



# FRANKLIN HAMPSHIRE WORKFORCE BOARD

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## MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board

Minutes of December 1, 2022 Meeting via Zoom

8:03AM – 9:02AM

(Approved by the Workforce Board)

### Members in Attendance:

Anthony Scibelli (Board Chair)	Melissa Eaton	Ken Messina
Neil Scanlon (Board 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair)	Mark Dore	John Waite
Tara Brewster (2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair)	Laurie Millman (REB, Inc Clerk)	Alan Wolf
	Sue Sumner (REB, Inc Treasurer)	

### Staff in Attendance:

Rebecca Bialecki	Andrew Baker	Laura Whittier
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### Others in Attendance:

Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor	Lily Stowe-Alekman (Rep. Domb)	Meighan Williams (EOL)
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### **Agenda Item I: Call to Order**

Anthony Scibelli called the meeting to order. Introductions were made.

FHWB Minutes of October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously. Tara Brewster motioned approval and Sue Sumner seconded. No further discussion ensued.

### **Agenda Item II: COLA FY23**

Rebecca Bialecki detailed the proposal for staff members to receive a 5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). Explanation was provided for how this COLA is in direct alignment with Career Center union agreements and funding allocations. Tony mentioned that the Workforce Board Executive Committee had already discussed and approved this COLA. When queried as to the availability of full funding to support this, Rebecca confirmed. When queried as to how will FHWB staff be informed that their COLA in future years will be less than 5%, Rebecca explained that she had already informed all her staff in a recent meeting. No further discussion ensued. A vote to ratify was moved by Neil Scanlon and seconded by Tara. Unanimously approved.

### **Agenda Item III: COI Training Requirement**

Under the WIOA Law, all members of the Workforce Board are required to *sign* the Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Summary of Conflict of Interest Law every year *and to complete* the Conflict of Interest Law online training every 2 years. The same applies to FHWB staff. All staff members are up to date on signage requirements.

Rebecca explained the federal COI acknowledgement and training requirements, and encouraged Board Member completion of missing paperwork by the end of 2022. Rebecca designated Laura Whittier to follow-up by notifying members who need update their own records. No further discussion ensued.

### **Agenda Item IV: Director Bialecki Updates**

- Annual reporting to the State for REB, Inc. was completed in November. Cindy Peeters and Sue Sumner were thanked for their efforts to expedite the process.

- Jen Droesch is still out covering Franklin, Hampshire and Hamden counties, digging into training needs of critical businesses. As a Market Maker, Jen has been successful in bringing in grants to companies and is working to align businesses with the new grant funding as it becomes available.
- FHWB staff member Andrew Baker was acknowledged and thanked for his history of work contributions by all present.
- Current FHWB staff change is occurring because grant funding ended. Recent redistribution of work load means more schools than ever are being connected to by outreach of FHWB team. Rebecca noted that grant funding often involves narrowing scope from one area to expand in another, all while avoiding duplicity. Health care jobs in high demand, and combined efforts are being executed to increase availability of skilled health care workers in Western Mass.
- The FHWB staff members with Connecting Activities (Matt, Aaron, and Laura Robinson) are busy with implementing a new grant with Baystate Medical system to pay student wages. In addition, 100 seniors will be paid as teaching assistants in January through Department of Education grants.

#### **Agenda Item V: Member Spotlight**

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra presented the view of Northampton's focus on human needs and economic development. The City of Northampton has been busy with commercial development, residential growth geared towards affordable housing, and initiatives to serve people well in new ways brought about by the pandemic. Current initiatives include activating outdoor spaces to encourage folks to enjoy being outside (Masonic Street Live, Summer on Strong, etc.), and establishing a Department of Community Care to handle crisis calls as well as serve those in need of showers, lockers, direction to services, etc. Town leadership is searching for a new building to develop a multi-purpose space that lends it's use as an emergency shelter as needed. Currently, Manna is serving the purpose of a resilience hub and Smith Vocational is still the emergency shelter space. Mayor Sciarra mentioned another initiative developing with the redesign Main Street to include the installation of a tree canopy. Alan Wolf explained how a large plant closure is impacting Northampton with lost revenue and jobs. Ken Messina informed all that EOL is aware of and addressing the situation, in conjunction with the Career Center, with what has been asked for specifically.

#### **Agenda Item V: Other Business**

- Ken reported having people from Venezuela who companies are looking to hire for temporary protective services (TPS) and how he's working to tap into that resource. Laurie Millman noted CNAM has been working with Jo Comerford to address the staffing shortage. She stated that economic necessity and education requirements don't align; DPH used to responsible for licensing but the technical studies are not a relevant design for boots on the ground. Rebecca noted that the State has been developing a community health worker training system for years but it remains a desperate need that is not being met. Workers are capable and want to do the work yet for many the requirements are untenable while some don't even make sense for these times as impacted by the pandemic. Laurie suggested problem solving through a larger regional conversation involving multiple workforce boards. Tony proposed putting this topic on the agenda when the new administration fully lands.
- John Waite proposed the formation of a Board Finance Committee to institute the review of fiscal elements in a granular manner. All agreed with this idea, and were encouraged by Rebecca to participate. Rebecca stated that the first Finance Committee meeting would be scheduled for January 2023. No further discussion ensued.

#### **Agenda Item VI: Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by John and seconded by Tara. Unanimously approved. The next **Full Board** meeting is scheduled for 3/2/2023.