

Metro South/West Career Center Committee

Unofficial Minutes March 5, 2024

Members on Zoom Conferencing: Bob Bower, Chair, Rosemary Alexander, John Bogdan, Chris Brennan, Patrick Davis, Shannon Laingen, Sue Medeiros

Members absent: Louise Lynch

Other present: MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board staff: Henry Bryson, Greg Bunn, Louise Meyer; MassHire Metro South/West Career Center: Zoie Jaklitsch, Rute Vale
VOA: Shannon Teles; Admin Consultant: Cindy Cedrone

Welcome and Approval of February 5, 2024 Minutes

Greg Bunn welcomed the members and turned the meeting over to Bob Bower. Bob asked for a motion to approve the February 5, 2024 minutes. Chris Brennan made a motion, Rosemary Alexander seconded. Motion passed.

Business Services Rebuild/Director of Business Partnerships

Greg introduced Rute Vales, hired as Director of Business Partnerships to rebuild the Business Services Team and cross-pollinate employer engagement activities between the Career Center, Youth Connections and the Workforce Board. Chris Brennan asked if there would be more employer focus. Greg noted that Rute and Antoine Jones from Rapid Response would be in communication often to strengthen connections with companies.

Greg noted the month of April is Youth Trade and Construction Month: 1. Trade & Construction Expo on April 3 with over 20 exhibitors expected inside and five or six outside exhibitors. 2. "Tools for the Trade" a week-long career exploration program. 3. Labor Market Information (LMI) night for parents, introducing youth career opportunities. 4. Job Fair for trade and construction. Bob noted that the unions would be involved in the April activities and also in July when Skills-Build takes place at the NE Laborers' Training Academy in Hopkinton.

EA Shelter Funding Update

Greg said that the supplemental funding from DCS in the amount of \$266K was expected this week. He noted the three parts of the proposal. 1. Contract with Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) to provide pre-employment and job placement services to 45 individuals in Waltham, which offers greater access to public transportation, by splitting the cost of a \$240K pilot program with MassGeneralBrigham (MGB) for employment at MGB's hospitals. JVS will also provide support with the hiring process and post-placement. 2. Dovetail with the Behavior Health (BH) grant to identify 10 individuals for BH health worker training. Contract with a Haitian-Creole bilingual person to work with the shelters to get pertinent information regarding skills and interest of potential workers and provide a more proactive approach to work with external partners. 3. Support Rute and the Business Services Team to get a larger pool of employers. Regional Shelter Coordinator meetings would be set up to stay updated on constant changes, to network and to share best practices. Greg said although the Governor's office is encouraging placements that he felt, with the money needed to be obligated by June 30, that he also will coordinate with Salem to use the money for the best public value.

Continuing Discussion: Career Center of the Future

Greg referred to the Career Center Activity Chart noting at the last meeting the discussion was about unemployment assistance (UA) services. Bob said at a meeting with Secretary Jones, it was agreed that a UA person should be stationed at the career centers one day a week.

Greg asked for input from committee members on what direction they would like business services to grow. Shannon Laingen said she had developed a strong relationship with the business services team and felt there needs to be more outreach to employers who are not aware of all the career center services offered, not just when there are layoffs. Patrick Davis said his sales team is struggling with both ends, finding jobs to fill and finding workers. Shannon and Patrick both agreed it is a very different job market at this time and that wide nets needed to be cast. Rosemary suggested reaching beyond normal areas like the career centers had in previous years. Greg said the Business Services Team would be concentrating on recruiting candidates from different areas, not just UI claimants. Zoie noted that they have spoken at the Framingham ESOL meetings and also noted that word of mouth was very important. Patrick asked about MOSES. Bob said a 20-page summary about updating/replacing MOSES would be available soon and that more engagement with workforce boards for ideas was part of the summary.

Greg asked that the next meeting be a brainstorming session on what a physical career center should look like and how much space is really needed with broad access to technology.

Bob asked for a motion to adjourn. Patrick Davis made the motion. Chris Brennan seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Career Center Activity Chart

PROGRAM	FUNCTION	DELIVERY PROCESS ??
(WIOA Title I) Training Enrollments	Administration of training funds and case management of participants	
(WIOA Title III) Wagner – Peyser	Basic Career Center Services: Resource Room, Walk-in Job Search Assistance, Workshops	
Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)	Required orientation workshop and follow up one-on-one appointments to verify unemployment requirements are being met by claimants receiving checks	TBD
Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP)	Services to Veterans with an SBE (Significant Barrier to Employment)	
Business Services	Employer Services: Job posting, recruitments, job fairs and navigation of grant or tax incentives	
Unemployment Services / DUA	Application/Adjunction of unemployment benefits. We currently only have limited read only access to this system	