

**Employer Engagement Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 6, 2024**

The Employer Engagement Committee Meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m. by Patty Head, Committee Chair. Roll Call was taken.

NAME	ABSENT	PRESENT	NAME	ABSENT	PRESENT
Tracy Morris		X	Deana Jones	X	
Kevin Lindeman	X		Kris Noble	Proxy to Parry Head	
Patty Head		X	Jesse Nauman		X
Tera Bedei		X	Jim Hancock		X
Palani Sakthi		X			

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Carrie Folken and Dianna Schuler

**Business Meeting**

Introduction of New Members at Large

Dianna introduced Palani Sakthi from Castor Healthcare in Sterling and Jim Hancock from IMEC.

Approval of Minutes

Tracy Morris motioned to approve the Meeting Minutes from October 3, 2023. Patty Head seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken.

NAME	Yes	No	NAME	Yes	No
Tracy Morris	X		Kris Noble	X	
Patty Head	X		Tera Bedei	X	
Palani Sakthi	X		Jesse Nauman	X	
			Jim Hancock	X	

Motion carried.

Business Services Report

Dianna stated that the Business Services Report, under the Contact Columns, include contacts made to promote: apprenticeships, job search assistance and recruitment, work experience and OJTs, incumbent worker training, and general outreach. Going forward it will also include outreach for the purposes of the state supplemental grant received by BEST.

Regional Business Services Team and Apprenticeship Update:

Dianna reported that the Regional Business Services Team will be meeting at the end of the month to discuss data collection on business service feedback from companies and how to share that data. This is included in the new plan and part of the integration of all services including business services. Data will be shared with the workforce board and partners agency staff members.

Reporting on the current apprenticeship grant, Dianna informed everyone that we are being required to do an updated budget for the state by February 15<sup>th</sup>. She also reviewed the Planned vs. Actual report that was in the mailing stating that reporting has been a challenge this time around. Dianna cited that the online reporting was late becoming available, definitions of the performance areas changed and she is working with the apprenticeship team to try to get them to accurately reflect activity. She also informed the group that 3 BEST staff completed the required US Chamber of Commerce TPM training in December.

#### Other Business

Dianna shared with the committee that the producer of their podcast series “Getting to Work” had recently invited Carrie to participate in a new series called “Follow the Leader.” Carrie share her positive experience, noting that it was outside her comfort zone but it was fun to reflect on her 30 year career in workforce development. Dianna will share the link to the podcast once it is released.

Carrie Folken initiated a discussion about the upcoming rewrite of the local plan and sought input on potential improvements or additions. Jim Hancock then introduced two grants that could be beneficial for manufacturers, emphasizing that they could cover expenditures related to automation, IoT, and cyber security enhancements. He stressed that the grants would match 50% of expenses up to \$25,000. Sakthi raised a question about the applicability of the cyber security grant to the healthcare sector, to which Jim clarified that the main eligibility criterion is being a manufacturer and shared the links to the grants:

<https://www.imec.org/cybersafe/>  
<https://www.imec.org/madeinillinois/>

Sakthi raised a concern about the lack of soft skills among healthcare workers graduating from the Health Institute, such as the inability to write a resume. Dianna suggested that workshops might be able to help address these issues. She mentioned that various members of the workforce system offer workshops, and she and Tammy could have a more in-depth conversation about the matter.

#### Public Comment

None

#### Adjournment

It was motioned by Jim Hancock and seconded by Tracy Morris to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Next meeting will be the first Tuesday in April 2024.

Dianna Schuler