



March 7, 2025
Virtual
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair
Jane Brown
Harry Coker, Secretary
Andy Forssell
Renard Jenkins
David O’Ferrall
Sumi Parekh

Office of the Governor
Robert W. Deutsch Foundation
Department of Commerce
Formerly HBO Max, Hulu
Formerly Warner Bros. Discovery
IASTE Local 487
Group Effort Initiative

Guests:

Catherine Batavick
Steven Skerritt-Davis
Cori Duggins
Walter Donoghue
Brad Fallon
Christy Wyskiel
Jerel Registre
Manny Welsh

Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce
Department of Commerce
Governor’s Office
Governor’s Office
Johns Hopkins University
Department of Commerce
Governor’s Office

I. Meeting called to Order

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

II. Meeting Minutes - October 4, 2024

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the amended minutes of October 4, 2024, were approved.

III. Briefing from the Governor's Office

Chair Bouadjemi invited Manny Welsh and Brad Fallon from the Governor's Office to provide updates on the state of Maryland's economy. Mr. Welsh began by thanking the Council members for their dedication to Maryland's entertainment industry and their service to the State. He emphasized that strengthening Maryland's presence in the entertainment sector is essential for maintaining the state's competitiveness and diversifying its economy.

Mr. Welsh pointed out that 5% of Maryland's workforce is tied to the federal government, making the state particularly vulnerable to policy changes in Washington. He assured the Council that the Governor and the Department of Labor are working diligently to support and advocate for laid-off federal workers. He also noted that the administration faces significant fiscal challenges, including a \$3 billion budget deficit and a \$200 million reduction in revenue projections for FY 2025.

Mr. Fallon added that the administration is pursuing a comprehensive approach to economic development, recognizing the interconnection of various issues. He highlighted that 66% of those migrating out of Maryland fall within the 17–34 age group. Factors such as housing, quality of life, and employment opportunities contribute to this trend. As the administration works to broaden its revenue base, addressing this out-migration is a key priority.

Additionally, Mr. Fallon discussed the [DECADE Act](#), which revises the designation, administration, and objectives of certain economic development programs to increase the state's return on investment. Regarding the MEIC, the relevant provisions include lifting the cap on tax credits and maintaining \$20 million in funding for film production incentives over the coming years. Additionally, the Procurement Reform Act is expected to expand opportunities for smaller businesses and several bills focused on apprenticeships are also being introduced during this legislative session.

IV. Johns Hopkins University Data Science and AI Institute

Chair Bouadjemi welcomed Christy Wyskiel to speak about the Johns Hopkins University Data Science and AI Institute. She shared that Hopkins has both received and contributed more investment in AI than Stanford, Harvard, and MIT combined. While the university's primary focus is on medical advancements, many innovations and proposals have emerged from faculty and students in the broader technology space—often with AI serving as the intersection between technology and health. The institute's goal is to commercialize these breakthroughs so that Maryland can be a leader in AI and maintain its status within the life sciences industry.

Councilor Renard Jenkins noted that copyright issues will pose a major challenge in the coming months and years; and suggested that the institute considers how these concerns might impact startups in the AI health industry.

V. MSAC Updates

Director Skerritt-Davis explained that Maryland could face up to \$1 million in funding cuts from the National Endowment for the Arts due to recent federal policy changes. He emphasized that, despite these shifts, the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) will remain committed to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. He then presented a PowerPoint of the economic impact from MSAC.

Presentation on file.

VI. Good of the Order

Chair Bouadjemi invited Councilman David O’Ferrall to address the group. Councilman O’Ferrall discussed the current film office vacancy and described skills that he thought should be considered for that position.

VII. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:44 pm.