



Thursday November 2, 2023

3:00-4:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Lynda Hefner, Chair	Clark Machine
Kelly Koermer	Carroll Community College
Sue Chambers	Strouse
Luke Chow	Prime Manufacturing Technologies, Inc
Sam Griffith	National Jet
April Richardson	Food Opportunity LLC/Sweet Potato Cake
Bobby Patton	Patton Electronics

Notable Guest(s)

Steve Barry, Carroll Community College
Leslie Cheslie, Carroll County Public Schools
Angie McCauslin, Carroll County Public Schools

Commerce Staff:

Heather Gramm, Assistant Secretary BISD

I. Call to Order & Chairman Remarks

At 3:10pm Chair Lynda Hefner called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of the September 18th minutes

Board members were provided the draft minutes both via email and hard copy at the meeting. Lynda asked the Board to review the minutes, then requested a motion to approve. Sue Chambers made the motion, Kelly Koermer 2nd the motion, and with no discussion the minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Manufacturing 4.0 Grant Program Update

Lynda Hefner provided an update on the Department of Commerce's Manufacturing 4.0 (M4) grant program. Applications for the FY24 funding round closed on October 18th. 108 applications were received, and with \$1million in funding available, the maximum numbers of awards possible would be 40. Heather Gramm stated that Commerce expects to make award announcements in January 2024.

IV. Maryland Blueprint for Education Presentation (CCC and CCPS)

Angie McCauslin gave an overview of the Blueprint and the 5 pillars of the plan – 1) early childhood education; 2) high quality and diverse teachers and leaders; 3) college and career readiness; 4) more resources for all students to be successful; 5) governance and

accountability. She then focused on Pillar 3 – College and Career Readiness – as the pillar most relevant to the MMAB’s discussion on workforce. As part of the CCR pillar, all students are expected to meet the CCR standard (PGA of 3.0 or higher) by the end of 10th grade. If they don’t meet that standard, they are put into a remedial education plan, and are not eligible to participate in CTE programs. There was a lot of discussion about this new standard, with concerned expressed that a 3.0 GPA is a high standard, and that many kids who might not be able to meet that standard could still be successful in a technical training program. The Blueprint sets a goal for 45% of high school graduates completing an apprenticeship or an industry-recognized occupational credential.

Kelly Koermer asked the group for feedback on industry credentials for manufacturing that are important. Luke Chow noted that there are plastic molding/tubing certifications that are offered through a national association. Many noted that industry certification is not as important as a strong work ethic – if someone will show up and work hard, the employers can usually teach them what they need to know and provide them training necessary specific to their position.

Leslie Cheslie then gave a presentation on the Pre-Apprenticeship program, which does have a requirement for a certification of completion at the end for graduation requirements. Several of the MMAB members noted the challenges for employers to participate in this program, especially small and mid-sized businesses, and that there is not enough incentive built into the program to participate.

Heather Gramm asked the CCPS team how the MMAB or other manufacturers could be helpful in supporting these new goals in the Blueprint. Suggestions included

- Serve as a guest speaker in the high schools
- Provide facility tours to both educators and students
- Provide input on updates to curriculum

V. Discussion on MMAB Recommendations to Secretary of Commerce

Heather shared the official “duties” of the MMAB from the statute that governs the Board’s activities: The Board shall advise the Secretary on the best methods to implement the policy directives of the action plan for manufacturing competitiveness in the State, including:

- (1) encouraging the development of new manufacturing enterprises and the expansion and retention of existing manufacturing enterprises;
- (2) encouraging and facilitating training and education of individuals for manufacturing jobs;
- (3) producing a climate conducive to the growth and viability of manufacturing enterprises;
- (4) supporting research necessary to evaluate, plan, and execute effective promotion of manufacturing enterprises; and
- (5) encouraging, assisting, and coordinating the activities of local, regional, and national public or private organizations that promote manufacturing.

The Board members agreed that they want to prioritize the development of a document to submit to the Secretary of Commerce, that outlines what the MMAB believes to be the most important topics for Maryland manufacturers as well as recommendations for Commerce to consider to support the manufacturing sector in Maryland.

The Board began with a review of the recommendations from the Transforming Manufacturing Workgroup report, which was submitted to the General Assembly in December 2022.

The first recommendation was for increased funding for the Manufacturing 4.0 grant program. Members in attendance were in unanimous support of this recommendation.

The second recommendation was for the creation of a Manufacturing Innovation Center. There was a lot of discussion on this, and it was agreed that more information was needed before the group could come to consensus on this recommendation.

In a brief review of the remaining recommendations, it was agreed that the Board members would need more time to review these recommendations, and have further discussion at the next meeting. In addition to the recommendations in the TMW report, the group agreed that a broader conversation was needed about key issues for manufacturing and recommendations that may be more broad in scope than the recommendations in the TMW report.

VI. Adjournment of MMAB Business Meeting

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. by the Chair.