MASS WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION
ONE SYSTEM – ONE VOICE

Massachusetts Workforce Association
Governance Committee Meeting Notes

Thursday, February 10, 2022

In attendance: Maddrey Goode, Shannon Norton, Stan Usovicz, Tonja Mettlach, and Raija Vaisanen

Board Member Updates/Recruitment

- Joe Peters has resigned. MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board has nominated Vera Sostre to take his place. Tonja/Raija meeting with Vera next week.
- Question on nominating elected officials/town administrators (local workforce CEO)
    - Typically there is not a lot of time for these types of officials to do this, but if they are willing and are interested there is no reason why not. Stan would be happy to be part of the conversation.
- Need to prioritize diversity.
- Community action recruitment? These agencies are great partners so it could be a good idea to have someone from a CAA on the board.
- Shannon suggested an individual up in Lowell. She will reach out and connect Tonja and Raija.

2022 Annual Meeting

- A question was put before the committee about an in-person vs. virtual annual meeting. Tonja mentioned that last year we saw our numbers drop slightly with our virtual offering and are worried if we did it virtual again we would see even more drop off.
- The committee was in agreement to host an in person meeting. MWA will follow all local public health guidance. We will look to host it in the Berkshires (was supposed to be there in 2020 when we had to cancel the meeting). Will also look at dates in June, preferably the second week.
- There was a question to explore a hybrid option especially for speakers who might not want to travel to MA.

New Administration Visioning/MWA Strategic Plan

- Given that Governor Baker has announced he is not running for reelection, there will be a new administration after November, including a new Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development. As such, MWA wants to undergo a process to develop a strategic vision and recommendations for a new administration. We feel this can also lead our association's next strategic plan.
- Tonja/Raija plan to meet with a few consultants to get a sense of the costs for this type of undertaking and will look at MWA's budget and report back. Ideally this would play out over the next few months, with part of the discussion occurring at the annual meeting. This

would put MWA in a great place to have our recommendations prepared and agreed upon by the members by early summer. This would be separate from any campaign education or forums MWA might participate in.

March Board Meeting

- Tonja and Raija were brainstorming a potential guest for the MWA March board meeting. We were thinking that Raija and Anne from Boston Indicators (housed at The Boston Foundation) could present on "What's Up with the MA Labor Market?".
- The committee was in agreement that this topic could be good so Raija will reach out to Anne to coordinate.

Participant Feedback on Growing Equity Session 1 and NYATEP Mental Health Training

- So far, feedback has been quite positive for both.
- Maddrey suggested that we report on the DEI webinar series and the feedback we receive at the Annual Meeting.
- Raija also shared that we are making some MASSCAP training slots available to members as well.

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Tuesday, May 11, 2022

In attendance: Maddrey Goode, Shannon Norton, Valerie Sutton, Tonja Mettlach, and Raija Vaisanen

Board Member Updates:

- Tonja updated the committee that Vera Sostre would be joining the board at the June board meeting based on the recommendation of the Governance committee to have Vera join the board for a 3 year term. She will be replacing Ray Wrobel who will be terming off.
- Tonja discussed the board chair transition and Stan's request to stay on the board but give another member the opportunity to lead the MWA's Board.
- The committee talked about the importance of diversity in the leadership positions of the board and the need to give some newer board members more time on the board before asking them into chair/vice-chair positions. Valerie shared what they did in Metro North when she agreed to Chair their board for just 2 years as newer board members came on the board.
- Tonja to talk to Stan about potential options as we think about transitioning to a new chairperson. Tonja reminded the committee that the chair had to be from the private sector which limits which current board members can take on this role.
- Tonja also shared that this summer MWA will plan on holding another summer onboarding session for new board members and will pair it with a member luncheon like we did last summer.

2022 Annual Meeting

- Tonja and Raija discussed the upcoming in-person annual meeting and asked for feedback from members in terms of what public health measures they are seeing given the increase in cases.
- Valerie, Shannon and Maddrey shared what their organizations are currently doing.
- Tonja and Raija then shared more about the agenda for the annual meeting and the visioning session we are planning.

MWA Strategic Plan

- MWA will need to undertake another strategic plan and will need to hire a consultant to help us in the work. We first need to do some cost research to better understand our budget for this work.
- Valerie shared that Metro North worked with a pro bono group out of the Harvard Business School - if MWA is interested there is an application to fill out. While getting a business perspective is useful, there is some benefit from using a consultant who is familiar with workforce development.

MWA Program Participation Diversity

- Raija led a discussion with the committee on whether MWA should be collecting gender and race/ethnicity data on webinar and program registration forms to understand who our programs are reaching.
- Committee thought it made sense as long as we are clear how we will use the data and we are transparent about that when we ask.

MASS WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION
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Wednesday, September 7, 2022

In attendance: Maddrey Goode, Shannon Norton, Valerie Sutton, Paul Ventresca, Tonja Mettlach, and Raija Vaisanen

Board Orientation Recap

- Welcomed Bobby Tugbiyele and Vera Sostre to the board. Maddrey and Mary Sarris joined our orientation to offer background and context.
- Shared binders with materials about MWA committees, policy agenda, financials, etc.
- Maddrey shared that the new board members seemed really engaged and excited to join.
- Recruitment for future members will begin again soon.

Member Survey Highlights

- Sent out the member survey in August, received 30 responses out of 61 individuals emailed. A pretty good response rate.
- Overall satisfaction has been pretty consistent. Over 90% are either satisfied or extremely satisfied with membership.
- Asked questions about services:
    - Councils are really popular
    - Meetings with the state are really popular
    - Webinars and newsletters are well received as well.
- Asked questions about potential future services:
    - A lot of interest on recruiting and training workforce
    - Continued interest in research
- Also asked questions really focused on our strategic plan
    - Top challenges around staffing
    - Finding training providers
    - Funding stability and flexibility
    - relationship and responsibilities with DUA
    - Access to data
    - Convening and equity
    - Service delivery modernization - Paul shared that we need to do a more focused meeting or convening on this. Tonja suggested maybe a lunch and learn peer learning opportunity, maybe inviting another state to join and share.

Strategic Planning Process

- Nancy Snyder agreed to work with the association again. She was also part of the original MWA strategic plan process.
- We'd like to use the Governance Committee as an Ad-Hoc Strategic Plan Committee during this process.
- To keep the budget reasonable, Tonja and Raija will do a lot of leg work with Nancy focusing on facilitation and information gathering/synthesis.
- Member Survey asked for external stakeholder ideas at both the regional/local level and national level. We'll use these suggestions in our process.

Notes:

What do Tonja/Raija do now that you would never want them to stop doing?

- Valerie - Advocacy work and reports are very informative. That is something that she is further removed from and so it is helpful to have us out there promoting the work and bringing it back to us.
- Maddrey - data collection, persistent issue and will be helpful for the future of the system.
- Louise - Pulling together everyone and communication capacity is very strong. Has been involved with prior versions of the association . Opportunity to get together and speak out on issues. Responsiveness is very helpful and supportive.
- Bobby - Communicating, data, etc. is very helpful for someone who is relatively new. Better understanding of the issues, and where the energy needs to be for advocacy. Also new member orientation was very helpful - either quarterly or bi-annually.
- Shannon - agree with everything that has
- Joe - New to the workforce association and the ability to get a lot of information and timely, very concise. The way they disseminate information is very helpful.
- LeeAnn - Helping the directors to get messaging together when talking to DCS. Think through how to share what we are thinking. The newsletter that comes out is a great way to share successes. Always forward the email to full staff.
- Dave - Listen. They go out of their way to learn the realities of the system so they can help best represent us. Worry about them burning out. And the research they do is very helpful.

Are there activities that you would like to see increased if there was more capacity?

- Joe - More in person meetings.
- LeeAnn - More training opportunities for the field
- Maddrey - People business so need to expand membership. Big divide around the DEI work with DCS and front line staff.
- Comm Corp is overreaching at this point.
- Common conversation we seem to have about Comm Corp

Three strategies are lead, advocate, and convene - how would you prioritize and allocate resources?

- Maddrey - first reaction was ⅓, ⅓, ⅓. But then some of it is seasonality around what you do.
- Regional voice should be under both lead and advocate. Needs to be fluid and reviewed based on the time of year and how we are operating.

- Dave - started with ⅓; ⅓; ⅓ but then lean towards 40, 40, 20 with 20 for convene. There is a lot of minutia work in convening and if we could get a third person that might help.
- Valerie - a lot of minutia work since it is us two. Where do they lead and where can the board assist. How can you make this easier on them to focus on the more important areas.

Where can MWA be a leader around DEI in the core strategies and beyond?

- Lead might need more information.
- DEI - real issues with the state and the work they are doing. Also a lack of data. Would like to see more data on senior leadership and is it reflective of who we serve. The perceptions of the career center and who they serve could be problematic long term.
- Dave - agree with Maddrey. Additional feedback - it would be good to just collect and unify all the separate DEI efforts.
- Joe - serve on two separate DEI committees for the city. Can't imagine what that is like across the Commonwealth.
- Maddrey – the system doesn't pass the eye test (senior leadership of color).

Opportunities to take advantage of over the next 3 years

- Take advantage of the economy (employers cannot afford to bring on payroll employees) and sell employers on apprenticeship/OJT. Take advantage of the opportunity to build the brand.
- Opportunity will be lost if all the money goes to Comm Corp. Position MWA as the lead not DCS or Comm Corp.
- How do we look at attracting philanthropic money to allow the system to be less reliant on Comm Corp?
- Expand what we call the workforce system. There are at least 5 other secretariats that do workforce development and we are missing an opportunity through membership.
- Bobby - State organization but one of the reasons that drove him to get involved was how to tie things together at a local level. How to get more buy in from local assets, public/private partnerships, etc. Break down silos that previously existed.

Biggest challenges in the next 3 years

- Dave - Staff capacity
- Joe
    - Maximizing staff
    - How do we stay relevant and prevalent in a changing economy.
    - Reining in Comm Corp

- Maddrey - overall procurement process for career centers and succession management. Also merit staff issues.

Three Years from Now - what would you like to point to for Association's successes?

- Maddrey - national recognition
- Bobby - making some progress in data and systems improvement. Being able to do a year over year review of where we were and where we've gone.
- Lee Ann - Getting us out of the hamster in the wheel mode. More of the system making progress and being outfront rather than reacting.
- Dave - benchmarks of membership and budget growth. A more unified system would be great.

Membership:

Is the Association the MassHire association or does it

- Maddrey - Under convene it has a larger group but under the other two it is very focused on MassHire.

What are the strategic growth opportunities the Association should pursue?

- Maddrey - WSG conference is great. Could we expand our annual meeting to a larger group? Share research. Bring more local flavor. Way to think about best practices and other intersecting issues (like housing and transportation).
- LeeAnn - wanted more CBOs that also do workforce development, couldn't CBOs have access to training/peer to peer learning opportunities? Discount to members and full price for non-members?
- Shannon - MASSCAP association that does a lot of good trainings. Look at that as a model.
- Dave - also think there is room for a little research to really identify where the state is spending money on workforce development and then to bring those leaders together to talk about how to align, eliminate duplication, better use our resources.
- Look at providing discounted prices for members and higher prices for non-members.

Wrap up

- Have to be able to explain what we've done with the money that the system has received.
- Dave - a more unified data measurement process. Continue to push the envelope.
- Bobby - Challenging mindsets. Systems and institutions are run by people. The reality is humans get in their own way. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.