**Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Advisory Board**

***Meeting Minutes***

**Department of Economic and Community Development**

February 2, 2021

10:30 AM -12:00 PM

***via Teams Meeting***

**Attendance**

* Board Members Present: Colin Cooper, Shane Eddy, Kelli Vallieres, Don Balducci, Chris DiPentima, Emir Redzic, Beverlee Dacey
* Board Members Absent: John Zoldy
* Quorum: Yes
* Stakeholders: Mike Rocheleau (PTA Plastics), Bernice Zampano (DOL), Nicholas Zuba (CT Green Bank), Ron Angelo (CCAT), Paul Striebel (CCAT), John Glidden (CCAT), Alyce Stiles (CCAT), Jeff Crandall (CCAT), Nasir Mannan (CCAT), Eric Brown (CBIA), Mary Bidwell (CSCU), Mike Stimson (CONNSTEP), Todd Berch (DOL)
* Public: Isabella Schroeder (Robinson & Cole)
* DECD Staff: Carmen Molina-Rios, Beth Trenchard

**Welcome & Introductions**

Colin Cooper opened the meeting at 10:36 AM.

**Minutes (Vote)**

Kelli Vallieres moved to have the December 3 and 11, 2020 meeting minutes approved. Don Balducci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**2021 Schedule of Meetings (Vote)**

The 2021 meeting schedule was provided to the Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Advisory Board members. The following was voted upon: Approval of the 2021 MIF Advisory Board Schedule of Meetings. Chris DiPentima motioned and Don Balducci seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Michael Rocheleau – PTA Corporation**

Colin Cooper introduced Michael Rocheleau who will be appointed to the MIF Advisory Board. Mr. Rocheleau is the Executive Vice President and CFO of PTA Plastics and will provide industry and geographic diversity to the Board.

**Governor’s Workforce Council – Workforce Strategic Plan**

As Executive Director of the Office of Workforce Strategy and Vice Chair of the Governor's Workforce Council (the Council), Kelli Vallieres provided an overview of the Council’s Workforce Strategic Plan (the Plan) – highlighting the following Core Strategic Priorities:

1. Business Leadership: building a dynamic workforce through a system of regional sector partnerships that integrate businesses’ needs with supporting parties.
2. Career Building and Education: helping students explore and enter educational programs that are aligned with in-demand career pathways.
3. Equity and Access: reducing the barriers that have limited access to training, sustainable work, and high-quality career opportunities.
4. Accountability and Data-Driven Management: designing and implementing innovative workforce solutions focused on delivering a comprehensive, intuitive customer experience.

Ms. Vallieres also discussed the following outcomes for residents demonstrated from the $14M in CARES Act funding used to launch new workforce training programs designed to meet current employer needs:

* $9M was spent on job training programs that trained an estimated 800 individuals in high-demand fields, including advanced manufacturing, IT and healthcare.
* $5M was spent on creating an additional 4,000 childcare slots for residents and increasing the supply of childcare workers.

Kelli Vallieres noted that the Council’s Workforce Strategic Plan is a “living” document and will be updated on an annual basis each October.

Colin Cooper emphasized that the Plan focuses on cooperation, collaboration and coordination – and addresses more than workforce development. The comprehensive Plan is an economic development competitiveness strategy for the state’s competitive advantage moving forward.

**Portfolio Update**

Colin Cooper provided an update on the MIF Financial Portfolio noting that there was a new expenditure since the previous report in December. $37,500 was allocated from the administrative funds for the Department of Labor to continue to administer the Incumbent Worker Training program through 12/31/21 – allowing for full expenditure of program funds. There remains a current balance of unallocated administrative funding of approximately $2.3M.

**Program Update: Manufacturing Voucher Program**

Paul Striebel provided a review of the revised criteria for continuing the Manufacturing Voucher Program (MVP) with the additional $5M provided by the Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD). Highlights of the new MVP requirements include:

* Former recipients prior to June 30, 2018 will be eligible to re-apply
* Eligible company size reduced from 300 to 100 employees
* Maximum award changed from $50k to $49k
* Match requirements range from 1:1 to 3:1

Processing of the 919 applications received to date resumed on 1/8/2021 – with 644 applications approved, 172 declined and 103 pending. Based upon pending requests totaling $4,400,013, the current funding available is $599,987.

Due to the changes in the company size, required match and previous participation, Mr. Striebel anticipates a higher decline rate than in previous years.

**Program Update: Industry 4.0 Voucher**

Ron Angelo provided an update on the Industry 4.0 Supply Chain Program. Through 12/31/20, 75 companies were introduced to IoT, Big Data & Analytics, Additive Manufacturing and Automation technologies; 22 virtual and on-demand events on Industry 4.0 technologies were held; and the Career Nexus database was utilized as part of the REV-Up! Connecticut Back to Work program for manufacturing employees.

The IoT Integration Voucher Program (IVP) provides funding assistance for the acquisition of hardware and software in the Industry 4.0 technology groups. $900k is available for the IVP and grants up to $20k will be awarded on a 1:1 matching basis. To date, 5 applications have been received – with 2 approved and 3 pending.

Outreach and program promotion is underway with bi-monthly emails to over 1,200 companies, industry groups and partners; social medial posts about upcoming programs; CCAT/AMEP webinars.

Upcoming planned activities include:

* Installation of sensors, CMM, robots and software
* Demonstrations and introductory workshops
* Revisit Career Nexus System
* Ongoing review and approval of IVP applications.

**Program Update: HRAM Program**

Due to time constraints, the HRAM Program update will be provided at the April MIF Advisory Board meeting.

**2021 Look Ahead**

Colin Cooper informed the Board that the MIF request has been incorporated into DECD’s overall funding request to the Governor. Once a formal approval and specific amount of funding is allocated to the MIF, the Board will engage in a strategic planning meeting to discuss the efficacy of the legacy programs, as well as potential new programs going forward.

**Meeting Adjournment**

Colin Cooper requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris DiPentima moved the motion and Shane Eddy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cooper closed the meeting at 12:02 PM