



MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board Annual Meeting Minutes (Approved by Board, 8/20/26)

Date: June 4, 2026

Location: Smith College, Carroll Room 208

Time: 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Board Members Present: Kristin Cole, Allison van der Velden, Sean Sormanti, Nismah Osman, Natty Hussey, Jeff Napolitano, Colleen Kucinski, Deb Christakos, Neil Scanlon, Sarah Sargent, Liz Buxton, Jen Halpin, Alan Wolf, Mayor Sciarra, Jessye Deane, Sue Turner, Libby Hernandez, Andrea Bordenca, Laurie Millman

Staff Present: Sarah Wilson, Maura Geary, Gregg Thompson, Sarah Hoecker, Zach Podhorzer, Jon Frodema, Drew Kott, Margot Douillet, Gio Richetelli, Matt Allen, Mark O'Toole, Savannah Baldwin

Others Present: Kelly Hanlon (MWA), Cole Angley (MWA), Jim Wage (UMass Five), Justin Lawrence (FCTS), Sarah Horan (CHCFC), Elena Cohen (Legislature), Cait Murray (UMass Five), Maggie Nugent (FCTS)

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Allison van der Velden called the Annual Meeting of the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board to order at 12:22 PM and welcomed Board members, staff, partners, employers, elected officials, and community stakeholders.

2. State of the Region & Workforce System Update

Co-Executive Directors Sarah Wilson and Maura Geary, along with Labor Market Specialist Gio Richetelli, provided an overview of workforce development activities and regional labor market conditions.

Highlights included:

- Continued implementation and refinement of the integrated MassHire Franklin Hampshire organizational model.
- Expansion of partnerships across healthcare, advanced manufacturing, youth workforce development, and apprenticeship initiatives.
- Ongoing efforts to strengthen workforce pathways and employer engagement throughout Franklin County, Hampshire County, and the North Quabbin region.
- Regional labor market trends, workforce challenges, and emerging opportunities presented by Gio Richetelli.

Leadership emphasized the importance of collaboration, innovation, and cross-sector partnerships in addressing workforce needs and supporting regional economic growth.

3. Spotlight: Impact Stories

MassHire staff shared success stories and program outcomes highlighting the impact of workforce development services on jobseekers, youth participants, employers, and community partners throughout the region.

Board members and attendees heard examples of how workforce programs helped individuals gain employment, access training opportunities, and advance toward career goals through stories shared by Jon Frodema, Margot Douillet, Mark O'Toole, Matt Allen, and Drew Kott.

4. Awards & Recognitions

MassHire Partner Award

The 2026 MassHire Partner Award was presented to Justin Lawrence in recognition of his outstanding partnership, collaboration, and commitment to advancing workforce development efforts throughout the region.

MassHire Employer Award

The 2026 MassHire Employer Award was presented to the Community Health Center of Franklin County in recognition of its exceptional partnership with MassHire Franklin Hampshire and its leadership in developing workforce pathways, supporting apprenticeship initiatives, and investing in the regional healthcare workforce.

MassHire Youth Leadership Award

The 2026 MassHire Youth Leadership Award was presented to UMass Five in recognition of its commitment to the youth of the region and in developing career pathways, hosting student interns, and in sponsoring youth workforce initiatives for the region.

5. Keynote Speaker

Attendees heard remarks from Elena Cohen, District Director for Jo Comerford, regarding workforce development, regional economic opportunities, and the importance of continued collaboration among employers, educators, workforce professionals, and community partners. Elena took time to also recognize Maura Geary and all of her work around advocacy for the region. Maura was presented with a citation from the Senate.

6. Board Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the previous Board meeting.

Vote: Approved unanimously.

Approval of FY27 Meeting Calendar

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed FY27 Workforce Board meeting calendar.

Vote: Approved unanimously.

Welcome of New Board Members

Chair Allison van der Velden welcomed the Board members appointed during the past year and thanked them for their willingness to serve and support the mission of MassHire Franklin Hampshire.

7. Staff & Partner Recognition

Sarah Wilson and Maura Geary recognized MassHire staff, Board members, employer partners, educational institutions, community organizations, and workforce system stakeholders for their dedication and contributions throughout the year. Special appreciation was expressed for the collaborative efforts that continue to strengthen workforce development services and opportunities across the region.

Maura Geary was recognized by Sarah Wilson and Cole Angley for her service to MassHire.

8. Closing Remarks

Closing remarks focused on the importance of partnership, innovation, and regional collaboration in addressing workforce challenges and expanding opportunities for both businesses and jobseekers. Leadership thanked attendees for their participation and continued support of the MassHire Franklin Hampshire mission.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Annual Meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.