

## **Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes**

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Notes -

### **Participants:**

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

### **FY22 Budget Updates**

- Tonja provided an update on the Senate budget and the \$7.5 million included for career centers. Tonja also gave an update on the timing of the American Rescue Funding.
- The committee then began discussing what is the ideal timing of funding and what does the system need in terms of additional funding or other assistance?
  - Very hard to hire right now, even for hiring for your own positions in workforce development.
  - One thought was that with more money could increase wages for current staff and bring on more staff. Pay equity makes it so you can't just increase hiring wages, you would need to increase existing staff wages.
  - Even with the increased WIOA funding and state funding many areas still find themselves underfunded compared to 2009/2010. For example, South Shore down almost \$1M.
  - Difference now and in 2009, people who were out of work all wanted to go to retraining, huge demand. People were reaching out to the career center, very little outreach needed. Whereas now, so much outreach is needed for employers looking to hire and/or to convince people to go into training.
  - MassHire infrastructure is people, wages are not keeping pace.
  - Need not just increase funding but consistent funding over multiple years so you don't staff up and then have to lay off all new staff when money goes away.

### **Public Policy Framework**

- Tonja reminded the committee that MWA shared an updated draft legislative agenda with the meeting materials. Tonja asked the committee to respond with questions/comments by June 10th. MWA is likely to present the agenda to the board for approval in June.
- Next Steps:
  - Please review the agenda and email Tonja/Raima by **June 10th** with edits/comments.

### **Issue Selection Discussion**

- The committee ran out of time before getting to the two bills for review.
- We quickly discussed two questions Mary Sarris had about the AVTE bill and Tonja/Raija to follow up with AVTE to get additional information.
- At the next committee meeting we will discuss both bills using MWA's issue selection document.