



Monday, September 18, 2023

3:00-4:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Lynda Hefner, Chair	Clark Machine
Suzy Ganz	Lion Brothers
Mina Izadjoo	Integrated Pharma Services, LLC
Kelly Koermer	Carroll Community College
Greg Maxwell	Northrop Grumman Corporation
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo	MD House of Delegates
Sue Chambers	Strouse
Luke Chow	Prime Manufacturing Technologies, Inc
Sam Griffith	National Jet
April Richardson	Food Opportunity LLC/Sweet Potato Cake

Notable Guest(s)

Mike Kelleher	MD MEP
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Commerce Staff:

Heather Gramm, Assistant Secretary BISD

I. Call to Order & Chairman Remarks

At 3:05pm Chair Lynda Hefner called the meeting to order. With many new members on the MMAB, each member was given a chance to introduce themselves. Lynda thanked the Maryland MEP for hosting the meeting at their offices.

II. Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership Updates

Mike Kelleher with MD MEP welcomed the MMAB to their offices, and provided an overview of their organization. The MD MEP is part of the national NIST network of MEP centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Mike and his team have held the contract with NIST for 10 years, with financial matching contributions from Maryland Department of Commerce. Serving mostly small and mid-size manufacturers (500 employees or less), Maryland MEP provides an array of programs and services to help these local companies operate more efficiently, grow profitability, implement new technologies and create more jobs and opportunities in Maryland. Their services focus on 5 key areas of business: strategy and growth, process and innovation, technology and cybersecurity; supply chain and defense, and workforce.

III. Discussion on MMAB Top Priorities Survey

Prior to the meeting, a survey was sent out to members of the MMAB to gauge their assess their priorities for supporting manufacturing in Maryland, and areas that should be a priority for the MMAB's work in 2024. The results of the survey were also distributed to members ahead of the meeting.

Lynda reviewed the results, noting that the 2 areas that had the highest level of interest were Workforce (#1 response) and Industry 4.0/technology adoption for manufacturers (#2 response).

A discussion among the members followed, with a primary focus on workforce. It was acknowledged that workforce is a key issue facing many industries, and that the greatest challenge can be just getting dependable people to show up to work. Skills training was also discussed, as were ideas about reaching both kids and their parents while they are in middle and high school to increase awareness of good job opportunities in manufacturing.

Kelly gave an overview of the Maryland Blueprint for Education, legislation that was passed by the Marland General Assembly, which includes comprehensive changes to Maryland's early childhood and public schools. Increasing education funding by \$3.8 billion each year over the next 10 years, the Blueprint will enrich student experiences, accelerate student outcomes and improve the overall quality of education in Maryland. The legislation requires that 45% of students earn an industry certification or pre-apprenticeship experience. She noted that every county is implementing this legislation in different ways, but that school systems are required to higher career coaches in middle and high schools (starting this school year). She suggested that these career coaches present an opportunity for Maryland manufacturers to engage – perhaps create modules that career navigators can use to showcase manufacturing to students, or help to create videos, curriculum, host facility tours and develop summer camp programming all focused on awareness of and skill in the manufacturing sector.

Greg noted that reaching students was one aspect of the workforce challenge. From his perspective there are 3 aspects to creating a pipeline of workforce: 1) basic life skills, 2) awareness/interest in the industry, and 3) hard skills/technical training. He also noted that the shift to a work-from-home mentality among the current workforce has created new challenges for the manufacturing industry as employers try to recruit talent.

April stated that from her perspective there should be 2 areas of focus for the MMAB: 1) make sure Maryland leaders recognize the importance of the manufacturing industry, and 2) change the face/perception of manufacturing. She asked the group to think about how the industry could also reach college graduates and get them to think differently about how their knowledge/education translate to manufacturing. She also noted that the HBCUs in Maryland could be a great resource.

Aside from workforce and industry 4.0, it was also noted that new federal legislation changed the federal R&D tax credit, making it much more difficult for manufacturers to realize value from this credit. Expenses must now be capitalized over 5 years.

IV. Transforming Maryland Manufacturing Workgroup (Heather Gramm)

Heather provided the Board with the final recommendations adopted by the Maryland Transforming Manufacturing Workgroup in December 2022. She noted that, of the 10 recommendations, only one resulted in legislation during the 2023 session – establishing the Manufacturing 4.0 grant program.

After much discussion, it was agreed that the Board would further review these recommendations, and use their next meeting to discuss and make recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce regarding priority focus areas and issues to address in order to strengthen Maryland’s manufacturing sector. These recommendations will be used to inform the Department’s strategic planning process, which will kick off in early 2024.

V. Maryland Manufacturing 4.0 Program Update

The group ran out of time, this item will be discussed during the November meeting.

VI. Adjournment of MMAB Business Meeting

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. by the Chair.