

Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Department of Economic and Community Development
February 17, 2022
1:00 -2:30 PM
via Teams Meeting

Attendance

- Board Members Present: Colin Cooper, Paul Lavoie, Mike Rocheleau, Kelli Vallieres, John Zoldy, Beverlee Dacey, Don Balducci, Mark Burzynski
- Board Members Absent: Chris DiPentima, Shane Eddy, Emir Redzic
- Quorum: Yes
- Stakeholders & Guests: Bernice Zampano (DOL), Todd Berch (DOL), Ron Angelo (CCAT), Paul Striebel (CCAT), John Glidden (CCAT), Jackie Garofano (CCAT), Mary Bidwell (CSCU), Mike Stimson (CONNSTEP), Leigh Appleby (CSCU), Jennifer Widness (CCIC), Shannon Marimon (ReadyCT), Deb Presbie (ReadyCT), Jessica Taylor (ACM), Beatriz Gutierrez (CONNSTEP), Michael Polo (ACMT), Barbara Fernandez (UConn)
- DECD Staff: Carmen Molina-Rios, Beth Trenchard

Welcome & Introductions

Colin Cooper introduced Paul Lavoie – the newly appointed Chief Manufacturing Officer (CMO) and Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board Chair. Mr. Lavoie opened the meeting at 1:03 PM and turned it over to Colin Cooper (former CMO and Board Chair) to facilitate the meeting.

Minutes (Vote)

Mike Rocheleau moved to have the December 7, 2021 meeting minutes approved. Don Balducci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2022 Meeting Schedule (Vote)

The Board reviewed the meeting schedule for calendar year 2022. Mark Burzynski moved to have the 2022 meeting schedule approved. Mike Rocheleau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Portfolio

Colin Cooper provided an overview of the funding status of the major programs and administrative expenditures. The only new expenditure from the previous Board meeting was the administrative funding used for preparation of the annual report.

Programs

Colin Cooper prefaced the discussion on continuing the legacy programs (Manufacturing Voucher Program, Incumbent Worker Training Program, and Apprenticeship Program – as well as the proposed SIRI and Cyber Assistance Program) by noting that approximately 94% of the funding for each of these programs passes through the administrator and is provided directly to the program participants.

Mr. Cooper referenced the Program Summary spreadsheet distributed to the Board prior to the meeting which outlines the funding amounts previously approved for the legacy programs and new initiatives, as well as the proposed program administrators and additional information the Board will be voting on in the meeting.

Manufacturing Voucher Program (Vote)

Colin Cooper provided an overview of the Manufacturing Voucher Program (MVP) and the proposal from the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) to continue administration of the program under the new program parameters. Mr. Cooper referenced the Board's prior approval of the new program parameters and funding of \$2.1 million to continue the MVP. There were no comments or questions by Board members and the following was voted upon:

Approval to accept the MVP with the guidelines as communicated and previously agreed upon and contract with CCAT for administration.

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Kelli Vallieres seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Incumbent Worker Training Program (Vote)

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program has historically been administered by staff at the CT Department of Labor (DOL). Colin Cooper informed the Board that DOL notified him that the agency will no longer have the capacity to run the program due to staff attrition.

Mr. Cooper discussed the proposal provided by CCAT to administer the IWT Program. DECD, DOL and CCAT will coordinate the final details to transition the program to CCAT. A discussion ensued among Board members.

As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

Approval to move forward towards contracting under the terms as outlined in the meeting materials and previously approved funding of \$1.5 million with CCAT administering the program.

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Kelli Vallieres seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Apprenticeship Program (Vote)

The Apprenticeship Program has historically been administered by staff at DOL. Colin Cooper informed the Board that DOL notified him that the agency will no longer have the capacity to run the program due to staff attrition but will continue to provide apprenticeship certification.

Mr. Cooper provided an overview of the new, simplified program parameters for the Apprenticeship Program and the proposal from CCAT to administer the program. A discussion ensued among Board members.

As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

Approval of the Apprenticeship Program under the terms outlined in the presentation materials providing funding of \$1 million with CCAT as the administrator at an administrative fee of 6%.

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Mark Burzynski seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Hearts & Minds Advertising Campaign (Vote)

Colin Cooper introduced Leigh Appleby from the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU). Leigh provided an overview of CSCU's proposal to develop and launch Connecticut's Hearts and Minds advertising campaign. The objectives of the campaign are to improve the overall image of manufacturing in Connecticut and drive enrollment to manufacturing programs at Connecticut's community colleges, technical and comprehensive high schools, and independent colleges and universities. To the extent possible, CSCU will utilize the Center for New Media at Middlesex Community College to develop video assets.

Board members Vallieres, Rocheleau, and Lavoie emphasized the importance of a fully integrated plan – leveraging funding resources and coordinating marketing campaigns/outreach efforts underway for CareerConneCT, Regional Sector Partnerships and the Workforce Investment Boards.

Mark Burzynski informed the Board that CT Public Television/American Graduate has produced content and a web page sponsored by Connecticut small manufacturers. The content may be usable for the campaign.

John Zoldy inquired about the status of enrollment in the community colleges. Mary Bidwell replied that enrollment rates are currently low and emphasized the need for a marketing campaign.

As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

Approval of the proposal submitted and included in the meeting package from CSCU to administer Connecticut's Hearts and Minds advertising campaign.

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Kelli Vallieres seconded *with the caveat that we ensure that collaboration with all these entities is included in the proposal.* The motion passed unanimously.

Engineering Internship Program (Vote)

Jackie Garofano provided an overview of CCAT's proposal to administer an Engineering Internship Program. The program will focus on attracting rising sophomore through senior

undergraduate engineering students to an internship experience within small to mid-sized manufacturing (SMM) companies in the Connecticut supply chain.

Jennifer Widness discussed the CT Conference of Independent College's proposal for a CT Manufacturing, Engineering & Technical (MET) Career Fair. The MET Career Fair is a statewide effort to bring technical employers and student candidates together for summer internships and full-time jobs. Attendance for the event will be open for high school students and their guardians to promote Connecticut's highly-paid, highly-skilled manufacturing sector.

Colin Cooper informed the Board that Beverlee Dacey suggested leveraging funding by incorporating the MET Career Fair into the Engineering Internship program proposal. CCAT has agreed to conduct the MET Career Fair with no additional funding – resulting in a \$25,000 cost savings.

Mike Rocheleau suggested looking in to perhaps aligning the Engineering Internship Program with the Governor's Innovation Fellowship underway at CTNext.

Kelli Vallieres mentioned CampusCT – a Governor's Workforce Council initiative working with AdvanceCT to develop a single front door for those seeking internships. Dr. Vallieres suggested ensuring there is a connection from the AdvanceCT website platform to the Engineering Internship Program.

Colin Cooper and Mike Rocheleau emphasized the importance of connecting with engineering students in their sophomore to junior year in college. They suggested offering employers higher wage reimbursements to incentivize them to bring on younger students to engage them earlier. Paul Lavoie suggested revising the proposal to reference the provision of grants up to \$3,500 – providing flexibility on the grant amounts.

As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

*Approval to accept the proposal and move to contract with the following modification to the proposal: "This initiative will provide a grant of up to **\$3,500** per intern ..."*

Paul Lavoie motioned and Mike Rocheleau seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Regional Career Fairs

Deb Presbie from ReadyCT provided an overview of the CT Exploring Careers in Manufacturing Statewide Roadshow. ReadyCT has worked in close consultation with the five Regional Sector Partnerships specific to manufacturing to design the career fairs. The series of regional career-focused events is intended to expand exploration and interest in manufacturing careers among middle and high school students, as well as students attending Connecticut's two- and four-year colleges.

Kelli Vallieres noted that ACM's career fair is a best practice and suggested using this successful model for the other career fairs being organized.

As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

Approval to accept the proposal as provided by ReadyCT and move toward contract on this.

Paul Lavoie motioned and Mike Rocheleau seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Digital Transformation/Cyber Security Roadmaps

Colin Cooper reviewed the information on the SIRI and CYBER (SAC) Assistance Program provided by CCAT to administer the program. The SAC program was developed to provide financial assistance to Connecticut manufacturing companies seeking Smart Industry Readiness Index (SIRI) and/or Cybersecurity assessments and roadmaps. The goal is to help companies striving to increase their awareness of and improve their implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies. The program will assist companies in understanding the cost and benefits of digital transformation, as well as address the cybersecurity practices needed during the transformation.

Paul Lavoie emphasized that this program is critical to strengthening the CT supply chain for our large OEM's.

As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

Approval to accept the proposal and move to contract on the proposed terms.

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Paul Lavoie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on New Initiatives

Colin Cooper provided an update on the status of the following initiatives:

Manufacturing Website – CONNSTEP is developing a comprehensive database of service providers to Connecticut manufacturers (estimated completion by end of April).

The Department of Administrative Services will develop and implement the website (estimated completion late June, at the earliest).

Manufacturing Regional Sector Partnerships – the Office of Workforce Strategy is looking to finance start-up costs and initiatives for the Regional Sector Partnerships out of their budget.

Other Business

Colin Cooper informed the Board that the motion to accept the 2021 Manufacturing Innovation Fund Annual Report passed via electronic vote on December 27, 2021 with a count of 8-yes and 1-no response. All discussion was had by December 24, 2021.

Meeting Adjournment

Paul Lavoie requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Rocheleau moved the motion and Kelli Vallieres seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lavoie closed the meeting at 2:45 PM.