**Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board**

***Meeting Minutes***

**Department of Economic and Community Development**

October 5, 2021

10:30 AM -12:00 PM

***via Teams Meeting***

**Attendance**

* Board Members Present: Colin Cooper, Mike Rocheleau, Beverlee Dacey, Chris DiPentima, Emir Redzic
* Board Members Absent: Kelli Vallieres, John Zoldy, Shane Eddy, Don Balducci
* Quorum: Yes
* Stakeholders: Todd Berch (DOL), Bernice Zampano (DOL), Ron Angelo (CCAT), Paul Striebel (CCAT), Mary Bidwell (CSCU), Mike Stimson (CONNSTEP), Laura Baker (Office of Workforce Strategy), Mark Burzynski (Arthur G. Russell Co. Inc.), Ashley Zane (CBIA)
* DECD Staff: Carmen Molina-Rios, Michelle Hall, Beth Trenchard

**Welcome & Introductions**

Colin Cooper opened the meeting at 10:39 AM.

**Minutes (Vote)**

Mike Rocheleau moved to have the August 3, 2021 meeting minutes approved. Emir Redzic seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Portfolio**

Colin Cooper provided a funding status of the major programs and administrative expenditures. Total funding allocated for the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) is now $100 million since the FY22/23 biennial budget provides $20 million over the next two fiscal years, 2022 and 2023 respectively. The first $10 million for Fiscal 2022 (7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022) was authorized at the 7/23/21 State Bond Commission (SBC) meeting. The additional $10 million will need to be authorized by the SBC after 7/1/22. Of the new $20 million, $1M (5%) will be allocated for administrative purposes (per statute).

**Legacy Programs**

**Manufacturing Voucher Program (Vote)**

Per the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board (Board) strategy session, Colin Cooper proposed the following program parameters and funding level to continue the Manufacturing Voucher Program:

* + Fund companies with 3-100 full-time employees (FTE)
  + Support projects valued at $10,000 or more
  + Remove prohibition on funding for companies that have received an MVP grant subsequent to 6/30/18
  + Revert to lifetime maximum award of $100,000
  + Simplify Match Requirement
    - Option 1:
      * 2:1 All Applicants (33% Discount)
    - Option 2:
      * 2:1 First Time Applicant (33% Discount)
      * 3:1 Repeat Applicant (25% Discount)
  + Use of Funds:
    - Purchase of more than 50% of the assets of the business is not allowed
  + Funding – Up to $3,150,000

A discussion ensued among Board members. As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

*Approval to provide $2,100,000 to continue the Manufacturing Voucher Program with the new program parameters discussed, including increasing the minimum project size to $25,000 and implementing a match requirement of: 2:1 for first time applicants and 3:1 for repeat applicants.*

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Chris DiPentima seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Apprenticeship Program (Vote)**

Per the Board strategy session, Colin Cooper outlined the following program parameters and funding level to continue the Apprenticeship Program:

* + Eliminate Third Party training Reimbursement
  + Remove Credentialing Option
  + Modify Wage Reimbursement
    - Fixed amounts after completion of first and second year, as certified by the Dept. of Labor (DOL)
* Administration
  + DOL’s Continued Role
    - Work with employers to create apprenticeship programs
    - Certify completion by individuals
  + Engage other organization(s)
    - to define scope, programmatic content and administration of the other program component.
  + Funding – Up to $1,000,000

A discussion ensued among Board members. As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

*Approval to provide $1 million to continue the Apprenticeship Program with a new program administrator and simplified program parameters. Final approval of the Program will be subject to a vote by the MIF Board approving a) the program administrator and b) Procedures and Guidelines for the program.*

Mike Rocheleau motioned and Chris DiPentima seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**New Initiatives (Vote)**

Colin Cooper provided an overview of the six new initiatives and summary budget. The proposed initiatives are:

Engineering Interns

Digital Transformation/Cyber Security Roadmaps

CT Innovators/CT Manufacturers

Hearts & Minds Advertising Campaign

Manufacturing Website

Regional Career Fairs

Final approvals for each initiative will be subject to the Board voting on the funding amount, program administrator and Program Procedures & Guidelines. Mr. Cooper noted that timing may require the Board to hold a short meeting in November for specific program votes.

A discussion ensued among Board members. As a result of the discussion, the following was voted upon:

*Approval to authorize DECD staff, with a budgeted target amount of 3.7M, to identify the partner supplier for each program and further details around the program terms and conditions for the MIF Board to finalize by vote in the future.*

Chris DiPentima motioned and Mike Rocheleau seconded. The motion passed with a count of 4-yes and 1-no.

**Other Business**

Mike Rocheleau inquired about the timing and process of potentially shifting the MIF-funded workforce development programs to the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS). Mr. Cooper replied that the Chief Workforce Officer, Dr. Kelli Vallieres, is on board conceptually with this transition; however, the state funding is not yet available. OWS also needs to comply with the specific parameters re: how the federal funding may be used.

**Meeting Adjournment**

Colin Cooper requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Rocheleau moved the motion and Emir Redzic seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cooper closed the meeting at 11:52 PM