



## MINUTES

### EWIB Board of Directors Hybrid Meeting

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

8:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Jim Butler; Ray Coombs, Jr.; Jessica Corneau; Patricia Feeney; Thayne Hutchins, Jr.; David Jarvis; Chris Jewell; Susan Kocaba; Linda Ladas; Liz Li; Michael O'Connor; Michael Phelps; Eric Protulis; Caleb Roseme; Jessica van der Swaagh & Paul Whitescarver.

**Staff Present:** Michael Nogelo, Guy Saporito, Carol LaBelle, David Allard & Stephanie Wisniewski.

**Others Present:** Tony Benoit; Kristin Hempel; Breanna Horton; Karen Hynick; Nancy Knutson; Lyn Lawrence; Andrea Messenger Wright; Sen. Cathy Osten; Rep. Kevin Ryan; Beth Sabilia; Denise Spellman; Hillary Thomas; Kelli-Marie Vallieres; Cyndi Wells; Leslie White; Carol Williams; & Steve Wolf.

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#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Jewell called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. and welcomed new Board members David Jarvis and Eric Protulis.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2024 EWIB Board of Directors meeting (**BUTLER/LADAS**).

**Action:** Approved, with Protulis and Whitescarver abstaining.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

EWIB President/CEO Michael Nogelo covered the following items:

- **Jobs for the Future (JFF) Invitation** – JFF, a national nonprofit focused on education and workforce, invited EWIB, by recommendation of Congressman Joe Courtney, to be one of three workforce boards to participate in forums for their Congressional Staff Network and Executive Branch Network in Washington, DC on May 2. The forums will give bipartisan House, Senate, and Administration staff an opportunity to learn about workforce development implementation and to discuss the implications of federal policies.
- **EASTCONN Op-ed** – In February, EASTCONN invited EWIB to contribute to an op-ed about the importance of providing career opportunities to young people who are disconnected from school or work or at risk of becoming disconnected. The op-ed mentioned the youth workforce pipeline programs and Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) EWIB runs with education, employer, and youth service partners as effective programs for engaging disconnected and at-risk youth.

- **Electric Boat (EB) Legislative Briefing** – Press coverage of the briefing noted that EB has hired 3,000 people from EWIB’s Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) since 2016. EB President Kevin Graney praised the flexibility of MPI curriculum to employer priorities, such as the addition of several EB safety modules based on the safety priorities of EB and other Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) members. President Graney and Congressman Courtney credited EWIB and its education and employer partners for a collective effort to ramp up production and hiring.

## CHAIR/PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Michael Nogelo covered the following items:

- **2024-2028 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan Preparation** – Under WIOA funding, EWIB must submit a local plan to the Governor every four years. The local plan will include EWIB’s goals and priorities, will document our regional system’s compliance with federal WIOA requirements, and will support the State plan vision, goals, and strategy. The EWIB Executive Committee will discuss and approve the plan in early May and the full Board will review and ratify the plan at its May 21 meeting. EWIB will solicit public comment on the draft plan and will submit the plan to the Governor by June 28.
- **Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Application** – EWIB plans to submit an application through Connecticut’s U.S. Senators for a CDS project by April 14. EWIB will modify last year’s CDS application based on feedback received on that application and current and projected MPI funding needs. The funding request will include MPI training cohorts, support services, and stipends along with equipment upgrades at Youth (Y)MPI high schools and MPI colleges, a marketing campaign, and an independent evaluation.
  - Board members and staff discussed the possibility of submitting future CDS applications focused on healthcare.
- **Customer Voice for Continuous Improvement** – EWIB relies on customer feedback to drive continuous improvement across all its programs. For example, surveys and focus groups of MPI participants in 2016 and 2017 confirmed stipends and support services as critical for many people to be able to enroll in and complete the training. Attendance-based stipends were adjusted multiple times to account for the changing labor market, the increasing financial needs of participants, and increasing employer demand. Recent surveys of MPI customers found the timely delivery of stipends to be vital, and EWIB staff worked with American Job Center and MPI college staff to streamline the stipend process while maintaining administrative protocols.

## GOVERNOR’S WORKFORCE COUNCIL REPORT

Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), shared the following recent OWS highlights: a) conducting a study with the Office of Policy and Management on career pathway outcomes for workforce programs including the MPI; b) secured funding from The Connecticut Project for a planning grant to explore opportunities to better integrate cross agency performance management platforms; and c) the National Governors Association (NGA) selected Connecticut to host the fall NGA symposium, which will showcase EWIB’s MPI and youth programs.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP)** – David Allard reported that the Policy Action Team is working to develop a statewide strategy that convenes the four Healthcare RSPs to advance healthcare legislative priorities. The Childcare Action Team represented the ECHP at two regional childcare forums. The Healthcare Education, Attraction, & Training (HEAT) Action Team is working to increase the number of healthcare career exploration programs available for area high school students. A Healthcare Careers Expo & Job Fair will be held April 26 at the Holiday Inn in Norwich. A full ECHP meeting is scheduled for April 19.
- **Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) RSP** – EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit reported that the full RSP met on February 21, where an employer instant poll revealed the number one reason manufacturers lose sleep is hiring, training, and retaining employees.
  - Board members discussed some of the hiring, training, and retention challenges facing their businesses.

EAMA RSP members identified their top strategic priority as expanding the future manufacturing workforce pipeline. A Youth Pipeline Working Group will meet for the first time on March 26. EAMA RSP members attended a Business Roundtable at CT State – Three Rivers on February 16.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

### **MEETING SURVEY & ADJOURNMENT**

Chair 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 9:10 a.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted for EWIB Secretary Caleb Roseme by Strategic Executive Assistant Stephanie Wisniewski.