



April 26, 2024
60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis
9:00 -11:00am
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Will Castleberry, Chair	Netflix
Matthew Bjonerud	Cerebro Capital
Vernon Thompson	CEO, Strategic Path Forward
Reza Jafari	e-Development International
Mary Kane	Maryland Chamber of Commerce
Ambassador Karen Kornbluh	German Marshall Fund of the U.S. – Virtual
Jerrod Moton	Goldman Edwards
Brian Pieninck	CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
Alec Ross	Author, Bologna Business School - Virtual
Sudhir Sekhsaria, MD	MedStar Union Memorial Hospital – Virtual
Herman Singh	Virtual
Dana Stebbins, MSW, Esq.	The Cornelius Group
Christy Wyskiel	Johns Hopkins University

Ex-Officio Members:

Secretary Kevin Anderson	Department of Commerce
Secretary Helene Grady	Department of Budget and Management

Guests:

Meryam Bouadjemi	Office of the Governor – Virtual
Michael Thomas	Office of the Lt. Governor – Virtual
Andy Schaufele	Office of the Comptroller
Ben Seigel	Office of the Comptroller – Virtual
Heather Gramm	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Jennifer LaHatte	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jerel Registre	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Jim Palma	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Jayson Knott	Department of Commerce
Racheal Parker	Department of Labor
Larry Twele	Eastport Partners
Chris Moyer	Blue Fin Consulting

I. Meeting called to Order

Chair Will Castleberry called the meeting to order at 9:06am and welcomed members and attendees.

II. Minutes of the March 8, 2024 Meeting

Upon a motion duly made and second, the minutes of the March 8, 2024 meeting were approved with no additional amendments.

III. Chair's Report

Chair Castleberry began his presentation by highlighting that the Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse on March 26th and its recovery has brought national and international attention to the State and the City of Baltimore. The Governor is messaging to live Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong and seize the opportunity to show the world the support, dedication and remarkable assets and importance of Maryland. He thanked the generous Council members for their support in the recovery efforts and requested Jonny Dorsey Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor on Innovation and Impact to give an update on the Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong Alliance.

Mr. Dorsey reported that \$15 million had been contributed to date and thanked the many generous donors and supporters. He noted the partnership with the Baltimore Community Foundation's (BCF) which published a [grant application process](#) on April 12th for organizations that are providing relief and response services and for community organizations that are addressing the needs of affected communities that face direct and tangible effects of the Bridge collapse.

He stated the BCF will prioritize grant making opportunities in the following areas: 1) port workers and their families, 2) first responders and their families, and 3) surrounding communities. Within the first criteria, Mr. Dorsey stated BCF plans to identify and vet at least three (3) cash assistance partners to provide cash assistance to port workers directly affected by disruption at the port.

Mr. Dorsey concluded his update and answered questions from the Council.

Keeping with the Governor's Office, Chair Castleberry introduced Brad Fallon, Deputy Legislative Officer to provide an update on the legislative session and the bills which the MEC provided testimony. He thanked those Commissioners who testified on the bills and spoke with legislators.

IV. Department of Commerce – Business Development Process

Secretary Anderson began his presentation by describing the offices within the Business and Industry Sector Division who focus on attraction. He then described the functions of the Office of Strategic Industries and Entrepreneurship, and Trade Shows that the Department participates in that result in leads nationally and internationally. Secretary Anderson continued by giving more details on the Office of International Investment and Trade, the locations of the Department's offices throughout the world and the Global Gateway Initiative.

Secretary Anderson then introduced Jayson Knott, Director of Business Attraction Team who described the attraction process with two-thirds of the leads resulting from site selectors. He stated the team attends conferences and trade shows; conducts direct call missions twice a year; and distributes a quarterly newsletter. He noted the majority of site selectors are located in Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York and Greenville, South Carolina.

Mr. Knott then provided an overview of a case study; described current Administration project wins; and the Department success rate. He continued by stating the Department is actively working on a pipeline of 27 total opportunities, which represent 18,884 jobs and \$11.5 billion in capital expenditure. He went on to illustrate the pipeline opportunities by region and industry. Presentation on file.

Discussion then occurred with the Council members on ways they could provide assistance to the Commerce team.

V. Comptroller's Quarterly Report – Immigration and Maryland's Economy

Mr. Ben Seigel, Deputy Comptroller for Policy, Public Works and Investment then presented the recently released brief on Immigration and the Economy in Maryland. This is their first brief in the State of the Economy series coming on the heels of the January release of the Comptroller's first-ever State of the Economy Report, which they briefed the Council in January.

Mr. Seigel described the main takeaways from the study include the immigrant population and labor force growth are offsetting losses among U.S. born residents; immigrants are restricted from accessing key industries and occupations, holding back economic growth; and Maryland is poised to attract even greater levels of immigrants to population and labor force. He described immigration growth trends, comparative trends with other states, population growth by category, labor force participation rates; and highlighted key industry/occupation restrictions.

Discussion occurred with the Council members including that 16% of Maryland's population are immigrants; challenges with green cards; assistance needed for naturalization process and H-1B cap levels.

VI. Workgroup Updates

Chair Castleberry noted that at the last meeting, Vernon Thompson was requested to examine state and local coordination efforts and that his report was distributed. Mr. Thompson gave a high level overview and asked for input.

Ms. Christy Wyskiel reported the Economic Strategy/Structure Workgroup met on the 25th and that a summary as being compiled.

Mr. Reza Jafari report the Workforce Workgroup met in early April and he provided a brief summary emphasizing the need to examine the supply and demand for workforce. He requested the Workgroup summary be distributed after the meeting.

VII. Good of the Order

Chair Castleberry raised the review of the draft outline of the MEC Report which was distributed at the last meeting. He noted it is a working document and requested members review in light of the Workgroups discussions.

After a brief discussion on the timeline of the report, it was the consensus of the Council to meet in May and hold a half day retreat in June to begin the report. Jerel Registre was requested to provide the timeline for the Strategic Plan which will coincide with the Council's Report.

V. Adjournment

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

