



METRO NORTH REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD MEETING NOTES

December 11, 2013

Present: Reed Brockman, Charlene Bauer, Andrea Donahue, Madeline Hoffman, Polly Harold (representing Susan Jepson), Rose Lydon, Kambiz Maali, Larisa Schelkin, Paul Richard, Mike Spinale, Sandra Smith, Steven Sullivan, Tricia Tyler, Susan Walsh

Absent: Lisa Anderson, Kitty Bowman, Philip Bronder-Giroux, Joanna Dowling, John Drinkwater, Camille Ferrullo, William Hart, John Kendzior, Danny LeBlanc, Lisa Amaya Price, Mina Reddy, Cheryl Scott, Karen Sampson Johnson, Mark Tardiff, Mary Tighe, Juan Vega, Kerry Wollner

REB Staff: Linda Bass, Mike Hatfield, Kimberly Napier, Mallory St. Brice, Holly Vogel, Meelynn Wong

Guests: Lance Hartford, Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation; Susan Buckey, Boston PIC; Linda Rohrer, Career Source; and Christopher Brennan, The Career Place

Review of September Minutes: Paul Richard

Paul requested a motion to approve the minutes of the September 2013 REB meeting. The motion was moved and seconded, and the minutes of the September 2013 REB meeting were approved as presented.

Comments/Questions: Committee and REB Update Reports: Paul Richard

Paul asked if there were any questions regarding the Career Center Committee Report, the Youth Council Report, or the REB Update Report; there were none.

Update on Pending Legislation and Current REB Activities: Linda Bass

Linda's update is as follows:

Federal Level:

- Yesterday's Congressional agreement on the federal budget is good news for the REB, as it may protect us from some sequestration cuts.
- There is a possibility that Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) may be extended, continuing benefits for many people who are still out of work. Per the jobs report yesterday, the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since 2008, but there

are still 10.9M people who are unemployed, an additional 5.7M people who have left the labor market (so they are not counted in the unemployment rate), and there are still 4.1M in the long-term unemployed category -- so there is still a lot of work to do to get people back to work.

- There is an increasing possibility that the Workforce Investment Act will be reauthorized in the near future.
- Katherine Clarke (from Melrose) was just elected to Congress yesterday.

State Level:

- There is still a possibility that there will be a casino in Revere – so it looks like there will be a casino in Metro North (either Revere or Everett).
- In 2009, the REB lost between 600-800k dollars from the welfare system, yet the impact was somewhat masked due to subsequent ARRA funding. Currently, there are two bills on the table – both controversial – that could have the impact of potentially bringing welfare dollars back into the workforce system, particularly for education and training. This could potentially mean we could receive more employment and training dollars for the career centers and our training providers.
- There is the potential for a Jobs bill this spring, which may include some funds for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF). This may also be good news for the REB, as the WCTF could support or continue to support some of our industry-specific initiatives.

REB Activities

Linda thanked REB Associate Directors for their successful efforts in bringing in a significant amount of resources for the region over the past year. Since last March, the REB has experienced a funding increase of \$930k, and over \$600k of that was from new grants. This has benefited training providers, the career centers, and some of our partners across the state.

At the recent 10th Annual Massachusetts STEM Summit, held in November at Gillette Stadium and attended by 1300 people, Governor Patrick announced (to our surprise!) that the Metro North REB is going to be the lead for the 8th Regional STEM network. As a result, the Metro North STEM Partnership will be expanded to become the “Metro North Regional STEM Network.” The change also means that we will now be working with students from the pre-k to post-secondary levels. There is also funding attached to this designation (\$40k/year).

Within the past two weeks, Secretary Greg Bialecki announced that the Metro North REB, along with the three other WIBs that comprise the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC), are recipients of a \$500k award. Metro North is the lead on this grant, which will support two full-time Manufacturing Marketing Managers who will meet with manufacturers in

the region to involve them in workforce development activities and assist them in accessing resources in support of the industry.

In collaboration with North Shore, Merrimack Valley, and Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Boards, the REB has received a grant from the Governor's STEM Council for an @Scale project, based on the Future City Competition. The project involves engaging middle-school level youth from "working cities" – typically lower income – in the Future City Competition, where students design the infrastructure of an imaginary city to introduce them to engineering concepts

The REB also just received two additional awards within the last two days. Announcements regarding these grants are under embargo, but information will soon be posted on the REB website.

We are waiting to hear about two pending proposals: 1) A grant to support workforce development initiatives for people with disabilities – working with Triangle, Inc. and the Metro North Career Centers; and, 2) An AMP It Up! grant, which would support continued efforts to change the image of advanced manufacturing among youth to encourage them to enter into the industry.

The REB was recently awarded a Rapid Response Set Aside Grant for \$223,000 to work with people who were laid off from four companies in region.

We are working on a healthcare planning grant relating to healthcare reform. We hope to hear back in the coming weeks.

Ticket to Work, a program for people with disabilities that operates through the career centers, will be operational within the next few weeks.

We are also now working on developing a proposal for the Youth Career Connect Grant – a new H1-B opportunity through the Department of Labor. Placing an emphasis on employer involvement, this grant is design for collaborative efforts between the workforce system and the high school/ secondary systems to build career training into the high school curriculum, with the goal of getting youth interested in a STEM-related career path. For this grant, the REB may potentially partner with six school systems, and focusing on the field of information technology, and possibly life sciences as well. These cities are: Cambridge, Somerville, Malden, Revere, Everett, and Chelsea. We have had preliminary contact with each of these communities. This proposal is due January 27. If you have contacts in those six school systems, or, if you know any school personnel in the entire Metro North region that might be interested in joining the Metro North STEM Network, please inform Linda.

We are still looking for additional board members to get involved with some of the industry priorities outlined in the strategic plan. The companies involved must be based in the Metro North Region. We are specifically looking for members to become involved in efforts relating to information technology, life sciences, and healthcare.

Linda then reminded members to please complete the online Conflict of Interest training (if they haven't already) and to send a copy of their certificate of completion to her at lbass@mnreb.org.

Paul Richard and the board then congratulated staff and Linda for their successes within the past year.

Paul then introduced Lance Hartford, who is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation (MassBioEd) and is responsible for promoting and delivering quality biotechnology educational experiences in schools, the workplace, and in the community. Mass Bio is the business association for MA that is focused on biotechnology, and has over 600 MA-based members. MassBioEd, which focuses on professional development in the life sciences, was created to address long-term workforce issues. Lance gave a presentation on Employment Demand in the Life Sciences, followed by a lively question and answer session.

Paul then introduced Susan Buckey, who serves as Project Manager of the Skilled Careers in Life Sciences (SCILS) Initiative for the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), where she works with un- and underemployed residents, staff at career centers and colleges and universities, as well as leaders in the healthcare and life sciences industries. Susan provided an overview of the SCILS Initiative, which was established to train Massachusetts residents for jobs in the growing industries of healthcare and biotechnology. SCILS Initiative partners include the MA Life Science Center, Boston University, Quincy College, UMass Boston, and career centers throughout the SCILS region – which includes Boston, Metro North, Metro South/West, and the South Shore.

Other Announcements

The Metro North REB will be hosting the WIB Association Holiday Meeting, December 17, 1:00-3:00, at the Sheraton Commander in Cambridge. All members are welcome to attend. City Manager Rich Rossi, Cambridge Mayor Henrietta Davis, and Chair Joanna Dowling will speak about Metro North REB activities and successes. Author Gary Beach will give the keynote address.

There will be a Healthcare Payment Reform Presentation at Mass Bay Community College on December 12, 9:30-11:30. Jessica LaRochelle from Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, who spoke at the June REB meeting, will be presenting, along with two others.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next REB meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 19, 2014.