



January 26, 2024
Maryland Chamber of Commerce
60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis
9:00 -10:30am
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Will Castleberry, Chair
Matthew Bjonerud
Loren Douglass
Reza Jafari
Mary Kane
Ambassador Karen Kornbluh
Jerrod Moton
Charles Phillips
Brian Pieninck
Sudhir Sekhsaria, MD
Herman Singh
Dana Stebbins, MSW, Esq.
Vernon Thompson
Christy Wyskiel

Netflix
Cerebro Capital
MKD Partners International – Virtual
e-Development International
Maryland Chamber of Commerce
German Marshall Fund of the U.S. – Virtual
Goldman Edwards
RECOGNIZE – Virtual
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
MedStar Union Memorial Hospital – Virtual

The Cornelius Group
Strategic Path Forward Consulting Services
Johns Hopkins University

Ex-Officio Members:

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller
Secretary Kevin Anderson
Secretary Helene Grady
Secretary Portia Wu

State of Maryland
Department of Commerce
Department of Budget and Management
Department of Labor – Virtual

Guests:

Meryam Bouadjemi
Brad Fallon
Special Secretary Y. Maria Martinez

Office of the Governor
Office of the Governor
Governor’s Office of Small, Minority & Women Business
Affairs – Virtual

Owusu-Acheaw Pokuaa
Andrew Schaufele
Robert Rehrmann
Ben Seigel
Ashley Sharpe
Jennifer LaHatte
Julie Woepke
Jerel Registre
Jim Palma
Abbi Ludwig
Hannah Allen
Theresa Montano

Office of the Lt. Governor
Office of the Comptroller
Office of the Comptroller
Office of the Comptroller
Department of Labor
Department of Commerce – Virtual
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce – Virtual
Maryland Chamber of Commerce
Maryland Chamber of Commerce
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I. Meeting called to Order

Chair Will Castleberry called the meeting to order at 9:09 am and welcomed members and attendees. He thanked the Chamber for hosting the meeting and introduced Executive Director Mary Kane.

II. Welcome – Maryland Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Mary Kane provided a brief background of the organization and its efforts to support Maryland businesses.

III. Minutes of the December 20, 2023 Meeting

Chair Castleberry noted an amendment was offered to correct the attendance of a member. He clarified that Secretary Helene Grady was not in attendance. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes as amended of the December 20, 2023 meeting approved.

IV. Chair’s Report

Chair Castleberry stated the discussion of the Draft letter and two (2) recommendations which were provided in the meeting materials would be held until after the presentations on Maryland’s Competitiveness. He also referenced the informal workgroups list and requested members review the list and sign up for any of interest. Chair Castleberry then requested Dana Stebbins, Council Member, who chairs the Maryland Economic Development Commission (MEDC) to distinguish the differences between the entities.

Ms. Stebbins provided a comparison of the entities reflecting on the statutory requirements of the Commission and noted that a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been published for a Strategic Plan to guide the focus of the industry sectors for the Department. Several members requested the link to the RFP announcement which will distributed as follow up.

Chair Castleberry then requested Secretary Anderson to address the members. The discussion led to questions on the RFP; industries that the Department focuses on attraction; how business attraction is conducted; process the State followed in its efforts to attract Amazon; business retention and expansion as low hanging fruit for growing jobs; Maryland’s sales pitch to Site Selection Consultants; and the process of digging into the supply chain to find prospects. Secretary Anderson offered to have the Commerce Business Attraction and Retention and Growth Teams present at a future meeting to walk through the process. He will request the Communications Team to provide a brief “elevator pitch” to be given to the members for chance encounters to prospects and presented the members with Ambassador Lapel pins.

V. Maryland’s Economic Competitiveness

Ms. Mary Kane began her presentation by stating she was delighted to present highlights from the Chamber’s 2024 Competitiveness Redbook which is planned to be published annually. The Redbook is a compilation of rankings and rates which reflect comparisons of states’ competitiveness. Ms. Kane noted she had attended a recent Annual State Chamber CEO conference where the tops factors of site selection consultants was discussed as presented by an economist at Economic Leadership, LLC.

Top site selection issues:

- Availability of skilled labor
- Energy Availability
- TIE between 3 - Labor Costs, Proximity to major markets, state, and local incentives
- Energy Costs
- TIE between 3 - Highway Accessibility, Proximity to suppliers, Availability of land
- Expedited/fast-tracked permitting
- Construction costs

Ms. Kane then reviewed the State's assets and concerns for 2024. She emphasized the need for the State to promote the diversity of its population; its stagnant job market; high costs to do business and the loss of population resulting in declining communities; and stated the recent legislative backed letter in support of immigration is a positive to assist with workforce. She then reviewed a presentation on population; non-agricultural employment growth; business friendliness rankings; State expenditures on roadways; Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and exports; and the state of the Technology Workforce.

Ms. Kane answered questions from the Council which included the list of criteria for site selection consultants. The list to be forwarded as follow up.

Messrs. Andy Schaufele, Chief Deputy Comptroller, Robert Rehrmann, Director of Bureau of Revenue Estimates and Ben Seigel, Deputy Comptroller for Policy, all of the Office of the Comptroller continued the presentation on competitiveness by presenting the recently released inaugural State of the Economy Report Briefing. The report is intended to better understand the economic trends in Maryland relative to the nation and neighboring states and Maryland's key challenges, strengths and opportunities. The Report was conducted to highlight recent fluctuations the State's recent economic environment and assist legislators, businesses and the general public to understand and respond to the economy.

Messrs. Schaufele, Rehrmann and Seigel then provided a presentation on the U.S. Employment, Productivity and GDP; Labor Force Participation Rate Trends; Population and Migration Trends; Net Flow of Maryland Migration; Population and Migration Trends; Maryland Jobs Forecast; and Housing Prices and Inventory. Discussion occurred among the Council members and presenters.

Lastly, Mr. James Palma, Director of Research, Department of Commerce provided an brief overview of Maryland's unemployment rate; the key to continued post pandemic recovery lies in Marylanders re-entering the workforce; jobs losses by industry sectors; population growth by the U.S. Census; international in-migration exceeding new domestic out-migration; ratings of Marylanders' working outside the state; and illustrations of the tracking of key economic indicators. He answered questions from the Council.

All three (3) presentations on file.

VI. Legislative Briefing

Mr. Brad Fallon, Deputy Legislative Officer, Office of the Governor reviewed a guide to bills in the Governor's legislative package for the 2024 Legislative Session relative to Maryland's Competitiveness and Affordability. He referenced the guide would be distributed and encourage members supporting to submit letters or emails to the effect to their legislators.

VII. Good of the Order

Ms. Christy Wyskiel revisited the recommendations provided in the meeting materials. It was noted by Council members that Recommendation #2 must be practical and that a single sign on system should be implemented among State Agencies to ease the permitting process.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the letter to the Governor and with the two (2) recommendations was approved.

VIII. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 11:06am.