

# MINUTES

## *TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY EIGHTH MEETING*

of the

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

of the

## **MASSACHUSETTS TECHNOLOGY PARK CORPORATION**

September 16, 2020  
Zoom Videoconference

The Two Hundred Sixty Eighth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation was held on September 16, 2020, via Zoom videoconference pursuant to notice duly given to the Directors and publicly posted on the Mass Tech Collaborative website with corresponding notice provided to the Office of the Secretary of State.

The following members of the Mass Tech Collaborative Executive Committee were present and participated: Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy (represented by Damon Cox of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development), Pam Reeve, Alexandra Drane, Anne Margulies, Bogdan Vernescu, Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago (represented by Tye Brady of Amazon Robotics), Christina Royal, Joe Dorant, Julie Chen, Michael Greeley, Secretary for Administration and Finance Michael Heffernan (represented by Patrick Lynch of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance) and Rupa Cornell.

The following members of the Mass Tech Collaborative Staff were present: Carolyn Kirk, Stephanie Helm, Laurance Stuntz, Farhad Vazehgoo, Pat Larkin, Michael Baldino, Holly Lucas Murphy, Lisa Erlandson, Jennifer Saubermann, Brian Noyes, Joseph Downing, Brianna Wehrs and Kelly Kleanthous.

The following individual attended the meeting: Holly Sweeney.

Mr. Cox observed the presence of quorum of the Executive Committee and called the Meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

### **Agenda Item I      Approval of Minutes**

After a period of discussion and upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously and without abstention VOTED:

**The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation, acting on behalf of the full Board pursuant to section three of Chapter Forty J of the General Laws of the Commonwealth, hereby adopts the Draft Minutes of the One Hundred and Sixty Seventh Meeting of the Executive Committee, held on June 18, 2020 via Zoom teleconference, as the formal Minutes thereof.**

**Agenda Item II      Report of the Chairperson**

Mr. Cox delivered the report of the Chairperson. He opened the meeting by discussing updates on the COVID-19 situation in the Commonwealth, stating that the Massachusetts continues to be in Phase 3 without many changes. Mr. Cox then commended the Mass Tech Collaborative and Ms. Kirk for the work done on the Manufacturing Emergency Response Team (“MERT”), as well as the work done establishing and supporting the Fintech Working Group, which is co-chaired by Secretary Kennealy.

**Agenda Item III      Report of the Executive Director**

Ms. Kirk delivered the report of the Executive Director. She spoke of the passing of Mitchell Adams, Mass Tech Executive Director from 2001 to 2011. Highlights of his service to the Commonwealth includes the establishment of the Innovation Institute and the Life Sciences Collaborative, which led to the creation of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. Ms. Kirk also mentioned his role in pioneering investments in Mass Challenge, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the Holyoke Innovation District. It was noted that Mr. Adams’ passion for identifying healthcare technologies that reduce costs while improving the quality of healthcare led to creation of the Massachusetts eHealth Institute. Mr. Larkin and Ms. Reeves also shared kind words and memories of Mr. Adams that highlighted his intellectual curiosity, wit and gentlemanly manner. Ms. Kirk then moved to discuss the work that had taken place at Mass Tech since the last meeting, indicating that each department and division would do a "deep dive" into a particular focus area.

**Agenda Item IV      Highlights and Updates from MassTech Collaborative**

The first focus area discussed by Ms. Kirk was the Innovation Institute and the Intrapreneur Challenge, which arose out of work of the MERT. She explained that the Intrapreneur Challenge allows Massachusetts manufacturers to apply to participate in a five-week accelerator program prioritizing manufacturing initiatives to support the creation of Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) in the Commonwealth. Two Challenges had been completed so far, with the winners of each receiving \$25,000 towards production of PPE. Ms. Kirk played video clips of the first two Challenge winners, Speakeasy Travel Supply of Cape Cod which produces masks, and CareAline, a Danvers company, which produces medical gowns. She noted that Challenge #3 is currently underway. Executive Committee members reacted positively to the videos and suggested that more videos should be filmed that highlight the positive work being done by the Mass Tech Collaborative. Ms. Kirk clarified that the

Intrapreneur Challenge was funded with mentorship funds that were repurposed to support COVID-19 initiatives.

The next update was provided by Mr. Vazehgoo regarding the MERT. Mr. Vazehgoo reviewed the history of the MERT, which met for the first time on March 20, 2020, and continued to meet three times a week for 20 weeks. He noted that Governor Baker announced the MERT portal for pivoting manufacturers on March 29, 2020, and in April the Commonwealth signed and executed contracts with 99 Degrees for 1 million medical gowns and with Merrow for 1 million medical gowns in mid-April. He stated that there are approximately 940 companies in the MERT portal. Mr. Vazehgoo explained that over 50 companies have made it through the MERT program and have produced over 9 million individual pieces of PPE.

Mr. Larkin provided an update on the EastWest Exchange, a virtual conference held on August 19, 2020, aimed at strengthening the manufacturing ties between the eastern and western parts of Massachusetts that was moderated by Carolyn Kirk and Rick Sullivan. He indicated that there were many highlights, including opening remarks and a discussion hosted by iRobot CEO & Founder Colin Angle and Congressman Richard Neal as well as a keynote address from Willy Shih of Harvard Business School. Mr. Larkin commended Ms. Marzalek on her hard work to pull the event together. He stated that the event produced a great deal of positive feedback and leads.

Mr. Stuntz reviewed the MeHI Sandbox Program. He noted that the Program launched with the first sandbox at PracticePoint at WPI and has expanded to include nine sandboxes. He explained that the Sandbox Program provides financial assistance to companies with a Massachusetts presence to access the sandboxes, which are test beds supporting companies in their product development. He discussed how each sandbox has different capabilities and offers consultative services that help entrepreneurs connect to clinical staff at the facilities. Mr. Stuntz discussed the shift in the program guidelines to focus on COVID-19 activities, including an emphasis on remote capabilities.

Ms. Helm discussed the MassCyberCenter activities, focusing on the upcoming Cybersecurity Month activities that will be supported in October. She also reviewed successful cyber response workshops for each Homeland Security region in Massachusetts that attracted hundreds of participants. Ms. Helm noted that "Collaborating for a Secure Future" will be the theme for Massachusetts Cybersecurity Month. She indicated that the annual Cybersecurity Forum would be held virtually on October 29<sup>th</sup> and will include three trek sessions - Reimagining Secure Telehealth Delivery; Future of FINTECH in face of Cyber Threats; and Senior Executive Perspective on Cybersecurity Future. Ms. Helm also discussed the Cybersecurity Mentorship pilot program that has been launched with the goal of encouraging diverse students to pursue careers in cybersecurity and increasing the diversity of the cybersecurity workforce. The program will run from the beginning of October through mid-December, with the intent to match 10 students to cybersecurity mentors. Students and mentors will have one-to-one ongoing dialogue on careers in cybersecurity and will work together on a project, along with attending various events such as a kickoff, career panels and a project showcase. Ms. Royal suggested that at least one participating student should be from a community college.

Mr. Baldino focused on the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's WiFi Hotspot Program that was put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Baldino explained that the WiFi Hotspot Program is intended to help the residents of unserved Last Mile Towns that are currently without broadband access and have been very hard hit during the pandemic, when many work and school related activities went remote. To assist, MBI has installed hotspots in 26 Last Mile Towns at community anchor institutions like libraries, town halls and schools that are connected to the MassBroadband123 network. Mr. Baldino clarified that the hotspots have been provided at no cost to the towns and the towns can keep the equipment when the program ends. He mentioned that residents can sit outside or in their cars and access a 250 Mbps hotspot at each location. He indicated that the program has received positive feedback and will be extended through the end of 2020. He noted that partners such as KCST, Crocker Communications, AccessPlus and Westfield Gas and Electric have been integral to the success of this program. It was suggested that MBI capture videos of families getting internet access at the hotspots. A discussion ensued about the need to establish indoor hotspots as the winter approaches as well as a broader discussion about digital equity issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Ms. Wehrs reviewed the Caregiving Initiative. She stated that the initiative's goal is to determine how to support caregivers in communities, and to expand upon the work that has focused on employers and establish new working groups. She mentioned upcoming virtual events in October and November. Ms. Wehrs indicated that the Mass Tech Collaborative is looking at establishing two new working groups – a Communities Working Group that would focus on getting caregivers to feel part of their community, and a Caregiver Impacts Working Group that would look at the complicated issue of short, medium and long-term impacts of caregiving. Ms. Drane discussed the results of a study that addresses the impacts on non-paid caregivers. The Executive Committee members agreed that both broadband and caregiving are critical economic development issues and discussed the disproportionate impact on women and minority populations.

Ms. Erlandson provided a budget update. She noted that the Mass Tech Collaborative's Fiscal Year 2021 budget was approved in June and at that time the state budget had not been approved. Ms. Erlandson informed the Executive Committee that a state budget for the full fiscal year still had not been approved but an interim state budget for the first four months of Fiscal Year 2021 had been approved by the state legislature. She indicated that the Mass Tech Collaborative is in the process of contracting for \$1,600,000 in appropriations and the full amount of capital funding for MBI and Innovation Institute. Ms. Erlandson stated that the budget variance is being addressed through a continuation of the hiring freeze for positions funded by appropriation dollars, scaling back financial assistance awards and drawing on fund balances.

Ms. Saubermann provided an update on the status of the Governor's 2020 Economic Development Bill. She informed the Executive Committee that the bill is in conference committee to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. She discussed the differences between the House and Senate bills, both of which include more than \$60 million in capital authorizations for the Mass Tech Collaborative. Ms. Saubermann noted

that the House bill does not include important changes to the Mass Tech Collaborative's enabling statute that would create a new Tech and Innovation Program. She noted that the legislative session has been extended and she expects final action on the Economic Development Bill this year.

Ms. Saubermann also provided an update on litigation with Axia and KCST USA. She reminded the Executive Committee that the Mass Tech Collaborative appealed the portion of the Arbitrator's award voiding Axia's \$4 million parental guaranty. In May 2019 the U.S. District Court judge ruled in the Mass Tech Collaborative's favor and reinstated the parental guaranty. Ms. Saubermann informed the Executive Committee that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit Court of Appeals reversed, the Federal District Court's ruling based on a determination that the Arbitrator did not exceed his authority in voiding the parental guaranty. Therefore there is no longer a parental guaranty from Axia should KCST fail to perform its obligations under the network operator agreement for the MassBroadband 123 network. She indicated that the Mass Tech Collaborative did not appeal this decision.

Ms. Saubermann also provided an update on the KCST bankruptcy proceedings. She informed the Executive Committee that both parties signed a Stipulation that was submitted to the Bankruptcy Court that resolves the six "Reserved Matters". She highlighted that the Stipulation settled on a \$13 million cumulative net operating loss for KCST for purposes of setting the dark fiber exercise price at \$1 million for four strands of fiber; established the 2019 Net Operating Gain of \$493,955 to be paid by KCST to the Mass Tech Collaborative, subject to reconciliation; and the timing of KCST's payments and KCST reporting requirements. Ms. Saubermann indicated that the parties are waiting for an Order from the Bankruptcy Court approving the Stipulation, which will end this litigation. She clarified that the Mass Tech Collaborative does not have any payment obligations to KCST as a result of this agreement. Ms. Erlandson noted that the approved Mass Tech Collaborative budget contemplates that payment of the 2019 Net Operating Gain would go into the Fund Balance to offset litigation costs.

Mr. Noyes discussed recent press coverage of the Mass Tech Collaborative's activities. He highlighted new articles that cover the events and accomplishments of each division, including the MERT, EastWest Exchange, the WiFi Hotspot Program, and the Sandbox Program. He noted that there has been 217 media hits for the Mass Tech Collaborative in 2020 thus far, and 46,000 users visiting the website, which is well above last year's metrics.

Ms. Lucas-Murphy provide a Human Resources update and focused on the status of employees continuing to work from home and the approach to reopening the Mass Tech Collaborative's offices. She noted that employee productivity has remained very high overall. Ms. Lucas-Murphy discussed the creation of a reopening policy document, which provides for a phased reopening approach. Ms. Lucas-Murphy explained that the reopening policy document also covers the conditions associated with office visits, the requirements for PPE, the cleaning of facilities and other related topics. She indicated that employee access is currently limited to the Innovation Building in Westborough and she clarified that there are capacity limits for each building consistent with state mandates. Ms. Lucas-Murphy also discussed employee engagement activities such as Secret Sound Thursdays, Music Bingo and the MassTech Book Club, which have the goal of keeping employees connected during the pandemic. She also

discussed unconscious bias training that has been provided to the Leadership Team and would be held for all employees later in the month.

There being no other business to discuss and upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously and without abstention voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:34 p.m.

A TRUE COPY

ATTEST: (Secretary)

DATE:

**Materials and Exhibits Used at this Meeting:**

1. Draft Minutes for the June 18, 2020 Mass Tech Collaborative Executive Committee Meeting
2. Presentation - Meeting of the Executive Committee- Highlights and Updates from the MassTech Collaborative