



County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

Mailing Address: 640 South Broad Street, PO Box 8068, Trenton NJ 08650-0068
Administrative Offices Location: 26 Yard Avenue, Trenton NJ 08609
Phone: 609 989-6824 ▪ Email: wdb@mercercounty.org



Virgen Velez
Acting Director

Brian M. Hughes
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB Advanced Manufacturing Committee ♦ Chairperson: Scott Needham

March 13, 2023 ♦ 2:00 p.m. (Via Zoom) ♦ Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Scott Needham (Princeton Air), **Alex Glen** (NJMEP), **Michael Hanna** (MCCC), **Alan Munford** (MCTS), **Keith Secrest** (Kinetics Industries, Inc.), **Darren Stewart** (MC Economic Development), Susan Conrad (MCTS)

Staff: Virgen Velez, Kassia Bukosky

Welcome

Chairperson Scott Needham welcomed the group.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2023

Motion was made by Keith Secrest and seconded by Darren Stewart. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

Update: MC One Stop Activities – Virgen Velez

Summer Youth Employment Program

- Grant awarded in the amount of \$380,000 to operate the SYEP
- The program will operate 8 weeks, serving 115 individuals ages 16-24; the hourly wage will be \$15/hr.
- A work readiness component for 2-2 ½ hours weekly will enhance the individual's experience; a meeting with Peg Gould (MCCC) will be held to discuss how their work readiness curriculum can be incorporated – their content was derived in part from the work completed by the WDB
- WDB members will be asked if they can participate as a worksite and/or refer youth to the application process; last year there were 50 worksites that enrolled and 48 participated

Job Fair

- To be held late May/early June at the Cure Arena

Youth Career Awareness Activities

At the last meeting, it was proposed that both an in-person and a virtual event be held. After more internal discussion, it was determined that a virtual event would be much more valuable. An in-person job fair format does not always lend itself to ensuring that imparted information is consistent and reaches all in attendance.

- Conference-style format would start with a brief introduction followed by designated virtual breakout rooms (rotating schedule) so attendees can choose what careers they wanted to learn about
- Timeframe will tentatively be from 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- No barriers to attendance are expected since many of the activities at the One Stop are delivered on a virtual platform, with no issues
- A planning meeting is being scheduled for March 16

Update: Mercer County Economic Development Darren Stewart

- Mercer County Small Business Grant program (\$3.5 million / American Recovery Act) – has had over 600 applicants; 150 applications are incomplete due to pending information
- Fifty applications have been approved
- Continue to spread the word regarding funds availability
- There is no set application deadline; all monies will be spent; some (i.e. number of required employees) will be lifted as the number of applications start to dwindle
- Maximum award amount is \$10,000 per business
- Some of the main eligibility requirements:
 - Business status prior to Sept. 1, 2019
 - Employ 20 employees or less; can count 2 part-timers to equal 1 full-time employee
- All information can be obtained on www.mercercounty.org

Update: MCCC – Michael Hanna (w/notes from Dr. Laura Sosa)

- Official agreement with NJMEP
- Internship classes will translate into MCCC credits
- Manual machining micro-credential and a CNC micro-credential available to high school students
 - Five TCHS students are enrolled in the MT classes
- Four Mercer County high schools were surveyed, with only 74 responses – the question posed was “What field of engineering interests you the most (mechanical, civil, chemical, biomedical, manufacturing)?”
 - *Manufacturing* ranked last with only one vote
 - Reflection of challenge to recruit for this field; continued marketing is the only way to increase awareness in order to boost enrollment in classes
 - Open houses events are held twice annually – they are participatory where students can make their own takeaways (keychain, coaster)
 - Committee agreed that outreach should be made to the middle schools

Update: NJMEP – Alex Glen

- State event on May 4, 2023 at the War Memorial in Trenton, NJ – Networking event for manufacturing companies and legislators
 - It's been a very successful event in previous years
 - Keith Secrest and Scott Needham plan to attend to recruit members for this committee
- Outreach will be made to high schools to plan career awareness events; NJMEP is exploring how to best expose middle school students to advanced manufacturing careers

Brainstorming – Keith Secrest

- Facilitate an *Alternative Energy* roundtable – invite MCCC, MCTS, car dealership association, scrap recyclers to discuss their training needs and what jobs they foresee being available
- Keith will actively be working on this initiative

Update: MCTS Strategic Planning – Alan Munford

- The district is working on their 5-year plan
- Many stakeholders (over 60) involved in the process; there have been two meetings far with NJ Department of Education in attendance
- Goals to improve the district include aligning the curriculum and programming with industry demand, increasing and sustaining stakeholder relationships, incorporating youth soft skills into the curriculum
- MCTS planning to offer a plumbing program in 2025; any plumbing equipment donations are welcome

WDB Local Plan: Committee Review and Comments – Virgen Velez

- The WDB is required to submit a local plan every couple of years
- Current plan will be due at the end of April
- The committees were asked for input as to their current and future goals

Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Next Meeting PY 2022: 2nd Monday on bi-monthly basis 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

May 8, 2023