



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

~ MINUTES ~

**Tuesday, May 6, 2025** **3:00 PM** **Sullivan Chamber**

The Economic Development and University Relations Committee will hold a public hearing to discuss all Workforce Development/Job Training programs provided for and/or funded by the City, School Department, and non-profits, and discuss a possible future “Jobs Trust” may do differently, or in addition to, current programming funded and/or operated by the City.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Economic Development and University Relations Committee was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Wilson. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

**At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/Remote
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Present/Remote
- Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

**Present – 5. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Councillor Wilson offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss all Workforce Development/Job Training programs provided for and/or funded by the City, School Department, and non-profits, and discuss a possible future “Jobs Trust” may do differently, or in addition to, current programming funded and/or operated by the City. Present at the meeting were Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Ellen Semonoff, Assistant Director of Adult and Family Service, Sue Walsh, Director of Economic Development, Pardis Saffari, Director of Workforce Development, Susan Mintz, First Assistant City Solicitor, Elliott Veloso, Interim Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools (CPS), David Murphy, and Career Pathways Program Manager for CPS, Alice Beth Fitzpatrick, RSTA Coordinator, Roy Doucette, Director of MIT Office of Government and Community Relations, Sarah Gallop, Manager of MIT Job Connector, Sarah Reese, Interim Principal at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS), Allan Gerhant, Director of Resident Services and Strategic Partnerships for Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), John Lindamood, Deputy Director of Resident Services, Kambiz Maali, Director of Education and Training for Just-A-Start, Miriam Ortiz, Managing Director for Per Scholas Greater Boston, H. Kay Howard, and Director of Cambridge Community Learning Center, Maria Kefallinou, and Councillor Zusy. Present and remote from the

MassHire Workforce Investment Board were President/CEO Chris Albrizio-Lee and Chief Operating Officer, Penny Hasseli.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson recognized Sue Walsh, City staff, and panelists, who gave a presentation titled “Workforce Development Update”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

**The Chair, Councillor Wilson opened Public Comment.**

Daniel Weagle, 12 Christopher Drive, Grafton, MA, spoke in strong support for a Cambridge Jobs Trust.

Steven Nutter, 99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support for a Cambridge Jobs Trust.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson recognized Councillor Toner who asked for more information on the amount of money being invested into workforce development. Sue Walsh shared there would be more information relative to that on Packet page 65. Ellen Semonoff added that it is estimated to be around \$3 million, not including the School Department budget, being spent through the Office of Workforce Development and the Community Learning Center. Additionally, Ellen Semonoff provided examples of what the jobs linkage fee could be used towards, such as supporting stipends and training opportunities. Councillor Toner shared that his concerns are not within the Workforce Development programs, but the impact of adding another fee through the Jobs Trust Fund would have on the City. Councillor Toner shared his appreciation and thanked staff for their hard work.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who agreed there is a need for additional funding to support stipends, training, and recruitment. The Vice Mayor stressed how important it is for the Cambridge community for the City to work towards creating career pathways that help keep people engaged and productive. The Vice Mayor asked how young adults can determine what their interests are and how decisions are made for job placement. Sue Walsh responded by providing an overview of the training process, highlighting that the goal is to look at what opportunities are available and what careers individuals are interested in pursuing, and connecting the two. The Vice Mayor appreciated the work that goes into job placement and the efforts made towards listening to young people. Vice Mayor McGovern pointed out that it is important for people to have access to learning about trades, such as plumbing and HVAC, as well as learning about other industries, such as biotech. The Vice Mayor asked what programs are being offered at CRLS and the RSTA program. Roy Doucette shared that there are some challenges with opening new vocational programs, such as state licensing requirements, if the training during school would be recognized by unions, and factors that play into what the Department of Education will approve. Roy Doucette added that there are active efforts being made towards creative solutions to try and incorporate more learning experiences.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson recognized Councillor Zusy who shared how important it is to train young people and students so they are ready for the needs of the Cambridge community, such as skilled trades, care-related roles, and educational roles, noting that there is a growing demand for these types of jobs. Councillor Zusy asked about funding sources for non-Cambridge programs. H. Kay Howard shared examples of how Per Scholas receives there \$2.7 million budget and funding, adding that with being a non-profit program, it is constant search. Councillor Wilson responded to comments made by Councillor Zusy and shared excitement for preparing students to meeting community workforce needs Councillor Wilson offered suggestions on implementing a “badge” system which highlights which skills students have earned within the different programs. Roy Doucette shared that the Department of Education has a program similar to a “badge” program called IRC’s (Industry Recognized Credentials and Certifications). Roy Doucette added that on Agenda Packet page 75 there was a list of IRC’s that students in the RSTA program can work towards. Interim Principal Gerhant explained how CRLS is working with students to be prepared for future opportunities and welcomes partnerships moving forward to help serve Cambridge youth. Councillor Wilson pointed out the importance of internships and asked what internship programs are currently being offered. Interim Principal Gerhant provided examples of current internships, noting that there are 100 students that participate every year, and he noted that he would support expanding the internship to more students and collaborating with more internship partners. Sarah Reese agreed that internships are valuable and there is a need to build stronger partnerships with local businesses and organizations. Sarah Reese shared that the goal is for students to not only graduate with academic knowledge, but with real-world experiences. Miriam Ortiz stressed how important it is to have

structure, leadership, and funding when collaborating. Councillor Zusy applauded the work being done through RSTA and asked if there were opportunities for night classes to be offered to adults. Roy Doucette shared that there have been recent conversations about offering adult night classes with programs such as carpentry and automotive technology. Roy Doucette added that they are looking for and applying for grants to help with funding.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson asked if students in the High School Extension Program can participate in RSTA. Roy Doucette explained that there have been High School Extension students who have participated in the past and that there are sometimes challenges due to scheduling. Additionally, he shared that he would encourage and welcome those students to participate. Councillor Wilson asked Elliott Veloso asked for an update regarding [POR 2024 #148](#). Elliott Veloso explained that the Special Legislation is pending with the State Legislature and was submitted in December, noting that Bill's similar to this usually get approved before summer recess. Elliott Veloso reviewed the steps the City Council should take once the Bill is passed.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson offered closing remarks and thanked everyone for their participation and hard work.

**The Chair, Councillor Wilson recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the role.

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes -4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**Attachment A** – Communications from the public

**Clerk's Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/1018?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/1018?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager, Human Service Programs, transmitting a presentation titled "Workforce Development Update".**

Erwin, Nicole

Attachment A

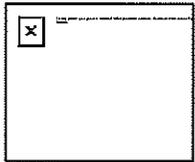
**From:** Dahlia Bousaid Cox <dahlia@techgoeshome.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 6, 2025 12:49 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** Campbell-Schwartz, Adam; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan  
**Subject:** Cambridge Jobs Training Trust Written Testimony  
**Attachments:** TGH\_Cambridge\_Council\_Jobs\_Trust\_Testimony.pdf

Hello!

Please find attached Tech Goes Home's testimony in support of Cambridge Jobs Training Trust. I'm sorry we can't be at the meeting in person. Please let me know how we can continue to support this effort.

Warmly,  
Dahlia

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**Dahlia Bousaid Cox | she/hers**

Interim CEO

(617) 213-0047

[www.techgoeshome.org](http://www.techgoeshome.org)

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May 6, 2025

Dear Councilor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Members of the Economic Development Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about the proposed jobs training trust to support the residents of the City of Cambridge.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the Council on advancing this important effort to the state legislature. Establishing a jobs training trust will help accelerate workforce development and educational opportunities for Cambridge residents, opening new pathways to economic mobility, particularly for BIPOC residents, folks from low and moderate-income backgrounds, immigrants, and others facing persistent barriers to employment.

Tech Goes Home is a Boston-based nonprofit organization committed to closing the digital divide. For 25 years, we've worked to connect people with a digital device, reliable internet service, and the training and support to navigate the digital world safely and efficiently. Through trusted community partnerships and local instructors, our courses provide residents with the confidence and resources to use digital tools to engage in the workforce, access educational opportunities, manage their healthcare, participate in civic life, and connect with loved ones. More than 50,000 people – from ages 3 to 97 – have graduated from a Tech Goes Home course. Among the more than 6,000 learners who enrolled in TGH courses in 2024, the majority had a household income of less than \$20,000, speak a primary language other than English, and/or identify as Black/African American or Latino/a/Hispanic.

I am proud to share this testimony on behalf of Tech Goes Home, our instructors, and thousands of learners. Tech Goes Home has numerous community partners that serve Cambridge residents, and we are grateful for previous opportunities to collaborate with elected leaders and community members in the city.

Tech Goes Home's courses are responsive to the needs of the community; as a result, many of our courses focus on workforce development. I am proud to share that, among graduates from those programs in 2024, 71 percent credit their digital skills training at Tech Goes Home for helping them get a new or better-paying job, receiving a pay raise, entering an educational or work training program, accessing benefits, or starting a business.

Over the past several years, the City of Boston has supported Tech Goes Home's programming through the Neighborhood Jobs Trust, a similar program to what Cambridge is hoping to establish. Between 2020 and 2024, Tech Goes Home received more than \$700,000 from the Trust to support career-building digital skills – such as resume writing and online job searching – to assist low income individuals in advancing their professional goals. Through the Neighborhood Jobs Trust, more than 700 learners have graduated from Tech Goes Home programming, and we anticipate utilizing Neighborhood Trust Fund dollars again this year to serve approximately 180 more learners.

Establishing a similar Trust for the City of Cambridge would offer a new opportunity for Tech Goes Home to scale its work and partner with the city and its strong network of community-facing organizations. We know the need for digital access continues to be acute; according to the 2023 [American Community Survey](#), roughly 23 percent of households in Cambridge with incomes under \$20,000 don't have an internet subscription, and close to 400 households have no computer at home.

Funding from the Trust would enable Tech Goes Home to support Cambridge residents who lack access to essential tools, such as a reliable device, internet connection, or digital skills, hindering their ability to fully engage in a workforce and community that is increasingly moving online. Currently, 2 out of every 3 Tech Goes Home learners begin our programs without access to a device, and over half of learners lack internet connectivity. These are foundational barriers, but when paired with digital skills training, they create pathways to economic mobility. Tech Goes Home graduates consistently report continued use of their digital skills, with nearly 80% stating that the training helped them in job searching or advancing in their current roles. Approximately one year after completing a course, nearly 1 out of every 4 Tech Goes Home graduates enroll in further education or job training, and nearly 20% secure new employment. These outcomes highlight the lasting impact of Tech Goes Home's model and its alignment with the goals of the proposed jobs training trust.

Tech Goes Home applauds the effort to establish a jobs training trust for Cambridge. Its passage would help create new pathways for individuals and families across Cambridge to engage and participate in the city's vibrant economy. While the home rule petition goes through the legislative process, we hope you will consider Tech Goes Home as a partner and champion in your effort to advance economic mobility, including through efforts to close the digital divide. We welcome future collaboration with the Council and Mayor, and share the vision of ensuring Cambridge is a community where everyone can thrive.

Sincerely,



Dahlia Bousaid Cox  
Interim CEO, Tech Goes Home

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Daniel Weagle <dweagle@apprenticareers.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:11 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Comment for Economic Development & University Relations Committee Regarding the Creation of a Cambridge Jobs Trust

Good morning, members of the Committee.

My name is Dan Weagle, and I'm a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a representative of Apprenti, a non-profit Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my strong support of the proposed Cambridge Jobs Trust.

Our organization has proudly placed 175 apprentices with Massachusetts-based employers—many of whom reside in the Greater Boston area. Of those, 88% have converted to permanent employment with their original sponsors, earning, on average, \$35,000 more per year than they did prior to their apprenticeships—a 176% increase in income. Our average apprentice is 35 years old, and 95% come from backgrounds underrepresented in the IT field, including women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, and veterans.

These outcomes are not accidental. They are made possible through the combination of rigorous technical training and structured on-the-job learning, supported by public workforce development funding across the Commonwealth. Funding mechanisms like the proposed Cambridge Jobs Trust are vital for reducing or eliminating the \$12,500 average cost of quality, 3–5 month technical training programs—programs that lay the foundation for long-term economic mobility and workforce retention.

In our apprenticeship model, the technical training is not simply a gateway—it's a critical phase that enables apprentices to build the occupational competencies they need to thrive. The combination of training, mentorship, and employer sponsorship results in the kind of retention and career transformation that sets Registered Apprenticeship apart from many other workforce pathways.

We could not achieve this impact at scale without the support of forward-thinking communities like Cambridge. For these reasons, I urge the Committee to move forward with the creation of a Cambridge Jobs Trust. It is a powerful investment in a comprehensive workforce development approach and long-term economic resilience for the city and the region.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have about our organization and my support for the proposed Jobs Trust should you wish further clarification.

Best,  
Dan

--  
Dan Weagle (he/him)  
*Channel Partner Business Development Director*



**ApprentiCareers.org**

774-437-3935

Book a 30-minute meeting with me via [Calendly](#)

Apprenti celebrates and considers every applicant. Read [our Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) pledge](#).

Learn more about registered apprenticeship at [Apprenti's Blog Page!](#)

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