

Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, March 22nd, 2023

Full Audio Recording available upon request

Attendance: David Slutz, Bernice Jensen, Jean Breault, Laura Douglas, John Fernandes, Margarita Graham, Haskell Kennedy III, Rick Kidder, Pam Kuechler, Lisa Lemieux, Jane McArdle, Ron Melbourne, Bonnie Mello, Jeffrey Pelletier, Derek Santos, Duarte Silva, Tracy Silvia, Allie Wainer, Michael Williams, Christopher Mittell

Staff: Jim Oliveira, Joe Lopes, Jamilyn Soares, Kyra Greco, Taylor Nichols-Xavier, Deborah Meggison, Justin Grota, Deven Robitaille, Matthew De Oliveira, Jacqueline Sylvia

Guests: Elizete Perry, Rodney Solomon, Fran Grey, Jordan Lamam, Robert Watt

Greetings and Call to Order by David Slutz- Chair – Opened meeting at 8:12AM

Announcements- Chair, David Slutz

David Slutz welcomed all and began the meeting with introductions of all present board members, staff, and guests.

Consent Agenda (Votes)

- Approval of Minutes, December 15th, 2022
- Approval of Treasurer's Report
 - David Slutz called for a motion to approve both December meeting minutes and the Treasurer's report. Margarita Graham made a motion to accept items, seconded by Bernice Jensen. All voted in favor and the motion carried

Votes to Approve – Joe Lopes

- **To accept the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board and MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center Lease Site Request for Proposals as presented in the Live Binder**
- **To accept the National Emergency Grant (NEG) Dislocated Worker Support Services Policy**
- **To approve Joseph P. Lopes as Executive Director/CEO effective April 1st, 2023**
 - *Joe Lopes called for a motion to approve Votes 1 through 3. Duarte Silva made a motion to accept the votes, seconded by Rick Kidder. All voted in favor and the motion carried.*

Executive Director and CEO Report - Jim Oliveira/Joe Lopes

Joe Lopes reviewed both the Treasurer's Report as well as the CFO report on behalf of Abbey Despres. Joe reviewed other relevant updates at the Workforce Board (WB). He highlighted that the WB has received certification for CY 24. Relative to the Apprenticeship Team, Joe noted that the WB has signed a MOA with the MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board for apprenticeships. Additionally, the Youth Team at the WB has received \$1.25M for Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 (Summer, Out of School Youth). This amount is roughly \$360,000 more than what was received last year, which speaks to the work that is being done on the youth team. As for the RFP for Lease Sites, Joe noted that as of right now the Board has only received one bidder. Jim Oliveira noted to the Board that it has been a pleasure watching how things are being done as well as how things have changed as he transitions into retirement. He emphasized that Joe, in his new role, has done a great job developing staff, and expects continuous improvement and greater outcomes from the team. Joe noted that the team plans to recognize Jim at the annual board meeting in June.

MassHire Career Center Report – Rodney Solomon, Fran Grey

Rodney Solomon and Fran Grey reviewed the Career Center (CC) reports from the Live Binder. Fran noted on the CC Activity Comparison Report that the Greater New Bedford region is comparing very well with other CC regions. It was emphasized that the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) has been seeing a lot of fraud claims that are affecting re-employment programming. This fraud is also happening in the Fall River Region. Rodney Solomon reviewed the Performance Snapshot. He noted that some of the planned numbers need adjusting as there has been an issue in the database system. He went on to discuss operational changes that have been made, such as revising customer flow, to make the process of enrolling participants more efficient for customers and staff. The CC previously enrolled participants on an average of 21 days, and presently it is only taking the CC an average of 7 days to enroll participants. Rodney highlighted that the goal is to keep customers engaged in the next step, leaving less excess time in the process. Additionally, the CC has been working on increasing their capacity to host Career Center Seminars and TABE testing in house. Rodney touched upon the participants in the pipeline who are scheduled to get their credentials. He stated that there is a total of 35 participants – 13 of which are scheduled to get their credential between now and the end of the FY. The remaining 22 were scheduled to have already gotten their credential. The CC is working on dissecting the reasons as to why this delay in certification may be. Fran Grey presented some visual data to the Board relative to the individuals that are being served. Dr. Laura Douglas noted that the data being presented in terms of Bachelor Degree obtainment goes against all national data, and was curious to know if there was a reason as to why this might be. Fran Grey noted that it could be the increase of individuals who went to school or



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completed online schooling during the pandemic. John Fernandes asked for more information about the individuals who are entering employment. He stated it is important to know what participants are being paid, if the job is a benefitted job, and what is being averaged.

Other Business – Joe Lopes

Joe Lopes and Rick Kidder discussed the gathering of the Nominating Committee with the board. Rick noted that the report from this meeting will be ready for review at the annual June Board meeting. He also mentioned that if any board members know of an individual who may be interested in serving on the board to provide information to himself and Joe. Dave Slutz asked the CC staff to provide a visual on how the CC is doing when times are not in our favor. He noted it would be helpful to have more visual data available for the board members. Michael Williams, Director of Field Management & Oversight/EOLWD Financial Liaison from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, introduced himself as a new board member. Mr. Williams is taking the spot that was previously filled by DCS employee Diane Hurley. Joe Lopes noted that the Career Center is planning to keep the Center open until 6:30PM-7:00PM at least one day per week. He emphasized that it is important to be able to offer services to folks after normal workday hours.

Adjourned at 3:53PM– Motion to adjourn made by Laura Douglas, seconded by Duarte Silva.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 21st, 2023

Location: TBD