

**Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Manufacturing Committee - Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2023

10:00 – 11:00 am

**Committee Members in Attendance**: Daniel Isaac, Monica Greene, Ashley Lipton, Veronica Newton, Patrick Boyle, Meg Hammond, Kiersten Bourgeois, Brian Carpenter, Barry Hulce

**Guests in Attendance**: Victoria Biondolillo, Abby Rhim

Victoria Biondolillo called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. She began by recapping the events of the last meeting. She reviewed the “one-pager” for the Manufacturing Committee, emphasizing the purpose of the one-pager as a tool for achieving tangible results. The floor was then opened for questions.

Veronica Newton asked how long-term the objectives of the one-pager should be. Victoria Biondolillo said the one-pager has objectives until 2026, but the Manufacturing Committee can revisit it every year for re-evaluation.

Victoria Biondolillo said there are several big areas the strategic plan of the Workforce Development Board is focused on. The first is “WIOA” (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). The act results in 20 million dollars coming into the state for workforce development and the Workforce Development Board oversees the allocation of this funding. The second area is system alignment; the coordination of all and departments that are part of the Workforce Board. The third is workforce support. Finally, the plan is focused on worker retention. She emphasized that by the time it is time to plan for the FY2025 budget, the Workforce Board should have policy recommendations for the governor’s office.

Victoria Biondolillo then reviewed the one-pager for the Manufacturing Committee. The bottom line is that manufacturing is important to Vermont’s economy. The Manufacturing Committee’s job is to assist in the work of the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center and the Vermont Talent Pipeline Management to grow the manufacturing workforce. The Committee should also be focused on marketing and rebranding careers in manufacturing. Victoria Biondolillo emphasized that the long-term objective of the Manufacturing Committee is to establish and continually improve a manufacturing worker pipeline “from cradle to career.”

The milestones for the Committee are:

* A “placeholder” for how the Committee can best support VMEC.
* Supporting VTPM employer-led regional workgroups.
* By July of 2023, define three core principles of a plan for rebranding manufacturing as a long-term career option.
* By September of 2023, define success metrics for a campaign (e.g., get 15 kids to participate in work-based learning in manufacturing).
* By December of 2023, develop promotional materials for the campaign with ACCD (and meet with ACCD).
* By March of 2024, begin promotion (distribute the campaign to stakeholders).
* By July of 2024, launch promotional campaign.
* By September of 2024, host no less than three events to promote manufacturing pipeline for various groups.

Victoria Biondolillo then opened the floor for feedback.

Veronica Newton asked how Manufacturing Day in Vermont (of the month it is in, October) could be used to do a soft rollout of the campaign.

Victoria Biondolillo said the Committee could do something in coordination with the governor’s office each October to promote manufacturing.

Terry Smith commended Victoria Biondolillo and Abigail Rhim for designing the one-pager.

Victoria Biondolillo thanked him.

Megan Hammond was wondering what “cradle to career” means to the Committee members.

Victoria Biondolillo said the governor’s perspective is that the state should be supporting people in developing life-long careers, not just “jobs.”

Daniel Isaac understands “cradle to career” to mean it is not just about creating employment pipelines, but supporting families through childcare and healthcare programs.

Victoria Biondolillo clarified that “cradle to career” is a term used in the one-pager because when the Committee begins policy discussions, they want to have flexibility in being part of discussions regarding housing, paid family leave, etc., even though those are not technically viewed as workforce topics (despite being very pertinent to workforce issues).

Megan Hammond thinks it is important to clarify exactly what “cradle to career” means and fears it might be a term that lends itself to overpromising.

Victoria Biondolillo said the term can be retooled.

Daniel Isaac said the governor’s State Workforce Development Board allocation sheet informed his definition of “cradle to career.” He suggested the sheet be used as the basis for the Committee in defining the term.

Patrick Boyle asked if there is data for how many Vermonters attended college or “go to other industries.”

Victoria Biondolillo said the data is available (although, it is imperfect). She said she would find the data so the Committee can use it to analyze how best to reach certain goals. She said around 50% of the Vermont student population becomes disengaged from higher education or the workforce, and that is a group the committee should focus on reaching for the manufacturing pipeline.

Ashley Lipton asked the Committee to consider how innovation will affect the demand for labor in Vermont.

Victoria Biondolillo said she thinks that is a really good point; the Workforce Development Board as a whole is focused on building a workforce for the future.

Ashley Lipton continued that other states in New England already have programs like the one being discussed in place. She offered to connect the Committee with resources in other states for developing their program.

Barry Hulce suggested that Victoria Biondolillo and Abigail Rhim attend the upcoming NERDIC conference. He also suggested using the term “awareness to career,” as opposed to “cradle to career.” He emphasized the importance of raising awareness for careers in manufacturing. He asked how the Committee can help with barriers to entry for potential workers.

Victoria Biondolillo agreed that translating the awareness that will be raised into people actually entering the workforce will be challenging and should be addressed.

Barry Hulce thinks the ultimate goal of the Committee is to increase the number of qualified, skilled, and excited people entering the workforce. He also emphasized the importance of knowing when people exit the workforce, not just getting them to enter.

Victoria Biondolillo said a consideration of when people exit the workforce can be worked into the plan.

Daniel Isaac said that creating the metrics and tracking them will be a massive task. He asked what the scope of the metrics will be.

Victoria Biondolillo said the Workforce Board is in the process of developing a “one-stop operator” to coordinate all services for a person going through the manufacturing pipeline. The one-stop operator could then provide aggregate data to the Committee. She continued that tracking the results of the promotional campaign will be important and should be considered.

Victoria Biondolillo then gave next steps for the Committee: her and Abigail Rhim will revise the one-pager, send it to Committee members, receive feedback from them, and discuss it at the next meeting.

Abigail Rhim tentatively scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 10:00 am.

Victoria Biondolillo adjourned the meeting at 10:44 am.

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Respectfully submitted by Nicholas Kebo