

Meeting of Montgomery County Workforce Development Board*
February 5, 2025
8:30 AM

*A full recording of this meeting can be accessed via [Zoom](#) with passcode: dN3tZ&q2
NOTE: Video time stamps are provided for each agenda item below.

Board Attendees: Kevin Armstrong, Jewru Bandeh, Dr. James Bridgers, Dr. Sonya Bruton, James Carmen, Todd Cohen, Stephanie Crane, Mark Drury, Barbara Ebel, Wyatt Genser, Scott Goldberg, Steve Greenfield, Courtney Hall, Yamil Hernández, Shant'a Johnson, Mary Lang, Omar Lazo, Nagender Madavaram, Natalie Mitchell, Dr. Dr. Peggy Pugh, Conrad Samuels, Grant Shmelzer, Michelle Bell Smith, Christa Tichy, Bill Tompkins

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Tichy called the meeting to order at 8:38 am.
2. **October Meeting Minutes** – approved without objection.
3. **Committee Updates**
 - a. **Health/Hospitality (00:10)** – Dr. Bruton reported that the Committee received legislative and development updates from staff and requested that the group receive regular departmental updates.
 - b. **IT/Life Sciences (00:50)** – Mr. Hernández reported that Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, Ernestine Chambers, provided a thorough data report for IT and Life Sciences industries and fielded several questions from Committee members.
 - c. **Construction/Transportation (01:25)** – Mr. Drury reported that a critical issue for the Committee is to work with all employers within the Construction trades to ensure that students that are in the SummerRise and MoCo CAP program have access to career pathways and employment opportunities.
 - d. **Youth/Young Adult (04:02)** – Mr. Madavaram reported that John Hattery provided an update from MoCo CAP.
4. **State Legislative Updates (04:45)** – Mr. Featherstone provided an update on the following bills and the Board's position (all supportive)
 - a. HB325/SB451 – Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study
 - b. HB501/SB431 – Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act
 - c. HB082/SB241 – Cyber Maryland Program – Revisions
 - d. HB772 – Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students – Alterations
5. **County & Federal Updates (14:58)**
 - a. WSM sent the FY26 County Budget request to the County Executive which totaled \$2.4M with an increase of \$185,000 over last year. The request was provided to the Board as an agenda attachment and Mr. Featherstone gave a thorough breakdown of each line item in the request. There was some discussion about previous and potential future cuts to SummerRise which would negatively impact WSM's ability to pay full student stipend amounts. Some members expressed

interest in advocating for funding with Councilmembers. Mr. Featherstone said that as soon as the budget hearing has been scheduled, the date will be shared with the Board.

- b. DEI & Federal Executive Orders (28:44) – Mr. Featherstone explained that the organization did have to cancel a contract with a DEI consultant that had already conducted an internal survey and provided a report. The consultant was scheduled to lead a DEI training course for staff and that has since been canceled. No federal funding can be used for DEI initiatives.
- c. Federal Workforce (45:45) – Mr. Featherstone reported that though the strategy is not fully developed, the organization is working on deploying a plan and services specific to this workforce. There is some concern about the organization's current capacity to serve many dislocated federal workers. Technology will play a critical role in serving this population moving forward.

6. Angela Franco, CEO, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (51:35) – Ms. Franco spoke briefly after introducing herself to the Board.

7. Executive Director Update (53:35)

- a. TEDCO Grant - \$250,000 to support Life Sciences Sector Connector and help fund Bio Bootcamps.
 - b. 5G Grant (1:01:02) – Federal earmark that will support several training cohorts in partnership with Montgomery College. The first cohort has 17 students.
 - c. MCPS/Greater Washington Partnership (1:10:31) – WorkSource will be doing business engagement for MCPS to increase internship and work opportunities for MCPS students.
- 8.** Open discussion included detailed discussion about working with students to obtain driver's licenses and affordable vehicles. It's a challenging to bring students into specific industries, specifically the trades, if they don't have access to reliable transportation.
- 9.** Ms. Tichy adjourned the meeting at 10:05 am.

Next Meeting: April 2, 2024 @ 8:30 AM via Zoom