



**Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, March 10, 2022**  
**Via: Zoom (remote platform)**



*Attendees*

|   |               |   |               |   |                  |   |                                 |
|---|---------------|---|---------------|---|------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|   | R. Adams      | ✓ | T. Gage       | * | D. Moresi        |   | Staff:                          |
| ✓ | D. Bissaillon | * | L. Harrison   | * | B. Morrison      | ✓ | H. Boulger                      |
| ✓ | M. Blake      | * | B. House      | ✓ | B. Petropulos    | ✓ | K. Toomey                       |
| ✓ | J. Brosnan    | ✓ | A. Ingegni    |   | R. Recker        | ✓ | H. Williams                     |
| ✓ | J. Burke      | ✓ | R. Keegan     | * | E. Sheridan      | ✓ | R. Lilley                       |
|   | J. Butler     | ✓ | K. Kelly      | ✓ | M. Sweet         | ✓ | S. Milano                       |
| ✓ | B. Chaput     | * | E. Kennedy    | ✓ | M. Taylor        |   | Guests:                         |
| ✓ | E. Dellea     | ✓ | J. Lipa       | ✓ | C. Tyer          | ✓ | Debra Sarlin, Peter Farkas, BCC |
| ✓ | P. Euber      | ✓ | J. Lowenstein |   | B. Waternan      | ✓ | Brittany Polito, iBerkshires    |
| ✓ | D. Evans      | ✓ | D. McNally    |   |                  | ✓ | M. Gelaznik, MHBCC              |
| ✓ | P. Gage       |   | K. Messina    |   | *excused absence |   |                                 |

**Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and Governor’s Order of limiting meetings of more than 10 people:** Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to access the meeting may do so in the following manner: Zoom video conference call. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts, we will post on our website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. <http://www.masshireberkshire.com>. Today’s agenda is posted on the City of Pittsfield and City of North Adams respective websites. Members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so via Zoom video conference call. This meeting will be recorded and a roll call was conducted via Zoom Chat.

**I. Call to Order:**

Vice President Michael Taylor opened the meeting at 8:00AM by welcoming everyone to the remote meeting and assuring a quorum.

**Consent Agenda**

Vice President Taylor asked if there were any agenda items that needed to be removed from the consent agenda.

1. Recommendation to approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2021 Board of Director meeting.
2. Recommendation to approve the YTD FY2022 Financial Statement reflecting \$617,582 income; \$500,216 expenses; showing net surplus of \$117,366. There is \$114K in account receivable and \$76K in money market.

3. *Recommendation to approve the 1 program from Salem State Individual Training Account vendor.*
4. *Recommendation to approve the MassHire Berkshire Career Center Report.*
5. *Recommendation to approve the BWB Youth Director Report.*

***A motion was made by John Lipa to approve the consent agenda items, seconded by Jerry Burke, and the motion carried.***

## **II. Announcements/Communications**

The Executive Director announced the following meetings:

- ▶ *Annual Board meeting – June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 8AM*
- ▶ *Executive Committee – May 11, 2022 at 8AM*
- ▶ *WIOA Partner – March at 1PM*
- ▶ *Youth Council – April 7<sup>th</sup> at 9AM*
- ▶ *Berkshire Skills Cabinet – May 17<sup>th</sup> at 11AM*
- ▶ *Evaluation Committee – May 19<sup>th</sup> at 8AM*
- ▶ *Workforce Board & Career Center Certification – April 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>*
- ▶ *Market Maker Roadshow March/April*
- ▶ *MWA June 2/3 in the Berkshires*

Communications included new grants and upcoming funding opportunities:

- ▶ Thank you letter from Berkshire Medical Center’s Medical Assistant students for the training and support.

New Board Members were welcomed:

- Monique Blake, Human Resource Director, Miraval
- Michele Sweet, Human Resource Director, Berkshire Health Systems
- Paula Euber, Regional Director, MRC
- Kimberly Kelly, Community Director, Elder Services of Berkshire County

David Bissaillon welcomed new members and noted that as a fairly new Board member, he arranged a meeting with Melanie and Heather for a Career Center tour and overview. Heather suggested that the April Orientation be conducted at the Career Center.

## **III. New Business**

**FY2023 Nominations Committee** – On behalf of Committee Chair Kennedy, the Executive Director noted that nominations for FY23 offices are due by May 15<sup>th</sup>. A form will be forwarded for all board members to complete. Private sector leaders must serve in the President and one Vice President roles. New officers are welcome!

**Career Center Policies** – Melanie Gelaznik provided a summary for the requested changes to the Career Center Standard Operating Procedures.

1. **Unemployment Insurance Walk In Services** - Career Center not receiving UI funding for FY22; requesting to change UI walk in services from 5 to 3 days a week (M, Tu, & Th from 8AM-12PM). Discussion ensued about access, eventual kiosks, and hearings being conducted via zoom. ***A motion to approve was made by Jim Brosnan, seconded by Gene Dellea, and unanimously approved.***
2. **Youth Funds for Incentive Payments** - Stipends are allowable costs under WIOA and the Career Center and youth can receive up to \$1500/year with proper documentation and justification. Discussion ensued and ***a motion was made by Albert Ingegni to approved, seconded by Barb Chaput, and the motion carried.***

Melanie highlighted some Career Center activities including a new CDL training with the BRTA; on-spot interviews with companies; assisting with housing/transportation/childcare; the DCS Area Directo is retiring in

April; Spring Job Fair on March 30<sup>th</sup> (virtual); collaborations with sector trainings; 2-3% increase in WIOA funding in FY23.

#### **IV. Program Updates**

Executive Director report – Heather Boulger reported on activities since the December Board meeting. New staff include **Rebecca Lilley** as Office Executive and **Dick Alcombright** as PT Market Maker meeting with companies. Lauren has retired and Shannon moved on. Currently **recruiting for Manager of Industry Relations** and Training Coordinator.

Training- wrapped up **Workforce Competitive Trust Fund** grant 12/31 to train nursing assistants. The goal was to train 70 – we actually trained 60 (86%) during the pandemic with 45 completing; 15 receiving credentialing and 16 placed at \$16.90/hr. Working with Berkshire Healthcare Systems to establish a local testing site to get through the back log and recertification of current workers. The Executive Director is requesting to provide \$7500 to BHCS to assist in purchasing equipment/supplies for this to happen. BWB would provide “refresher workshops” to graduates to help them success when testing. ***Jim Brosnan motioned to approve providing \$7500 to BCHS toward the nursing certification process. Seconded by Doug McNally, the motion carried. Albert Ingegni abstained.*** Discussion ensued that BCC was also renovating the campus to provide an additional testing site for up to 10 students which hopefully will be established by summer.

- **Healthcare Hub** – 2 Medical Assistant trainings (12 students completed in February; another 10 in May) and 4 new nursing assistant trainings with MCLA during summer/fall.
- **Hospitality/Culinary programs** – BCC has 10 students in their fast track programming for supervisor; 10 in front desk agent program; 20 in their 24-weeks culinary program; and BWB funded 100 serve safe trainings.

Admin – Started a donations account to accept contributions in memory of individuals. The family of Phyllis Bona want donations in their mother’s name to go to nursing assistant students. Legislative meetings have started with the Berkshire Delegation and Mayors.

Youth Director Update – Heather Williams highlighted **Connecting Activities** programs including:

- 222 Internships with 103 employers (61 paid; 66 TEM; 14 healthcare; 32 human services; 16 hospitality; 8 manufacturing 22 building trades; 60 education/childcare
- 19 Career Awareness Activities for 618 students with 19 employers
- 11 Career Exploration activities for 237 students with 10 employers
- Enhancing career readiness activities and college/career planning systems with Hoosac Valley, Central Berkshire, Mt. Greylock, and Southern Berkshire.
- Career Pathways for Lenox (healthcare & business/finance); Monument (advanced manufacturing and healthcare); additional pathways in auto tech/construction; horticulture, early childcare; building trades, computer science, business, art/design/ humanities; communications.
- High School Student Educational Internship Program (HSSEIP) – DESE funded internships for 19 high school seniors for 10 hours/\$14.25/hr. Participating schools include: Lenox, Lee, Monument, Pittsfield, Mt. Everett, Hoosac Valley and Drury. Experiences in K-8 supporting and learning from teachers and school-based staff.

**Youth Works** – 1. North County School-Year YouthWorks program funded by First Congregational Church of Williamston for 8 youth for 90 hours/\$14.25/hr this winter/spring. 2. Pittsfield Year-Round YouthWorks Program funded by CommCorp for 14 youth ages 16-32 for career pathway training; work placements; 25-hrs work readiness, etc. 3. North County Summer YouthWorks – THANK YOU to BCCW, MountainOne, Barb Chaput, MCLA, Smith Bros. McAndrews Insurance & Adams Community Bank. BWB continues to seek funding for north and south county programming. Sponsor a youth for \$2500; hire a youth; or make a donation!

**FY23 WIOA Youth procurement for In-School and Out-of-School Youth.**

## **Youth Council Request for Proposal Timeline**

**Issuance Date:** Friday, February 25, 2022

**Bidders Conference:** Friday, March 11, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. / zoom

**Proposal Q & A deadline:** Monday May 2, 2022

**Proposals Due:** Friday, May 6, 2022 at noon

**Evaluation Period:** May 9 – May 20, 2022 (Review Team meet on Friday 5/27)

**Notice of Awards:** by Monday, June 13, 2022 (Award approval at 6/9/22 BOD Mtg.)

Visit [www.MassHireBerkshire.com](http://www.MassHireBerkshire.com) for the RFP or more information.

**BWB Intern** – Kat Toomey recognized the hard work and efforts of our high school intern Teagan from Lenox who started in November and is doing marketing/social media projects, labor market information research, produced an educator video; and is redesigning/updating our career trees. Here is the link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mtZO0nzNOM>

**Manufacturing update** – Sara Milano noted that MassTechnology has funded training in coordination with McCann Tech (Intro to Mfg for 5 trainees with 96 hours of instruction) and with BCC (online ToolingU for 7 participants for 30 hours of training). Currently recruiting for in-person welding and on-going enrollment with BCC's ToolingU. Also working with BIC for a digital manufacturing literacy training in Spring 2022. Promoting On-the-Job training opportunities for newly hired unemployed residents.

## **V. Strategic Plan FY22-26**

Board members reviewed and modified the mission statement, vision statement, diversity statement and 5-year strategic plan.

- Proposed Mission: *To develop partnerships, generate resources, and advocate for workforce solutions that result in a skilled workforce, prospering businesses, and equitable access to meaningful career pathways and quality employment for residents and youth.*
- Proposed Vision Statement: *Our vision is a thriving, inclusive, and resilient regional economy where businesses, residents and youth have equitable access to workforce development resources and to quality employment opportunities. We envision a better future for people, youth and businesses of Berkshire County through meaningful work and sustainable growth.*
- Proposed Diversity statement: *As a leader in workforce development, Berkshire Workforce Board is committed to having Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion embedded into the programs and services we offer, reflected in the people we impact and our workplace culture. Our vision of a society where upward economic mobility is possible for all – cannot be accomplished alone, but through the collective efforts and support of our staff, partners, board members and the communities in which we live and serve.*
- Proposed 5 strategic goals:
  1. *Catalyst for innovative workforce development & LMI*
  2. *Readiness of youth*
  3. *Align skills gap*
  4. *Success through evaluations and adherence to mandates*
  5. *Road to reemployment & recovery – strategies for businesses, job seekers and youth*

Discussion ensued **and a motion was made by Tammy Gage to approve the Strategic Plan, mission, vision and DEI statements. Seconded by Beth Petropulos, the motion carried.**

Board members and community leaders discussed workforce issues:

- Most companies/occupations are finding it challenging to find applicants at all levels.

- The banking industry which traditionally have not had staffing issues are facing high turnover rates. MountainOne hired 25 new people (167 employees) and are having concerns in the Berkshires and South Shore. Positions include customer service, front facing positions, looking for soft skills and leadership ability.
- Towns are pivoting to expand their college credit internships in order to assist workers.
- BCC has a leadership academy and programs in STEM, auto, trades and much more.
- Job Quest shows almost 3,000 job openings in the region
- The Berkshire December 2021 unemployment rate is 4.4% with 61,306 in labor force, 57,711 employed and 3,595 unemployed.
- There is still concern with fraud happening with unemployment claims and MassHire continues to work with Department of Unemployment Assistance.
- Retention is also a growing concern as employees are job hopping.
- Some companies are still experiencing ghosting where the prospect doesn't show up for the interview and/or the job.
- No longer a wage issue rather than a culture issue.
- Future of work is changing – more remote work
- Important for our Board to focus on workforce items that we can have an impact on – pipeline development, recruitment and retention are FY22 priorities.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The Annual meeting of the full Board of Directors will be June 9, 2022 hopefully in person at 8AM. ***With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Jerry Burke, seconded by John Lipa, and unanimously approved.*** Vice President Taylor welcomed new board members and staff, thanked Board members and staff for their continued hard work and wished everyone a safe and healthy spring! Meeting ended at 9:05AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chelsea Tyer, Secretary/HPB