

Metro South/West Workforce WIOA Board Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2026

Attended via Zoom: Lisa Kubiak, Chair, John Bogdan, Bob Bower, Patrick Davis, Mark Fegley, Walter Gardner, Ernie Houle, Rev. Lloyd, Sue Medeiros, Kevin O'Connor, Tom O'Rourke, Jason Palitsch, Nick Pavone, David Podell, Laura Reiman, Ashley Terrill, Chris Vericker, Ken Webster

Members Absent: Shannon Laingen, Craig Nesta

Others: Metro South/West Workforce Board staff: Henry Bryson, Greg Bunn, Meghan Burke, Zoie Jaklitsch, Louise Meyer, Rute Vales, Carol Wolf; Town of Norwood: Tony Mazucco; Cindy Cedrone, Consultant

Welcome, Introductions

Greg Bunn welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Lisa Kubiak. Lisa introduced the newest board members, Laura Reiman, National Grid and Ashley Terrill, DCS who is replacing Rosemary Alexander.

Approval of October 9, 2025 minutes

Lisa asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 9, 2025. Bob Bower made a motion to approve; John Bogdan seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Audit and Fiscal Systems Monitoring Results

Carol Wolf presented the mid-year financial report, noting that the organization is in a strong position with 63% of funds remaining through December. She highlighted that most grants allow for carryover, and approximately \$6.5 million is left for the second half of FY26. The organization is on track to meet several benchmarks, including WIOA training and youth out-of-school spending. Carol also discussed the recent DCS fiscal certification process, where the organization was fully certified with no conditions and all standards met. The FY25 audit is complete with very minor findings and will be submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse by March. It will be available to board members.

Youth Connections Funding Challenges/Updates

Meghan Burke addressed funding challenges for the Youth Connections program, noting a significant cut in state funding for FY27, from \$1.1 million to \$662,000, and discussed potential changes to the employer match component of the program. She explained that YouthWorks is a work experience program for youth aged 14 to 25, while Connecting Activities focuses on in-school services and partnerships with schools. She outlined various funding strategies to address budget cuts, including a Mass Clean Energy Center planning grant, potential collaboration with the Department of Youth Services and Commonwealth Corporation, and expansion of partnerships with Boston Children's Hospital for Teen Mental Health First Aid Training. Meghan emphasized the importance of maintaining service delivery quality and requested board members' support in engaging employers financially and advocating on behalf of the organization.

Tricia Lucier reported on the WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) youth program, which provides federal funding for intensive services to eligible youth aged 17-24. She explained that the program currently operates with \$1.7 million and serves 179 young adults, with plans to

expand to over 200 by June. The funding is prescriptive, requiring 75% to be spent on out-of-school youth and 20% on work experience activities. Tricia highlighted challenges, including potential level funding and a proposed increase in the work experience requirement to 40%. She emphasized the importance of support services, such as providing transportation and tools, to help young adults succeed in training programs and enter unions. The program must meet performance requirements and provide 12 months of follow-up support after training.

The board discussed the success of Tricia and Meghan's work supporting young people in the region, highlighting the importance of patience and dedication in entering the building trades. Greg proposed holding the April board meeting at the training facility, which Bob Bower and Walter Gardner agreed to arrange. Greg also shared positive news about FY27 WIOA funding, which was level-funded for youth programs, providing stability for the organization and avoiding potential layoffs in the youth program. Laura Reiman suggested offering employer sponsorships at fundraising events.

AI Advisory Committee Updates

Greg provided an update on the AI advisory committee, highlighting its recent formation. The three broad goals are: a. develop Board/Career Center policies; b. examine potential job displacement and reskilling needs c. identify AI relevant training content and providers. The committee aims to develop policies on AI use, predict industry impacts, and establish training provider frameworks. Greg shared the committee's progress in analyzing staff and faculty roles at the Career Center with plans to expand to management and oversight roles.

Next Steps

Greg will send information about the MA Workforce Board Association's annual meeting to be held April 9 at Patriot Place and will include a panel on youth career education.

In absence of the Chair, Ernie Houle asked for a motion to adjourn. Chris Vericker made a motion, Walter Gardner seconded. The meeting was adjourned.