



Anika Van Eaton, Managing
Trustee
Vickie Choitz, Managing Trustee

City of Somerville Job Creation & Retention Trust Monthly Meeting

Trustees
Thomas Bent
Silvana Dinka
Jim Hachey
Jacob Luria
Wilfred Mbah
Rachel Nadkarni
Rand Wilson

Meeting Minutes

Location: Hybrid: via Zoom Meeting and in-person at 167-169 Holland St, Somerville
Date: July 16, 2026
Time: 6:30 PM

Attendance

- Trustees: Thomas Bent, Vickie Choitz, Jim Hachey, Jacob Luria, Wilfred Mbah, Rachel Nadkarni, Anika Van Eaton, and Rand Wilson
- Economic Development Staff: William Blackmer

Meeting Minutes

A Van Eaton: Meeting called to order at 6:32pm. Quorum established with 7 trustees in attendance. R Wilson joined after attendance was taken.

W Blackmer delivered house rules about technology.

1. Review and approval of past meeting minutes

a. Vote to approve June 18th meeting minutes

Motion: V Choitz makes motion to approve June 18th meeting minutes. T Bent seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Motion passes by vote of 6-0. A Van Eaton abstained.

2. Review Received and Estimated Linkage Fees for 2026

W Blackmer: The current uncommitted balance sits just above \$2.6M. Since last meeting we have earned interest on the uncommitted balance and we also deducted the funds committed to the Workforce Development Coordinator role from the uncommitted balance. There's approximately \$500,000 we are anticipating from 1 project that is wrapping up. The Trust isn't projected to receive any other funds linkage payments in the next few years.

T Bent: Hasn't the project for the last payment been completed?

R Nadkarni: They've earned a temporary certificate of occupancy (CO) and we are expecting them to make a payment and obtain their full CO in the next few weeks.

3. Updates on Active Programs and Upcoming Programs

W Blackmer: In line with the votes taken at last month's JCRT meeting, William is working on amendments with Just A Start, Bunker Hill Community College, and the City's Nibble culinary entrepreneurship program. The Youth PACMAN program recently concluded and we can talk about the final report and results from that program in an upcoming meeting, and SCC's Good Municipal Jobs program has recently launched.

T Bent: *Can you share the curriculum being implemented for the Good Municipal Jobs Training Program?*

W Blackmer: *Yes, I can share this for the projects being funded through this initiative.*

R Wilson: *Is there union input into the curriculum from any of the labor organizations that represent City employees?*

W Blackmer: *The projects being funded did have conversations with human resources about vacancies and hiring needs when they were putting together their proposals. I will follow up and encourage the organizations to reconnect with labor unions now that the trainings are up and running.*

R Wilson: *I'd be happy to help with making those connections.*

W Blackmer: *Thanks Rand.*

W Mbah: *There is a balance of funds next to the program that recently concluded. Can you explain this?*

W Blackmer: *Yes, we are processing the final invoice for the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board's Youth PACMAN (pre-apprenticeship construction and maintenance training), but there is approximately \$30,000 that is left unspent from this grant due to not reaching their job placement goal. The grant has already been extended by the Board once before. I am trying to learn a little bit more about the challenges with placing program graduates and any continued supports that are being offered to the participants and will share more about this at next month's meeting. What happens to this remaining balance of funds is a good topic for the Board to discuss next time we meet.*

4. Review draft schedule for upcoming meeting topics and next request for proposals (RFP)

A Van Eaton: *Back in March, we shared this draft schedule of meeting topics and steps leading up to the release of the JCRT's next RFP. So far, we've had a labor market info presentation and also had Mayor Wilson join to present on workforce development priorities. Tonight, we will hear from Jim and Tom about Somerville's Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program and will also have time to reflect on our conversation with the Mayor. Next month, the focus will be on recent meetings that the City's Economic Development team is having with employers. In September, we will have updates on grantee performance, a preview of our annual report and begin prep for November's annual meeting.*

Meanwhile, the 2026 RFP subcommittee of Anika, Silvana, Tom, and Rachel will be capturing the key takeaways from each presentation that will inform the language of the next request for proposals. We are scheduled to release the RFP in January and have it open until April 2027 after which the subcommittee will evaluate proposals and make recommendations to the full JCRT on which proposals to fund.

Are there any questions, comments, or ideas regarding this schedule?

I think we will need to make some adjustments to the right-side column regarding the RFP preparation steps and should consider reviewing a draft of the RFP earlier than our December meeting. We should also consider meeting earlier in the month than December 17th to avoid holiday travel and end of semester conflicts.

W Blackmer: *I can review possibilities for an earlier meeting date in December and if we plan now, we can probably have an RFP draft ready earlier.*

A Van Eaton: *We could use some time during the October 15th meeting to review the draft RFP.*

V Choitz: *I'd suggest releasing the RFP as early as we can in January so that respondents have as much time as*

possible to form partnerships and collaborative proposals.

R Nadkarni: We should aim to determine how much funding we are committing to the RFP by the October meeting so that we can put this on the radar of the groups attending the annual meeting in November. We do not need to have every detail of the RFP in place at that point.

R Wilson: The annual meeting is also the place where we can collaborate with the public and get their input on the RFP.

5. Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Presentation

A Van Eaton: We are excited to have two of our Board Members, Jim Hachey and Tom Bent presenting on Somerville CTE. We will have time at the end of the presentation for questions.

J Hachey thanked board members who recently came on tours to visit Somerville High School CTE and gave an overview of the SHS CTE program. SHS CTE includes 14 Chapter 74 programs including Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Dental Assisting, Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC-R (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration), and Health Careers.

All programs give students the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials before graduating high school. More than one third of seniors participating in the CTE program are enrolled in cooperative education (co-op) or internships at local employers across various industries, including dental offices, assisted living facilities, SPS classrooms, childcare centers, etc.

R Wilson: Do students get paid?

J Hachey: Co-op students are paid between minimum wage and approximately \$20 per hour and internships are unpaid opportunities. Some programs that have high participation are in industries that are in great demand in Boston, such as Health Careers and Dental Assisting.

In the SHS class of 2026, 44% are planning to attend a 4-year college, 24% are planning to attend a 2-year college, and about 30% are planning to go into the workforce. 50% of those attending college are pursuing a degree related to their CTE program. Overall CTE enrollment has grown significantly in the last 5 years from 634 to 891 participants. Enrollment will likely be slightly down in the coming school year due to decreases in overall student enrollment numbers.

Several CTE programs offer services or work on projects in the community including Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Automotive Technology. We partner with City divisions including the Council on Aging, Veterans Services, and the Department of Public Works (DPW), and are open to additional collaboration opportunities. We also offer CTE summer camps to 90 middle schoolers and partner with SCALE to offer several nighttime adult education programs funded by the JCRT and other grant funds. Many students have opportunities to continue on with their co-op or internship site during the summer or after they graduate.

William also asked me to name a couple of ways in which CTE and the JCRT may be able to collaborate. One great, immediate need is funding for driver's education for CTE students at Somerville High School. If students do not have a driver's license, they have trouble participating in co-ops and finding jobs after they graduate. There additionally may be a need in the future for funding for the Let's Get Workin' partnership with DPW to offer co-ops in the municipal workforce.

R Nadkarni: For co-ops, are businesses coming to you to let you know how many students they can accommodate, and are businesses paying the students?

J Hachey: Yes, the businesses are hiring and paying the students.

R Nadkarni: One idea that comes to mind for me is the potential for a scholarship program to fund co-ops for students at smaller non-profits in Somerville who might want to pilot taking on a student for the first time.

R Wilson: How do you ensure that students are ready for the opportunity and that they take the co-op seriously?

J Hachey: Students need to meet certain age, shop hours, and skill requirements to participate in the co-op program. We make sure that they are ready for the responsibility. While in their high school program, the students hear constantly about the importance of showing up on time, being professional, and communication.

V Choitz: Aside from co-ops being paid, what are the differences between internships and co-ops?

J Hachey: In internships, students do not work outside of school hours. Co-op students are encouraged to work more hours during school vacations and during the summer because they are being paid for hours that count toward certification and Chapter 74 hours requirements.

V Choitz: I wonder if it is better to have a scholarship program for paid internships instead of paid co-ops.

A Van Eaton: Thank you for a great presentation and discussion. I also really recommend that any board members who could not attend a tour of the CTE facilities to be in touch with Jim about a future opportunity. It was a great experience.

6. Reflections on Mayor's Presentation with regards to upcoming RFP and ongoing grantmaking

Managing Trustee: Last month, Mayor Wilson joined the JCRT to present on his administration's workforce development priorities. We have two reflection questions that we would like the Board members to weigh in on. 1) How does the Mayor's presentation inform our upcoming RFP? And 2) How does the Mayor's presentation inform how we do grant and planning work over the next few years?

V Choitz: A main takeaway for me was the importance of collaboration. The Mayor is interested in programs where multiple grantees are working together on programs. This was a pillar of the Good Municipal Jobs RFP that we put out where applications required a backbone organization responsible for managing the project and coordinating partners and subgrantees. We should keep this in mind for the next RFP. How do we encourage collaboration between organizations that result in strong programs.

A Van Eaton: It was helpful to hear that the Talent Equity Playbook is still a relevant guide for the City's workforce development strategy.

T Bent: I agree that it was helpful for the Mayor to learn more about JCRT-funded programs and the work that the JCRT and the City are doing to complement each other's works. We are already running programs that are good examples of the types of collaboration the Mayor wants to continue to see. Mayor Wilson also mentioned the importance of engaging employers in the work that the JCRT supports and hearing from employers about what their needs are.

V Choitz: We do still have funding set aside to do work with smaller employers to help them make sure that they are following employment laws, not violating the wage ordinance, and providing good quality jobs. Is this funding that William will be helping the JCRT invest?

R Nadkarni: On that topic, I have heard that this is a priority of nonprofits as well to support job quality and offer more resources and benefits to employees.

T Bent: This has been an initiative that we have struggled to launch. Jen Lawrence at the Chamber of Commerce could be a good person to speak to regarding how to support small businesses.

R Nadkarni: I'd recommend releasing a future RFP on this topic or having it listed in a separate section of the next RFP that we release. William and I are scheduled to meet with Jen soon to gather insights to share at the next JCRT meeting.

R Wilson: The City's Wage Theft Committee is up and running with more vigor than it has had in the past and is hoping to have City resources to better support the work of that committee similar to the staff support that the JCRT has.

7. Adjournment

Motion: T Bent makes motion to adjourn. V Choitz seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Motion passes by vote of 6-0. W Mbah and J Luria left meeting prior to this vote being taken.

Meeting Materials:

- 7/16/26 Mtg Notice and Agenda
- draft 6/18/26 Mtg Minutes
- JCRT Received and Estimated Linkage Fees (7.10.26)
- JCRT Investment Priority Tracker (7.10.26)
- (reshared) March 2026 Memo Re: Draft Schedule for Meeting Topics and Next RFP Steps
- CTE Presentation

Approved 7/16/2026