



**HC Media Studio 101
Harbor Place
2 Merrimack Street
Haverhill, MA 01830**

QUARTERLY MEETING

**Minutes
Tuesday, January 30, 2018
7:30 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joseph Bevilacqua, Francisco Brea, Christian Brennan, Eileen Burns, Karen Conard, Ron Contrado, Evelyn Friedman, Lane Glenn, Andrew Herlihy, Supt. Maureen Lynch, Joselyn Marte, Peter Matthews, Carol Riemer, Fred Shaheen, Abel Vargas, Bob Westcott, Cal Williams, Juan Yopez

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Edward Bartkiewicz, Rosa Muñoz, Michael Fiato, Jeff Linehan, Marianne Paley-Nadel, Kathryn Sweeney, Stanley Usovich, Ellen Weinhold, John Silva

GUESTS PRESENT:

George Moriarty, Linda Rohrer, Rachel Kaprielian, Ron Trombley, Stephanie Guyotte, Nate Robertson

STAFF PRESENT:

Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Matthias Bohler, Brian Norris, Corina Ruiz

1. Call to Order

A quorum being present, Peter Matthews called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Peter Matthews welcomed everyone.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 24, 2017

Chairman Matthews asked for a motion on the minutes of the October 24, 2017 board meeting.

Motion by Bob Wescott to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2017 meeting as submitted. Lane Glenn seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Matthews introduced the guest speaker, Rachel Kaprielian.

4. Invited Guest Speaker: Rachel Kaprielian, U.S. Government Relations at McDonald's Corporation and former Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development

Rachel said she is working for McDonalds, a company that has soul and that cares for its employees. She talked about *Archways to Opportunity* which is McDonald's overarching educational and workforce development strategy. Their vision is to lead the food industry by promoting workforce education to both support their business and to ensure their employees' success and advancement.

McDonalds provides many people with their first job. Its *Archways to Opportunity* helps McDonald's employees at their points of need. Its four principal components are:

- English Under the Arches
- Earning a High School Diploma through Career Online High School
- Earning a College Degree with tuition assistance and getting ACE transcripts
- Free Education Advising

Rachel said that McDonalds has increased access to education for 20,400 people.

Cal Williams said that corporate America keeps secret their tuition reimbursement activities and he commended Ms. Kaprielian for bringing attention to it. Corporations should help ensure and make clear that opportunities do exist. He applauded McDonald's for their ESL classes. Rachel added that there are also many opportunities for people with disabilities and criminal records.

To view the Archways to Opportunity PowerPoint presentation, click here: [McDonald's Archways to Opportunity](#).

5. Report of Chair

My remarks today are an update on Regionalization in Massachusetts - the topic Under-Secretary Marina Z discussed at our October Board meeting. State guidance on the issue can be found on a sheet in your packet for today's meeting. Regionalization does not mean that Massachusetts' existing sixteen (16) WIBs or Workforce Development Boards will be reduced to seven. It does mean that some of the funding decisions made by Governor Baker's Workforce Cabinet – the entity comprised of the Labor, Economic Development, and Higher Education Secretaries, will be partially informed by group discussions in seven regions.

Our regional planning groups included people from private for and non-profit businesses, public higher education, and public workforce and economic development. Several MVWIB members went to the meetings. John Lavoie, Karen Conard, Juan Yepez, Bob Wescott, Ron Contrado, Lane Glenn and I went to the first one at Greater Lawrence Technical High School almost a year ago. Sister Eileen joined the group several months ago. We were about a third of the regional planning group with the other two-thirds coming from the North Shore and Greater Lowell.

Our joint draft blueprint will be soon be posted on the MVWIB website. It will contain a link to a comment site at the Northshore WIB. All Board members and the general public are invited to comment on the blueprint when it's posted.

The Regionalization planning group discussed many issues. In total, 31 companies were directly engaged in the process. An additional 500 Greater Lawrence and North Shore companies provided input via surveys conducted over the last year or two. We learned the following:

In Northeastern Massachusetts, the Health Care and Social Assistance sector is the largest and fastest growing one with over 90,000 jobs in 2017. Growth is projected to continue through at least 2022. Government is the next largest employment sector with nearly 62,500 jobs in 2017. Please consider that Health Care, Social Assistance, and Government rely on tax dollars. If significant growth in our economy does not happen as a result of the recent tax cut, funding for government, health and social assistance will only be sustained by increasing taxes or the deficit and national debt.

Manufacturing is Northeast Massachusetts third largest job sector. It has nearly 54,000 jobs. Although the number of manufacturing jobs is declining, demand for manufacturing workers is high because many sector employees are retiring. Sixty- and Fifty- somethings are the last group of people who went into manufacturing. Fewer thirty- and forty-somethings are in it because they were told that manufacturing was a dead end. You may also remember hearing people saying that globalization would make the U.S. the world's banker and that we didn't need to have manufacturing in this country, things could be made more cheaply abroad.

Well, that was partially true but that perspective failed to realize that not everyone wants to be or can be a banker or financier, where academic requirements are high. Some people prefer and do much better working with mechanical things, with people, or in the trades.

Retail is fourth with nearly 50,000 jobs. But technology is taking its toll there. Amazon now has a market cap larger than Walmart, Target, Macy's and Bloomingdale's combined. Brick and mortar stores will thrive only if they have an Amazon-like presence in the Internet. The delivery of items will increase, but maybe via drones or driverless cars.

The top six area job sectors are currently rounded out by Construction and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services which respectively have 26,000 and 30,000 jobs. Construction saw significant growth over the last five years but only after a large post-2008 contraction. Growth is projected to slow down to 6% over the next five years. That projection seems very optimistic to me. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services has shown relatively steady job numbers with no substantial growth or decline. Both industries have high earnings per job, and help support other economic sectors.

Overall, the economy has seen a 6% growth in jobs over the last five years (26,790 new jobs added) and is projected to continue to grow by another 3% through 2022. But technology, globalization and deficits make our economy very, very changeable. Northeast Massachusetts manufacturing is also very much part of the U.S. military-industrial complex. Governmental budget cuts and increases greatly effect it.

Technology will eliminate and create an unknown number of jobs over the next four or five years. Deputy Secretary Jennifer James, who spoke to us a few years ago, recently stated that we now do well if we can accurately see forward just a couple of years.

Human population growth or decline are much easier to calculate and predict. Since 2012, the Northeast Region population increased by 3.9%, or about 38,000 residents. Gains are projected to continue, with the regional population growing by 26,000 over the next five years. This will represent a total increase of 5.5% over 10 years. Our growth is driven more by exorbitant Boston home and rental costs than by immigration or the birthrate.

The age groups with the largest projected increase are 70 to 79, and 25-29 year olds. The number of people in their seventies will increase by about 29%. Young people in their late 20's will only increase by 13%. They'll live around here, likely in one of our cities, rather than closer to Boston. More seventy-somethings means that the healthcare, and entry level jobs like home health aides, will increase. The 45-54 age group is projected to decline by about 12% or by nearly 18,000 residents.

Believe it or not, Northeastern Massachusetts has slightly below average racial diversity compared to other parts of the State. Over 70% of the population identifies as White, Non-Hispanic. The next largest cohort - 13.4% - identify as White, Hispanic and 6.6% identify as Asian.

Over the next five years, the number of people identifying as White, Hispanic is projected to increase by 12% or by nearly 17,000 people. The number of people identifying as Asian and Black Non-Hispanic, are projected to increase by 12% and 10%, respectively, adding nearly 12,000 residents to our total.

Current area challenges include low unemployment, slowed transportation, and decreases in privately funded job training. Businesses across all sectors are currently competing for labor. People available to work often have insufficient skills for available jobs. Anyone who's driven during rush hour or who looks for a bus in the evening knows we have transportation issues. Employer participation in employee training efforts has been declining for various reasons and for many years. Private training resources are increasingly scarce. Training is more and more often paid for by Federal and State entities who provide a variety of grants and such. We at the MVWIB are one of them. But public entities find it more and more difficult to fill the gap left by decreased private employer training because more and more public money is being taken up by entitlements and healthcare. WIA and WIOA funding for Massachusetts has been cut by about 50% over the past ten years.

On the plus side, we have excellent colleges and we work well together. We have a successful partnership model in the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium. For several years, NAMC has coordinated manufacturing- related State funded workforce, economic development and higher education resources to prepare entry-level workers for jobs in advanced manufacturing. The flip side of not having enough employees is that our companies are growing enough to need them. Our current situation is an opportunity for the MVWIB and our partners to help employers continue to adapt their hiring, training, and retraining practices. Continuous demographic and technological shifts may make our discussions here at the MVWIB more and more valuable and necessary.

I again remind members to check the Northeast Massachusetts Regionalization Blueprint when it's issued. It will expand on my remarks but is still very much a work in progress.

6. Presentations by Ron Trombly of the Greater Haverhill Foundation and Stephanie Guyotte of UMass Lowell iHub

Ron Trombly began by welcoming everyone on behalf of the Harbor Place ownership team, to the first development phase of Haverhill's new Merrimack street downtown water front district which is the last navigable stop on the Merrimack River.

Many people don't realize that, from here, in a 30 or 40 foot power boat, you can be on the Atlantic Ocean in less than an hour. That trip was recently made much easier by completing a bathometric sounding project over the last eight miles of the river. Now you can now travel the 19 miles from the Atlantic to downtown Haverhill using your boat's GPS and stay in safe deep water channels all the way.

As we all know, water front property is gold and downtown Haverhill is blessed with an abundance of outstanding water front development site opportunities on both sides of the beautiful Merrimack River. What is happening in Haverhill's downtown waterfront today is really just a recapturing of the roll that the Merrimack River played in commercial and recreational activity back in the 1800's and in the early 20th Century.

The Harbor Place development that you're visiting today is a mixed use development consisting of a five story building with 58,000 sf of first class office and retail space. There's 108,000 sf in the building next door, which houses eighty beautiful new residential apartments and 13,000 sf of the first floor available for restaurant/retail space. There's also a private 145 car parking garage located below this building. The plaza and adjacent building have elevators to take you from parking directly up to your office or residence.

Ron said that what you see here today is a major step forward toward Haverhill's downtown waterfront renaissance. Combined with the new public riverfront board walk, they represent a total private and public investment in excess of \$70 million dollars.

Harbor Place development could not have happened without a total team effort in terms of funding and permitting support from state and local officials, along with critical pre-construction lease and purchase commitments made by HC Media. The beautiful space we are in is also used by UMass Lowell. UMass has a incredible new downtown Haverhill presence in this building 2nd/3rd floors. They are offering under-graduate and post-graduate courses as well as UML's exciting new Innovation Hub. Lastly, Pentucket Bank's is demonstrating its commitment to expand its downtown presence by locating a beautiful new corporate headquarters on Harbor Place's 4th floor.

Ron gave a special welcome to everyone present. He said that if anyone knows of any companies that may be seeking some outstanding high impact office space with unique customized buildouts, to send them his way. He'd love to provide a private tour of their last available 5th floor penthouse space.

Stephanie Guyotte introduced herself. UMass Lowell offers classes and has the iHub on the 3rd floor. The iHub offers dedicated offices and desks. It also offers shared co-working space, conference

rooms w/ AV, meeting and event space and a prototyping and fabrication lab. Stephanie said that anyone is welcomed to a tour after the meeting.

7. Reports of Committee Chairs

Peter called on Juan Yepez to give the Planning Committee report.

- *Planning Committee*

Chairman Yepez said that the Labor Exchange and WIOA Performance Summary are in your packet. Although unemployment is at a historical low, our overall planned numbers will end up only slightly below what we planned. Lawrence UI staff are moreover serving more customers than any other Massachusetts career center but one, and that one is the State UI center near Government Center in Boston.

We need to accelerate job placements and the number of new employers served. Those numbers will increase during the second half of the year. Although still located at NECC's suburban Haverhill campus, Haverhill numbers are already increasing, in part because VWCC hired a part-time workshop facilitator to work at the site. VWCC customers are also accessing some of the workshops offered by NECC.

When we relocate to downtown Haverhill, they'll increase even further. But the move to downtown has been postponed for a while so that things can settle down at both career centers. Moving to downtown Haverhill is ideal but we're doing better at our current location.

After so many months of waiting that we had almost given up hope, we've received a Federal Polartec National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG), formerly called a National Emergency Grant or NEG. We've received a contract that will ultimately total over a half million dollars. State Rapid Response funds have been requested to cover costs incurred before the contract funding was received but we're still waiting for that one. That one represents about \$200K.

As you can see by the grant update list, MVWIB has successfully applied for many grants this fiscal year. Much of that success is due to Susan Almono, who wrote many of them, and to the excellent opinion that many State agencies have of the MVWIB under Rafael Abislaiman's leadership. Because money is getting increasingly short, it's a very competitive environment and the sixteen Massachusetts WIBs are competing with each other and with other entities.

For example, MVWIB was only one of five regions to receive a YouthWorks year-round contract. As Cal will elaborate, we will be working with Haverhill High School to certify 20 students in CompTIA A+. We also received a Workforce Competitive Training Fund 'Earn and Learn' contract to ameliorate some of the cliff effects people feel when they leave Public Assistance. Only five programs were funded statewide and scores of applications were submitted. For example, a total of four agencies submitted proposals from the City of Lawrence alone. We proposed to help folks who are receiving Head Start services for their children. Parents will be trained for entry-level jobs in health care while at the same helping to reduce benefit reductions immediately after work begins/

MVWIB has also been working closely with City of Lawrence economic development, specifically with Board member Abel Vargas, on various job fairs. As part of this effort, for example, a local contractor

will be receiving a demolition contract and another building will be constructing 102 housing units. We hope to help provide local people with jobs in this project. MVWIB has been advocating hiring local people for construction-related work for several years now.

The City of Lawrence, the Career Center Director, VWCC Business Service Representatives, and its Veterans unit also recently organized a Veterans Federal Job Opportunities Event and Dinner. About 40 veterans attended. Former MVWIB member and current MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Secretary, Rosalin Acosta, spoke at the event and presented VWCC with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bronze Award for Outreach and Collaboration in Support of Veteran Job Seekers. Five employers also spoke about their companies and their job application processes.

VWCC is also currently serving hurricane impacted individuals from Puerto Rico. VWCC services occur at the career center and onsite at DTA, also known as the Welfare office. According to State data, most hurricane Maria effected Puerto Ricans are going to Holyoke. The VWCC is one of the few centers that has Spanish speaking staff so some are coming here.

Our Bridging the Opportunity or BOG activities are having recruitment problems. All of our recruits come from the MA Department of Youth Services but DYS staff are having difficulties identifying formerly delinquent youth who are ready for job training and jobs. These new problems likely derive at least in part from increased gang activity and the opioid crisis. Board member Andrew Herlihy has confirmed that there's been a spike in Haverhill gang activity. Last year we helped more kids from Haverhill than from Lawrence because Lawrence gang activity was even more problematic.

We have some very good news. VWCC, MVWIB and NAMC successfully recruited to again have advanced manufacturing CNC operator training at Greater Lawrence Technical School. Believe me, it's not easy to get kids interested in manufacturing after decades of people saying that it's a dirty and dying industry. A lot of work was done at VWCC on outreach and their tireless efforts paid off.

The VWCC director is working on improving customer flow in compliance with NECC's successful proposal to become our career center operator. She also received staff input and reached out to other career centers for their best practices. Staff will be reorganized into Industry Sector Teams by mid- to late-February. The Career Center Director is doing an excellent job under difficult circumstances. Thankfully, our elevator is now working for customer and staff use. Lawrence public school's elevator is now shut down for replacement so their customers and staff are now using ours. Both the WIB and staff are taking security steps to address the flow of unknown customers, 99.99% are very honest people. But that one hundredth of one percent is always tricky.

The Career Center Director is also dealing with unscheduled staffing reductions due to NECC campus closures when their unions demand that all NECC union staff stay home. The VWCC Director is optimistically coping with the situation by creating staff skeleton crews. The MVWIB Executive and Deputy Directors do not consider this a good long-term solution, in part because there is another non-NECC State union on site and their membership is getting an inordinate work load whenever NECC union members are absent. Bilingual capacity also mostly resides in NECC staff and many of our customers speak little or no English. We are happy to report that MVWIB member, NECC President Lane Glenn, is working to address the union member attendance issue.

Chairman Matthews spoke about Regionalization and how MVWIB has been ahead of current efforts with our multi-WIB advanced manufacturing training program. Manufacturing employment numbers may go down but there are plenty of employment opportunities because of the average age of its current employees. There was a generation that didn't work in manufacturing, about 25-45 year olds, so we now find ourselves looking for replacements for older workers who are retiring. Although the number of workers in manufacturing may continue going down, it still pays the highest average wages and is the biggest money generator in the Merrimack Valley. It is critical for us to sustain it.

- ***Youth Committee***

Chairman Williams said that the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) and ValleyWorks Career Center (VWCC) partnered with Haverhill High School (HHS) for an 'IT Career Accelerator' YouthWorks Year-Round 2017/18 program. It boosts HHS's Information Technology Chapter 74 Career Technical Education by combining occupational and soft skills training with work-related experience in entry-level Information Technology (IT) jobs. Eighteen low income students will benefit from this program.

Two student cohorts of about nine each will participate in the IT Career Accelerator curriculum from November 2017 until May 2018. All will receive eighty (80) hours of training to prepare for CompTIA A+ certification exams. Students will also receive twenty (20) hours of related job readiness /career exploration competency-based workshops using the Signal Success curriculum.

CompTIA A+ training was selected since it builds on the knowledge and skills students have already gained in their high school classes, and because it results in a credential that will boost their marketability. This program will motivate youth to develop their own pathways to independence while remaining attached to education and work. It will help increase the chance of their future professional success. Employer involvement, and connections to established MVWIB/VWCC youth programming such as Connecting Activities and summer YouthWorks, will enhance effectiveness.

October was National Manufacturing Month. In preparation for youth activities. Brian Norris, Director of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC), met with the Principal, Administrative staff and Guidance Counselors at Lawrence High School. He presented a Power Point presentation about manufacturing in the region, including examples of specific industry sectors and companies present in and near Lawrence. The guidance counselors were surprised about the variety of job and career opportunities available in manufacturing firms and asked questions about the skills sets and academic training valued by manufacturers.

Required foundational skills include basic math through fractions and percentages – with higher math skills for better jobs, communications, computer skills, problem solving, teamwork, and reliability. The group agreed that graduates from the school would be well equipped in these skills. If students were more exposed to the opportunities available in manufacturing, more of them might consider seeking careers in that job sector.

After the meeting, Brian accompanied a group of Lawrence High School students on a tour of Straumann, an advanced, precision machining company in Andover. MVWIB/VWCC Youth Workforce staff worked closely with NAMC staff throughout manufacturing month and later. We will continue to

coordinate activities by promoting manufacturing via AMP It Up! Activities and company tours. We have already accomplished the following:

- Haverhill High School visited CASA Systems
- Lawrence Learning Center students visited Straumann
- Lawrence International Academy visited Landmark Finishing

Such events allow students to learn about real live manufacturing workplaces. They get some sense of the opportunities it provides and helps them explore related career pathways. Students get a sense of daily workplace activities. Many ask questions about actual jobs, career ladders, and salaries.

Exposing high school students to advanced manufacturing, encourages them to continue and succeed with their education. Some learn that they can work part-time while in post-secondary training and are more willing to take the leap into college. Many will seek employment in this field and will have a head start because they'll at least briefly meet HR folks at manufacturing companies.

Staff will continue to visit local high schools to help their students' link with employers. Workplace visits help reinforce the connection between learning and work. We are currently looking for companies interested in supporting internships and youth mentoring. Please let Cristy Gomez know if you would like more information on the program.

In closing, Cal informed the board that the MVWIB successfully applied for a fourth AMP it up! grant. This small grant will market manufacturing to youth and helps us in our efforts to deepen awareness of advanced manufacturing careers among teachers and students in the public schools.

- ***Nominating Committee***

No nominating report.

- ***Finance Report***

No finance report.

8. Report of Executive Director

Rafael said that he wants to make clear that the difficulty we are having recruiting youth is at least in part because we are not dealing with just average youth. They are instead youth coming from the Department of Youth Services (DYS), which means they have a documented delinquency incident that made them court involved.

Lawrence's receiver, Jeff Riley, will become the next Mass Commissioner of Education and that is reflective of the work he has done in the city. Lawrence has risen more than 40 slots in statewide MCAS scores. It is no longer in the bottom 10% of high school academic and high school graduation rates. Positive things are happening and we shouldn't only focus on the negative.

Unfortunately, DYS kids are largely the product of poverty and of the social and ethical confusion that we currently experiencing in this country. In many cases they were just caught doing things that we may have done as kids. Many of them are making an effort. MVIWB is trying to help parents because we believe family is key to helping youth and we help do good by helping adults find work. The vast majority of people in Mass work and only small pockets of them don't – sometimes because of

disabilities, or one parent households, or bad habits that often took generations to develop and that will take time to change. Rafael said that growing up he had both parents at home and that his father made a very good income. That made a big difference to him but he was also lucky for not getting caught doing some of the things he and friends did.

Rafael re-stated what Peter and Juan said about the VWCC Director. Linda Rohrer is doing an excellent job and he thanked her for her efforts.

Sister Eileen asked how much the increased graduation rates had to do with Dreamers and Rafael said he doesn't know. He believes the principal reason for increased graduation is because there was a real focus on improving education in Lawrence. Receivership created more flexibility that allowed some new teachers who are committed to teaching kids to be hired and some who weren't to be fired. School hours were greatly expanded and administrative costs were reduced. More money went directly into classroom education.

Cal said the gang activity in Lawrence and Haverhill is disturbing and asked if any work is being done with the police department to see if work related jobs can be offered. Rafael said Susan and Matthias have an ongoing dialogue primarily with probation department staff because we cannot help kids going in to the custodial system but can help those coming out of it. We were funded to create a new program that will take a few of those kids and advise them on how to get jobs and maybe a little bit of job training. We haven't spoken much to the police. The problems in Haverhill and Lawrence are national problems and a lot of work is being done to address them. We hope to help with the growing opioid issue.

Francisco said that going back to the discussion about union issues, he reminded the board that they have labor participation on it. If help is needed, Mass AFL-CIO is available to help. Rafael thanked Francisco and said VWCC has three unions. One of the unions is providing coverage when the other two are out. He provided example of when the NECC Haverhill campus closed due to an electrical problem and VWCC staff in Lawrence were encouraged to leave although there was no electrical issue there. Chris Brennan asked if that is in the contract and Rafael said he didn't know. Rafael added that NECC administration wants to address the issue. It is interested in finding solutions and is working to address the problem.

Chris said that in Juan's previous remarks he made mention of the VWCC staff as union members. They are NECC employees and there should be a protocol about how to resolve issues. Juan said they are working with Dr. Glenn and they hope it's a language interpretation issue that can be addressed. Juan gave the example of a snow day in which community colleges closed and VWCC employees had the day off while City and other State employees worked. Chris said he doesn't think it's a union issue but more of a contractual issue which should be an easy fix.

9. Other Business

No other business.

10. Adjournment

Chairman Matthews said that he was soon retiring as President and CEO of the Merrimack Valley Credit Union and that this would be his last board meeting. He stated that it had been a privilege to

serve on the MVWIB for the past twelve years and as Chair for the past four years. The MVWIB has made great strides in workforce investment, helping to raise the standard of living for many residents that live here. It has been inspiring to see elected officials, civic leaders and business executives coming together to give back to the community. He stated that he had been very fortunate to work with many wonderful and talented colleagues like many of you here today, Rafael Abislaiman, Fred Carberry, Arthur Chilingirian and the late Mary Kivell who we miss dearly. He stated that personally and professionally, it has been a very rewarding experience serving on this board and I can truly say that I have benefitted more than I have contributed. He also wanted to thank each board member, Mayor Sullivan, Mayor Lantigua and Mayor Rivera for giving him the opportunity to participate. With the transition to NECC as Career Center Operator, the MVWIB is positioned for many years of continued success.

Having no further business Cal Williams made a motion to adjourn and Chris Brennan seconded the motion. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder