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Food Bank of Western Massachusetts Announces New Board Officers

January 12, 2024 [CHICOPEE, MA] – The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is thrilled to announce the appointment of its new officers to the board of directors, effective January 1, 2024. **Charlotte M Boney, M.D.** assumed the role of **President**. In her professional capacity, Dr. Boney is the Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Baystate Health. The **1st Vice President, Willette H Yarbrough Johnson**, a retired educator from the Springfield Public Schools after having served 38 years in a variety of capacities. She continues exploring her love of education as a member of the Coalition of Experienced Black Educators, an Educational Consultant group.

Our **2nd Vice President** is **Omar Irizarry**, M.S. NMP, Director of Cross Agency Initiatives at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. **William Harju**, Treasurer, is Chief Financial Officer at USA Hauling & Recycling, and our **Clerk** is **Shannon Yaremchak**, Director of Grants and Latino Economic Development Opportunities at Partners for Community, and Director of Mission Advancement at New England Farm Workers' Council.

These appointments reflect the Food Bank's commitment to diverse voices and strong leadership to carry out its mission to feed our neighbors in need and lead the community to end hunger in Western Massachusetts. Dr. Boney has a proven track record of successful leadership in academic medicine, as both Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at UMass Chan Medical School-Baystate and Pediatrician-in-Chief, Baystate Children's Hospital. "I am humbled and honored to serve as President of the Board. As a pediatrician, I have seen first-hand that food is medicine, and food insecurity prevents children and families from living their best lives. I am thrilled to be a part of the Food Bank's mission to end hunger in our community".

Willette H Yarbrough Johnson brings a wealth of experience in education, and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by individuals and families struggling with hunger. "Being an officer on the Board of the Food Bank allows me the privilege of serving in a decision-making role with such a vital organization. This new year affords our Board and staff the opportunity to contemplate and generate new ways of interrupting the existence of hunger as a true enemy plaguing many in our communities. I will continue to support the mission of the Food Bank to reach the goal of ending food insecurity in Western Massachusetts."

In their new capacities, the new officers will lead the Food Bank to implement innovative strategies, expand partnerships, and elevate the organization's impact. "I'm excited to work with such a dynamic group of community leaders in this next chapter of the Food Bank now that we are settling into our new home in Chicopee to serve all four counties of our region more effectively and efficiently, said Andrew Morehouse, Food Bank Executive Director.'

Two new board members also began their tenure - Joesiah González, Chief Philanthropy & Communications Officer at Home City Development, Inc., and Xiaolei Hua, First Vice President of Commercial Lending at PeoplesBank.

The Food Bank extends its heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing officers and board members for their invaluable contributions during their tenure.

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ABOUT THE FOOD BANK OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Since 1982, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been working to feed our neighbors in need and lead the community to end hunger. We provide healthy and culturally responsive food directly through our own programs (Mobile Food Banks and Brown Bag: Food for Elders), and through the food assistance network across all four counties of Western Massachusetts, including Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. These independent pantries, meal sites and emergency shelters are on the front lines providing food and resources to individuals, families, seniors, children, veterans, and people with disabilities, so they may lead healthy and meaningful lives. The Food Bank partners on public education and advocacy to confront systemic issues that lead to hunger, operating with the belief that everyone has a right to healthy food.