

April 20, 2021

Members of the City Council
City of Somerville, MA

Dear Councilors,

The purpose of this letter is to make a strong case for why Colleen Moran, Integration Director, Workforce at Mass General Brigham and former Director, Workforce Programs at Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, should be confirmed as a Business Representative on the Somerville Jobs Creation and Retention Trust Fund Board (Jobs Trust Fund/Board).

The purpose of the Jobs Trust Fund is to “assist in the creation and maintenance of employment and career opportunities within and near the City of Somerville for the residents of the City of Somerville.”ⁱ Our [2019-2020 annual report](#) provides a summary of our strategies and initial investments. It is critical for the Jobs Trust Board to have a diverse, well-balanced, and knowledgeable membership, including representation from the Somerville employer community. We strongly believe that Ms. Moran should be confirmed for the following reasons:

1. She is a regional, state, and national leader and has deep expertise in workforce development, job training, career pathways, and quality jobs from a business perspective, particularly in a critical industry for the city of Somerville.
2. She has extensive knowledge and experience in health care, an industry sector that is large and projected to grow in Somerville.
3. She has a personal commitment to serving Somerville, including serving on the employer board for Somerville Community Corporation, demonstrating an above-and-beyond loyalty to our City.
4. This board vacancy has existed for over six months and is disrupting the work of the Board.
5. A good Jobs Trust Board thrives with diversity, including in business representation. The Board has small business representation now and would benefit from a representative with experience and insights into Somerville’s largest employer.

We provide further detail for each of these reasons below.

1. **She is a regional, state, and national leader and has deep expertise in workforce development from a business perspective, particularly in a critical industry for the city of Somerville.** Under Ms. Moran’s leadership, the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network/Mass General Brigham (formerly Partners HealthCare) have become national models of both job training in healthcare and high-quality jobs. In 2014, Brigham and Women’s Hospital was named a [CareerSTAT Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion](#) due to the work of Colleen and her colleagues. Some of that work is captured in this national report by CareerStat at Jobs for the Future, [Guide to Investing in Frontline Health Care Workers](#) (see page 7). Her pioneering work on good quality jobs in the healthcare sector helped partners JVS-Boston and the Boston SkillWorks workforce funding collaborative at the Boston Foundation secure a [\\$100,000 grant](#) from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions to continue investments in these jobs quality efforts. Colleen is on the [board](#) of the Metro North Workforce Development Board, an important workforce development partner for Somerville and the Jobs Trust Board.

2. **She has extensive knowledge and experience in health care, an industry sector that is large and projected to grow in Somerville.** At the July 2, 2019, meeting of the Somerville Jobs Trust Board, members reviewed Labor Market Information (LMI) that showed that healthcare is a Top Industry in terms of employment in Somerville and is projected to grow (see the [meeting minutes](#)). The Board anticipates doing another LMI review soon and, given the growth in the healthcare sector nationally, we fully anticipate healthcare to continue to be a large and growing industry in Somerville. It would benefit the Jobs Trust Board greatly to have Ms. Moran’s healthcare workforce development expertise on the board.
3. **She has a personal commitment to serving Somerville, including serving on SCC’s employer advisory group, demonstrating an above-and-beyond loyalty to our City.** Ms. Moran noted in the [confirmation meeting on April 13](#) that, even though she does not live in Somerville currently (NOT a requirement of this position), this is a place she’s “always really loved” (since her days living in Ball Square), and she wants to do even more work to “get locals into good jobs...give back to Somerville, deepen connections, and be a good employer” in Somerville. She demonstrates this commitment already by serving on SCC’s employer advisory group. What better way to strengthen Somerville’s connection to its largest employer and strengthen pathways to good LOCAL jobs in healthcare for Somerville residents than to add this commitment, perspective, and insight to the Jobs Trust Board?
4. **This board vacancy has existed for over six months and is disrupting the work of the Board.** We have been working hard to recruit another Business Representative for the Jobs Trust Board since the resignation of Josh Grehan of Finch Therapeutics, a large biotech company, in September 2020. At first, it was difficult to identify a business representative who would have the time, interest, and qualifications for serving on this public board. Once we identified one, Colleen Moran, her appointment was held up in committee for several months. At various times, this has led to a quorum challenge for our committee, causing delays in our vital work, i.e., our April 13 meeting started 20 minutes late due to lack of a quorum. Given the importance of quality workforce development in Somerville, and the significant resources the Jobs Trust Board is entrusted with, we simply cannot afford to continue with a partial board. We have an extremely well-qualified candidate who is ready to join our team to do important work for Somerville; it makes no sense to reject her candidacy.
5. **A good Jobs Trust Board thrives with diversity, including in business representation.** The Jobs Trust Board is diverse, which helps us do our work well. We have perspectives from women, men, residents, workforce development experts, nonprofit providers, unions, and small business as represented by Tom Bent of Bent Electrical. Given that 28% of the 26,700 workers in Somerville pre-pandemic were employed by one of the three large employers in our city (Tufts University, Cambridge Health Alliance, and Mass General Brigham (formerly Partners HealthCare; 4,700 workers), it would be helpful to have this perspective on the board, as well.ⁱⁱ

We understand that part of the concern underlying the rejection of Ms. Moran’s nomination is that she works at Mass General Brigham. We want to underscore that this appointment is not of this company to the Board, but rather, of this qualified individual with her valuable knowledge and experience. Just as Tom Bent, not Bent Electrical, and Rand Wilson, not SEIU, are members of the Jobs Trust Board, Colleen Moran, not Mass General Brigham, would be a Board member.

We thank you for your time and consideration to this critical matter and are happy to answer questions or discuss further.

Sincerely,



Vickie Choitz
Chair, Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust Board (Somerville resident representative)

[REDACTED]



Tom Bent
Business Representative, Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust Board

ⁱ See the Jobs Trust Fund [Declaration of Trust](#).

ⁱⁱ Calculation based on data from the [Somerville Talent Equity Playbook](#), City of Somerville, 2018.