



FRANKLIN HAMPSHIRE WORKFORCE BOARD

Full Board Meeting Minutes

Date: March 26, 2026

Time: 8:02 AM – 9:00 AM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Board Members and Staff Present

Allison van der Velden, Kristin Cole, Alex Colonna, Laurie Lamoureux, Brian Pearson, Colleen Kucinski, Deb Christakos, Jeff Napolitano, Libby Hernandez, Neil Scanlon, Jamie Santiago, Alan Wolf, Erin Anhalt, Andrea Bordenca, Mpress Nembhard, Sarah Wilson, Maura Geary, Jon Frodema, Giovanni Richetelli, Zach Podhorzer, Cindy Ray, and Sarah Hoecker.

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Vice Chair Kristin Cole called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM due to Chair Allison van der Velden joining late. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Board reviewed the Full Board meeting minutes from December 4, 2025. Deborah made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Alan Wolf. The motion passed.

III. New Board Member Introductions

Sarah Wilson introduced two new Board members:

Laurie Lamoureux, CFO of Cooley Dickinson Hospital, shared her background and community involvement. Jamie Santiago, R&D Engineer at florrent, introduced himself and discussed the company's workforce development efforts related to advanced energy technology manufacturing.

IV. Impact Moment

Jon Frodema shared the story of a jobseeker, a veteran and former combat medic who utilized MassHire Franklin Hampshire services following a layoff in 2025. Through CTI electrical training at Franklin Tech, support from Veterans and Career Center staff, and partnership development with Palmeri Electric, jobseeker secured employment as an electrician apprentice. The presentation highlighted collaboration across multiple MassHire programs and staff to support successful reemployment.

V. Q2 Labor Market Overview

Giovanni Richetelli presented the Q2 Labor Market Report developed for the Franklin Hampshire region. Highlights included:

- Increased unemployment rates in both the region and statewide compared to Q1, likely due in part to seasonal trends.
- Registered Nurses remained the most posted occupation in the region.
- Continued strong demand in healthcare and other priority industries.
- Notable posting activity in transportation, warehousing, waste management, and wholesale trade.
- Regional wages continue to lag behind statewide averages, with Franklin County among the lowest in Massachusetts.
- Introduction of a new Labor Market Information request form for employers and partners seeking additional customized data.

Board members discussed wage data methodology, regional breakdowns between Franklin and Hampshire Counties, and opportunities for more granular labor market reporting in future quarters.

VI. MassHire Services: Rapid Response

Antoine Jones, MDCS Rapid Response Manager, provided an overview of the state's Rapid Response program. He described the program's role in supporting workers and businesses impacted by layoffs and closures through:

- Layoff aversion strategies, including the WorkShare program
- Pre-layoff services
- Resume and career support
- Unemployment insurance guidance
- Connections to local MassHire Career Centers

Jones emphasized the importance of early intervention and collaboration among state agencies, workforce boards, and career centers to support rapid reemployment and employer engagement.

VII. Youth Program Updates

Zach Podhorzer presented updates on MassHire Franklin Hampshire's Young Adult Programs (YAP), including WIOA Youth, YouthWorks, and Connecting Activities.

Program Highlights:

- 39 total WIOA youth enrollments during the fiscal year
- Participants earned credentials in HVAC, esthetics, culinary arts, and other fields
- Youth internships established with employers including Climates by Pomeroy, Greenfield Public Library, and local tattoo businesses
- Nearly 90 YouthWorks participants served this year
- Continued success of the Youth Climate Service Corps partnership with GCC and MassCEC
- Over 400 students participated in a Reality Fair event at GCC

Challenges Discussed:

- Transportation barriers
- Difficulty obtaining eligibility documentation
- Geographic challenges across the rural region

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Summer YouthWorks application launch
- Construction Day event
- Additional Youth Climate Service Corps cohorts
- Outreach to graduating seniors without postsecondary plans

Board members discussed internship opportunities, school partnerships, entrepreneurship pathways for youth, and employer engagement opportunities.

VIII. RESEA Overview

Cindy Ray, Operations Manager, provided an overview of the RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment) program. The federally funded program supports unemployment claimants by connecting them with MassHire Career Center services, including:

- One-on-one career counseling
- Resume assistance
- Career action planning
- Labor market information
- Job search strategy support
- Review of unemployment work search compliance

The goal of the program is to support faster and more successful reemployment outcomes for unemployment claimants.

IX. Director Updates

Sarah Wilson and Maura Geary provided organizational updates and acknowledged ongoing efforts across programs and partnerships. Additional updates were limited due to time constraints. Wilson and Geary promised to email Board members further updates along with the Q2 Labor Market Report.

X. Other Business

No additional business was discussed.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM