the 2020 member survey. See PowerPoint for additional details.

Adjournment

- Stan thanked everyone for their participation. Reminded members that the next meeting will take place on December 15th.
- Mary asked a few public policy questions and a discussion ensued along with some additional follow up on Tonja's end.
- VOTE: Motion to adjourn (Bob motion, Jim second).
 - Unanimous