



Monday, December 22, 2025

1:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

April Richardson, Food Opportunity (Chair)
Mina Izadjoo, Ph.D., Integrated PharmaServices
Susan Chambers, The Strouse Corporation
Luke Chow, Prime Manufacturing Technologies, Inc.
Greg Maxwell, Northrop Grumman
Sam Griffith, National Jet Company
N. Scott Phillips, N. Scott Phillips Consulting

Commerce Staff & Invited Speakers:

Ulyana Desiderio, Senior Director, OSIE
Benjamin McGlaughlin, Manufacturing Program Manager, OSIE

I. Call to Order & Chairman Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 PM by April Richardson, Chair. Chair Richardson welcomed board members and attendees.

II. Review and Acceptance of the December 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Board members were provided the draft meeting minutes from the December 8, 2025 meeting in advance. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Sue Chambers and seconded by Greg Maxwell. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously, and the minutes were approved as presented.

III. Board Discussion Re: Advancing Maryland's Manufacturing Sector

Chair April Richardson, Esq. provided clarification regarding the advisory process, noting that formal Board votes are not required for the transmittal of recommendations. Authority to advance recommendations to the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Commerce rests with the Chair.

It was further clarified that the compiled recommendations are intended for review by the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Commerce, and subsequently the Governor.

The Board discussed and affirmed the inclusion of the following thematic recommendation areas in the 2025 report:

Workforce Development and Education

Board members reiterated that workforce challenges remain the most significant barrier facing Maryland manufacturers. Prior discussions within the board emphasized:

- Barriers within the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, including GPA thresholds impacting access to Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- The need to expand and better support career coaches and employer engagement
- Increased parent and student awareness of manufacturing career pathways
- Expanded use of apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships
- Exploration of early college / early career models that integrate paid work experience with secondary education

Scaling Maryland Manufacturing 4.0

The Board reaffirmed its long-standing recommendation to expand funding for the Maryland Manufacturing 4.0 program. Prior discussion highlighted:

- Significant unmet demand relative to available funding
- The importance of democratizing access to advanced manufacturing technologies for small and mid-sized firms
- Alignment with national smart manufacturing principles emphasizing scalable adoption and practical implementation
- Competitiveness, Costs, and Site Readiness
- Board members reiterated concerns regarding:
 - High energy costs and permitting delays
 - Variability in competitiveness across counties
 - Opportunities for energy efficiency investments
 - Reuse of vacant or underutilized industrial sites
 - Support for legacy manufacturers planning leadership or ownership transitions
 - Tax Policy and Innovation Incentives
- The Board discussed the importance of:
 - Evaluating state-level approaches to offset recent federal changes to R&D tax incentives
 - Encouraging in-state procurement and manufacturing
 - Strengthening linkages between Maryland-based innovators and in-state manufacturing capacity to ensure technologies developed in Maryland are also produced in Maryland

Building a Coordinated Industrial Strategy

Members emphasized the value of a coordinated, ecosystem-based industrial strategy

that aligns:

- State agencies
- Universities and federal laboratories
- Community colleges and workforce partners
- Industry and accelerators
- Particular attention was given to Maryland's strengths in defense, aerospace, life sciences, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing.

Discussion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Manufacturing

An additional recommendation related to Artificial Intelligence in manufacturing was introduced by the Chair for consideration.

Key discussion points included:

- Strategic emphasis: The Board agreed that AI should be recognized as a critical component of the future of manufacturing and that the Department of Commerce should continue to integrate AI considerations into manufacturing policy, programs, and planning.
- Access and equity: Discussion emphasized the importance of ensuring that AI tools and capabilities are accessible to small and mid-sized manufacturers.
- Intellectual property protection: Board members underscored the need for safeguards to protect proprietary data and intellectual property, particularly for smaller firms engaging with AI technologies.

The Chair noted that the inclusion of AI in the 2025 recommendations would remain principle-based and forward-looking, with the opportunity for the Board to develop more detailed AI-focused recommendations during the 2026 planning cycle.

IV. Public Comments/Discussion

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

V. Closing Remarks

The next meeting date is scheduled for January 26, 2025 from 10am - 12pm as a hybrid meeting. Meeting notice will be sent out over the next few weeks.

VI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by N. Scott Phillips and seconded by Susan Chambers. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:48 PM.