



February 9, 2024
60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis
9:00 -11:00am
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Will Castleberry, Chair
Matthew Bjonerud
Loren Douglass
Reza Jafari
Mary Kane
Ambassador Karen Kornbluh
Jerrod Moton
Brian Pieninck
Alec Ross
Sudhir Sekhsaria, MD
Herman Singh
Dana Stebbins, MSW, Esq.
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
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield - Virtual
Author, Bologna Business School - Virtual
MedStar Union Memorial Hospital – Virtual
Virtual
The Cornelius Group
Johns Hopkins University

Ex-Officio Members:

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller
Secretary Portia Wu
Secretary Helene Grady

State of Maryland
Department of Labor
Department of Budget and Management

Guests:

Meryam Bouadjemi
Pokuaa Owusu-Acheaw
Ben Seigel
Dani DiPietro
Heather Gramm
Jennifer LaHatte
Julie Woepke
Jerel Registre
Walter Donoughe
Jim Palma
Ashley Sharpe
Erin Roth
Abbi Ludwig
Chris Moyer
Larry Twele

Office of the Governor
Office of the Lt. Governor
Office of the Comptroller
Office of the Comptroller
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce – Virtual
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce – Virtual
Department of Labor
Department of Labor – Virtual
Maryland Chamber of Commerce
Consultant
Eastport Partners

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Will Castleberry called the meeting to order at 9:07am and welcomed members and attendees. He thanked the Maryland Chamber of Commerce for hosting the meeting.

II. Minutes of the December 20, 2023 Meeting (revised) and January 26, 2024

Chair Castleberry noted an additional amendment to the December 20 minutes was offered to record the attendance of ex-officio members as voting members. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes as amended of the December 20, 2023 meeting were approved.

With no additional amendments to the January 26 meeting minutes offered, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the January 26 meeting were approved.

III. Discussion of Governor Moore's State Plan – Lt. Governor

Chair Castleberry recognized Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and thanked her for being in attendance. Lt. Governor Miller commended council members for their work to improve Maryland's economic competitiveness. She then offered an overview of the Governor's newly released State Plan to make the State of Maryland safer, more affordable, more competitive, and committed to service. Lt. Governor Miller noted that over the coming months, the State will identify and track these objectives through key performance indicators, with an initial report being released by the end of 2024 or in early 2025.

Council members expressed their support for the Governor's State Plan and asked to receive regular updates on the key performance indicator collection progress as developments arise.

IV. Workforce Development

Secretary Portia Wu began her presentation by identifying two (2) key factors that will determine whether Maryland achieves its economic competitiveness goals; maintaining a skilled workforce that is prepared to meet the needs of emerging business sectors; and helping Marylanders who have left the labor force to come back to work. Secretary Wu identified three (3) programs within the Department of Labor that, if given the necessary funding, will facilitate the creation of a strong workforce talent pipeline and stimulate economic growth.

Secretary Wu then offered an overview of these programs—the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) grant program, registered apprenticeship reimbursement and tax credit programs. She also referenced the new Talent Innovation Fund—and noted that legislation has been introduced to establish or expand these programs. Secretary Wu referenced a goal within the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to graduate 45 percent of Maryland high school students with apprenticeships by 2030.

Secretary Wu left the meeting to fulfill other commitments before the end of her presentation, so Assistant Secretary Erin Roth concluded the presentation with a discussion of the Governor's Workforce Development Board and stated that the Board will publish a workforce development plan in the spring of

Discussion among the council and Department of Labor representatives included the return on investment for programs; the mechanics and types of apprenticeship programs; industry sector workgroups of the Workforce Development Board; and the importance of building pipelines to industries of the future. Chair Castleberry and council members mentioned the importance of workforce training, noting that funding workforce development is always a good investment.

V. Chair's Report

Chair Castleberry reported that as a follow-up to the January 26th meeting, the Council transmitted the letter with two (2) recommendations to the Governor. He indicated he would be following up with the Governor's Deputy Legislative Officer for feedback and next steps. He also referenced the Guide to the Bills of the Governor's legislative package with sample testimony/letter, hearing schedule and the list of Legislators to reach out regarding the transmittal to the Governor.

Chair Castleberry then referenced the informal workgroups and sought members to lead. After discussion among the members, Christy Wyskiel offered to lead the Economic Development Strategy/Structure, Reza Jafari offered to lead the Workforce, and Dana Stebbins offered to lead a Land Use Workgroup. The Chair thanked them for leading.

VI. Legislative Initiative Letters

Chair Castleberry referenced three (3) documents of support included in the meeting materials. The first letter references support of the BioHub Maryland Workforce Initiative; testimony in favor of The Critical Infrastructure Streamlining Act of 2024; and testimony in favor of The Transparent Government Act of 2024. Several council members expressed an interest in appearing to give oral testimony in support of these bills. Council members also discussed submitting testimony in opposition to legislation that would reduce eligibility for a data center tax exemption, noting that the bill would reduce Maryland's ability to compete with other states in attracting data center business. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council approved forwarding of the letter and testimony.

VII. Maryland Innovation Ecosystem

Ms. Christy Wyskiel began her presentation by reiterating the previous discussion related to protecting the State's ability to attract and retain data center operations, connecting it to the importance of realizing Maryland's tech development assets. Ms. Wyskiel remarked on the immense growth potential of the tech sector, highlighting that, for every job created in the software, technology, and life-science industry, five (5) additional jobs would be created within the local economy. Given Maryland's high concentration of scientists and engineers, coupled with its outstanding biopharma and innovation status nationally, Ms. Wyskiel emphasized that Maryland is in a prime position to invest in venture-funded tech startups.

Using examples from other states, from Baltimore, and within Johns Hopkins University, Ms. Wyskiel demonstrated how the state can benefit from massive returns on investment into tech startups. Ms. Wyskiel concluded by outlining next steps, which include making capital investments, providing focused support for tech business founders, and advertising Maryland's business success stories.

Chair Castleberry thanked Ms. Wyskiel for her presentation and restated the importance of identifying key sectors in which to make 'all-in' investments. Council members shared this sentiment, and discussed ways the state could take advantage of this opportunity by attracting international customers to Maryland, retaining current in-state tech businesses, and cutting red tape.

VIII. Good of the Order

Council members discussed the possibility of asking the Governor to announce the appointed council members and expressed a desire to invite entrepreneurs from the region, state legislators, and other notable public officials to future council meetings as guest speakers.

IX. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.