

Manufacturing Innovation Fund Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

Department of Economic and Community Development

September 7, 2018

9:00-10:45 AM

450 Columbus Boulevard, Conference Room B, Plaza, South Tower

Attendance

- Board Members Present: Colin Cooper, Don Balducci, Commissioner Catherine Smith, Emir Redzic, John Zoldy, Chris DiPentima,
- Board Members via phone: Todd Pihl
- Quorum: Yes
- Absent: Beverly Dacey, Kelli Vallieres, Shane Eddy
- Stakeholders Present: Commissioner Kurt Westby, Patrick Flaherty, Kathy Marioni, Bernice Zampano, Todd Berch, Beth Furnari, Dr. Victor Black,
- Stakeholders via phone: Mackey Dykes
- DECD Staff: Carmen Molina-Rios, Barbara Fernandez, Kasper Bik

Minutes

Catherine Smith opened the meeting at 9:05 P.M.

Commissioner Smith asked for a motion to accept the September Minutes. Colin Cooper moved to accept the September meeting minutes. Chris DiPentima seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Bond Commission

Catherine Smith gave an overview on the bond commission process. She stated that DECD has requested \$15,000,000 for the next State Bond Commission meeting to be held in late September. This is the final tranche of the \$75 million authorization by the Malloy administration. DECD has requested an additional \$15,000,000 for both FY 20 and FY 21. This information will be given to the next administration for consideration. There was a brief discussion of what normally occurs during the transition period between administrations. Catherine Smith stated that most likely the board make up will remain “as is” for a while since it takes time for a new administration to fill board positions.

Manufacturing Market Outlook Update

Patrick J. Flaherty, Assistant Director of Research, Department of Labor (DOL) presented the CT Manufacturing Jobs Update and Outlook. Connecticut is facing major challenges in demographics: very slow population growth and the state’s labor population is growing below the national average. CT’s job growth is tied directly to our population growth: job growth can only increase if population increases. CT’s booming economy, especially in manufacturing, makes this situation more difficult. Manufacturing had 4,263 job openings in August, 2018, this is a 27% increase from a year ago. 21% of the job openings in manufacturing are in Fairfield County, thus the job openings go beyond the traditional Hartford Region. We now face a situation in manufacturing where labor demand outpaces labor supply. In addition, we are seeing an increase in voluntary separations- people are more comfortable quitting their

jobs to move on to other positions. This makes competition for workers even more intense. The largest group entering the manufacturing workforce is 25-34 year olds, these people have already been in the labor force and see manufacturing as a move up. Younger groups, 19-21 year olds, are not entering the manufacturing workforce at the level needed to replace workers that are retiring. The key is to expand the labor pool for manufacturing in order to fill the growing need.

Workforce Development Funding- DOL Update

Commissioner Westby provided an overview of how DOL foresees using the \$50 million in funding authorized from DECD's Manufacturing Assistance Act (MAA). In general, these funds are envisioned to enhance current programs including the incumbent workers and the apprenticeship programs. The funds will be awarded through the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB's) in a competitive process. The WIB's must work with a consortium of stakeholders that include industry and academia in order to qualify for the program. DOL has completed the initial report and submitted to the legislature. They will be sending out Request for Quotes (RFQ's) in October and expect responses in November.

Manufacturing Apprenticeship Alliance Program (Fairchild Wheeler School)

The Fairchild Wheeler School is a charter school located in Bridgeport that has a 90% graduation rate. Of which, 70% of the students are from urban environments and 30% from suburban areas. The school is organized around three major themes and manufacturing is one of those themes. The school presented a proposal that will expose young people to manufacturing starting in the 6th grade and will maintain that focus throughout high school. Their proposal will infuse manufacturing into everything the children do in the school. The proposal consists of summer school training in manufacturing and internships. Additionally the high school students are taught to train younger students (as early as 5th and 5th grade) in the analytical skills needed in manufacturing. A key component is building a close partnership with local manufacturing firms to ensure the school is teaching a curriculum that meets the industry's needs. The MIF board agreed to review the proposal and discuss at the next meeting.

Mobile Manufacturing Training Labs RFP (Vote)

Commission Smith provided an overview of the Special Act 18-24 which was passed as an act concerning a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the operation of Mobile Manufacturing Training Labs. She explained that the legislation is to support manufacturing careers by providing services that may include, but not be limited to, continuing education for Manufacturing employees and demonstration of advanced manufacturing to middle and high school students. Carmen Molina-Rios shared with the board that the legislation requires that DECD issue an RFP by October 1st. Ms. Molina-Rios also commented that the statute does not require a budget amount, however, it does state that the MIF would provide the funding for the manufacturing mobile lab(s). John Zoldy remarked that he was not comfortable with the sample budget provided. Commissioners Smith confirmed that the request was for permission to move forward with issuance of the RFP and that the process would allow for the board to review responses and approve scope and budget. Commissioner Smith stated that a subcommittee would be established to help with evaluations and recommendations. Based on those parameters, Colin Cooper motioned to issue the RFP. Emir Redzic seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Defense Manufacturing Communities Support Program (DMCSP)

There was a brief presentation of the Defense Manufacturing Communities Support Program which is part of a federal bill that codifies the work of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) communities that have a focus on defense industries. CT has taken a participated in the work of the IMCP communities. This bill is part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and will be administered by the Department of Defense in coordination with Department of Commerce. Funds will be set aside for this effort in the Department of Defense. The specifics of the bill are still being developed but CT with its robust defense infrastructure is well positioned to take advantage of these federal funds.

Other Business

New England Collaborative

Commissioner Smith shared with the board that the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) New England Collaborative will be meeting in later in September to discuss the award of OEA to the region and its work to support the aerospace and defense industry. She mentioned the work of the New England Trade Council in the region as an example of impactful work being done in the region.

Meeting Closed

Commissioner Smith requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Colin Cooper motioned and Chris DiPentima seconded the motion. The motion passed. Commissioner Smith closed the meeting at 10:42 a.m.