



MINUTES

EWIB Board of Directors Hybrid Meeting

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Nereida Braasch; Jim Butler; Ray Coombs; Jessica Corneau; Patricia Feeny; Thayne Hutchins, Jr.; Chris Jewell; Susan Kocaba; Linda Ladas; Liz Li; Andrew McKillop; Deborah Monahan; Courtney Murphy; Michael Phelps; Caleb Roseme; & Paul Whitescarver.

Staff Present: Michael Nogelo, Guy Saporito, Carol LaBelle, Sheila Taurianen, & Stephanie Wisniewski.

Others Present: Rob Austin, Tony Benoit, First Selectman Kevin Cunningham, Gumwatty Garcia, Kristin Hempel, David Jarvis, Andrea Messenger-Wright, Rep. Tammy Nuccio, Mayor Peter Nystrom, Sen. Cathy Osten, Rep. Kevin Ryan, Denise Spellman, Cyndi Wells, & Carol Williams.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chris Jewell called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made to accept the minutes of the May 23, 2023 EWIB Board of Directors meeting (*Butler/Phelps*). **Action:** Unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

EWIB President/CEO Michael Nogelo covered the following items:

- **CT Reentry Employment Advisory Committee Appointment** – The CT Dept. of Corrections (DOC) appointed Mr. Nogelo to the DOC Reentry Employment Advisory Committee, which will advise DOC on education and job training programs for inmates to promote successful reintegration. EWIB has communicated with DOC about connecting the DOC Vocational Village initiative with manufacturing career opportunities through EWIB's Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance Regional Sector Partnership (EAMA RSP). EWIB has also been meeting with the CT NAACP regarding a partnership with the CT NAACP One Million Jobs Campaign, EWIB's Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) and EAMA RSP to increase manufacturing career opportunities for justice-affected individuals while helping to meet EAMA RSP members' hiring needs.
- **Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Application Notice** – EWIB was notified on August 1 by the offices of U.S. Senators Blumenthal and Murphy that its CDS application submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee for MPI training and capacity was well received but was not among the 39 applications funded out of 247 applications received in its category.

- **Industrial Base Analysis & Sustainment (IBAS) Program Visit** – U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney (CT 2nd Dist.) and representatives of the U.S. Dept. of Defense IBAS program visited EWIB on August 1 to discuss the state of the submarine industrial base (SIB), Rep. Courtney’s work to keep the SIB strong, and the important role of the MPI. IBAS invited EWIB to submit a white paper for funding for MPI training and capacity expansion. IBAS will notify EWIB if it will be invited to submit a full application.
- **Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP) MSW Partnership** – In July, the ECHP announced an agreement making CT Health Horizons grant funding available to provide partial or full tuition support for ECHP employees to enroll in the University of St. Joseph’s Master of Social Work (MSW) program now offered at satellite locations in New London (at Mitchell College) and Mansfield (at United Services) in response to a need identified by ECHP employers. Fifteen people from six ECHP members enrolled in the program this fall. The Governor’s Workforce Council highlighted this agreement at its July meeting.

GOVERNOR’S WORKFORCE COUNCIL REPORT

No report.

CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT’S REPORT

- **Administrative Update** – Mr. Nogelo announced Stephanie Wisniewski joined EWIB in July as the Strategic Executive Assistant and thanked Sheila Taurianen for leading Stephanie’s onboarding. EWIB Talent Pipeline and Youth Pathways Coordinator Elle-Jordyn Goslin stepped down in June to take the position of Executive Director of the Northeastern Chamber of Commerce. EWIB will release a job posting shortly.
- **Good Jobs Challenge (GJC) Grant Start Up** – EWIB was designated by regional stakeholders and the CT Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) as regional lead in the manufacturing and healthcare regional sector partnerships (RSP) as part of a OWS \$23.9 million U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) GJC award. Goals of CT’s statewide Strengthening Sectoral Partnerships Initiative (SSPI) are to boost two RSPs in each of the five (5) workforce areas plus train and place 2,000+ people (focused on underserved populations) in quality jobs on career pathways in manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. Eastern CT’s projects will elevate the EAMA RSP and ECHP with additional resources for staffing, partnership, and employer outreach, and strengthen and expand the Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI) and Youth Healthcare Pipeline Initiative (YHPI). EWIB’s GJC contract with OWS was executed August 30, 2023.
- **EWIB Strategic Direction Pillars** – Mr. Nogelo stated that EWIB has not formally updated its mission and vision in several years. The EWIB senior team will work with the Executive Committee and Board to update both to reflect the organization’s strategic direction more clearly for the benefit of staff, Board members, and outside parties (including funders). After the new vision and mission statements are in place, the organization will establish its core values and will then revisit and update its strategies, goals, and objectives.
- **Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Recap** – Carol LaBelle reported on the 2023 SYEP, noting that there were ~1,600 applicants, ~520 youth who enrolled and worked at ~145 worksites with a ~94% completion rate. Funding from State, municipal, corporate, philanthropic, and nonprofit funders totaled ~\$1.73 million.
 - Ms. LaBelle answered several questions about the SYEP related to funding, youth recruitment and orientation, youth wages (paid by the program), and worksites, among others.
 - Mr. Nogelo explained that more youth were recruited for the 2023 SYEP based on an anticipated increase in State funding that did not materialize in the biennial budget that passed on June 7.
 - Deb Monahan said the SYEP relies on State and federal funding to expose youth to the world of work and stimulate economic development.
- **New MPI Web Portal Launch** – Guy Saporito reported the growth of the MPI program has resulted in the need for a new pre-application portal (launched Sept. 20) and more robust database.
 - Several Board members asked questions about the need to collect personally identifiable information (PII). Mr. Saporito explained that certain MPI funding sources require PII to be collected and noted a “prefer not to say” option for several questions. Mr. Nogelo said many funders require efforts to serve underserved populations and added that, to meet industry demand, EWIB must reach populations underrepresented in the manufacturing workforce.
 - Board members suggested adding language to the pre-application form reassuring candidates that the form is secure and adding a privacy policy explaining how EWIB protects PII.

- Sen. Cathy Osten (CT 19th Dist.) noted that the State Legislature had restored MPI funding and increased annual State funding by ~\$1.4 million and asked if these funds help pay for this resource. Mr. Saporito explained that the State funding goes to training and support services, case managers and other staff, and the new portal.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **EAMA Regional Sector Partnership (EAMA RSP) Report** – EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit reported that the RSP met on August 16 with ~28 manufacturing members and ~25 community support partners. The Plastics Working Group reported that CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley recently completed the first of two plastics courses that the Working Group helped to develop. RSP members approved the addition of several safety modules that Electric Boat (EB) requested be added to the MPI curriculum. ReadyCT conducted a survey and focus group of RSP employers to gain industry input on the YMPI. Separately, 95% of RSP employers polled said they were willing to hire justice-affected individuals or interested in learning more about such hiring. EAMA RSP is supporting the Explore Manufacturing Expo on September 28 at Dodd Stadium in Norwich to expose 500+ 7th-12th grade students to the benefits of manufacturing careers.

OLD BUSINESS

Deb Monahan thanked the Board for the memories, friendships, experiences, and knowledge she gained from serving on the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Paul Whitescarver announced that the Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership will meet on October 13, 2023 at CT State Community College Three Rivers. Invitations will be sent out soon.

MEETING SURVEY & ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Jewell asked participants to complete a brief online meeting satisfaction survey.

A **MOTION** was made to adjourn the meeting (*WHITESCARVER/BUTLER*). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted for EWIB Secretary James S. Butler by Strategic Executive Assistant Stephanie Wisniewski.