

**Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Manufacturing Committee - Meeting Minutes

June 30, 2023

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Committee Members in Attendance**: Steve Dalessio, Monica Greene, Meg Hammond, Sarah Sanctuary, Carla Wuthrich, Ashley Lipton

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

**Video Recording:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoNPFPutDmw>

Executive Director Victoria Biondolillo began this meeting by announcing that she will be leaving The State of Vermont Workforce Development Board at the end of July to attend law school. Abby Rhim will be transitioning in Victoria Biondolillo's role. The meeting then proceeded as Abby Rhim introduced the agenda for the meeting.

* Receiving a VMEC update
* Addressing milestones that are approaching within the workforce strategic plan
* Discussing the manufacturing campaign core principles

Carla Wuthrich shared the VMEC “Call to Action” updates in regard to creating a regional focused statewide coordinated plan. While communicating with the CTE’s three statistics were particularly brought to their attention.

* 8/10 CTE’s acknowledge a gap of knowing that they are meeting manufactures’ needs
* 3/10 do not recognize their engagement with their board as strong
* 6/10 provided specifics about how manufacturers can help them

Ashley Lipton as well as Meg Hammond asked for this presentation to be shared, as she believed it was important information that had to be passed onto the workforce team in NERDIC as well as keep the state on track.

Carla Wuthrich then expressed the importance of spreading awareness for the day dedicated to the manufacturing workforce.

Ashley Lipton proceeded by stating that rather than starting from scratch with our manufacturing campaign, we can use the resources that Massachusetts and Connecticut have already used within their manufacturing campaigns. As a committee we could use these resources provided by outside sources and adjust it to best suit Vermont’s manufacturing needs. Ashley than expressed one of her biggest concerns being how effectively the committee is able to spread the resources available to manufacturing companies.

Victoria Biondolillo then introduced the nature of this year's manufacturing month event given Abby Rhim’s workload capacity, and the youthfulness of the committee. Victoria Biondolillo introduced an event that would involve coordinated effort to promote what is happening in manufacturing month. The event would begin with publicizing the Governor’s proclamation for manufacturing month. A calendar would be created to help publicize manufacturing information and events throughout the month. Furthermore, each week there would be a singular manufacturer selected to help spread information about Vermont’s manufacturing industry. Victoria Biondolillo then requested members of the committee send her and Abby Rhim information they may already have in regard to manufacturing events that are happening throughout October.

Meg Hammond then requested a public form be sent out to manufacturing companies, and a spreadsheet be shared within the members of the committee to help organize information about the event. Carla Wuthrich then stated that VMEC already has a connection to manufacturing month. She also liked the idea to choose/focus on a specific manufacturing company each week. Monica Greene then brought to the committee's attention that she is on the chamber board, which already has a database for manufacturers. With the chambers connection they could reach out to manufacturers and see if they already have an event or would like to establish one.

All agreed that there was no need for hosting a singular event, but rather it would be okay to broadly promote the manufacturing industry across the state.

Meg Hammond then asked how the committee intends to promote manufacturing month around the state. Victorio Biondolillo then responded by stating that it was her intention to create an additional tab on the Vermont Workforce Development Boards website, that would be allocated to promoting this month-long event.

Victoria Biondolillo then transitioned the meeting into discussing the manufacturing promotional campaign. This topic of discussion began by establishing the three core principles of their manufacturing rebranding plan. The brainstorming exercise was structured by two questions. The first question being, what words represent the current perception of Vermont’s manufacturing industry? The second question being, what the committee actually wants the public perception of the manufacturing industry to be.

Sarah Sanctuary believed that the words dead end, uneducated, and repetitive accurately represented the current public perception of the manufacturing industry. Monica Greene chimed in using the phrase manual labor to exemplify public perception of manufacturing jobs. Guest Steve, contributed to the topic by using the phrase “it is not a trade.” Ashley Lipton then used the words dirty, dark, dangerous to describe the current public perception. Ashley then continued by stating many view the current manufacturing environment as work, not a career, that does not provide benefits.

Abby Rhim then asked the committee where they were getting this public perception from?

Sarah Sanctuary answered Abby Rhim’s question by stating she has heard this from and older employee within her company.

Monica Greene then contributed to the conversation stating she mainly sees these negative perceptions from parents who do not work in manufacturing. More specifically they are parents who are unaware of the modernization of the manufacturing industry. Guest Steve, and Sarah Sanctuary agreed that there is pushback from parents about the manufacturing force. Ashley Lipton then proceeded to discuss that there is typically a misconception about manufacturing jobs being unable to provide benefits, which is untrue. Meg Hammond enhanced the discussion by stating that oftentimes people view the manufacturing culture as aggressive, which is not an accurate representation of all manufacturing work cultures. Carla Wuthrich agreed with the statement made by Meg Hammond.

Tori Biondolillo then transitioned the trajectory of the conversation into discussing what an ideal public perception of the manufacturing industry would sound be like.

Sarah Sanctuary wished the public thought of Chroma Technology. More specifically, how her manufacturing company fosters a positive work culture, and the provides substantial benefits to their employees. Furthermore, she wished they thought of the manufacturing industry as high tech. Meg Hammond then discussed how Generator VT tries to create a work environment that fosters creativity, and independent thinking.

Victoria Biondolillo then discussed trying to adjust the public perception to view the manufacturing industry as more innovative, and exciting.

Committee member Meg Hammond then brought up the point that there is a misconception of what advanced manufacturing means.

Abby Rhim then asked how the committee felt about the job title freezing modern manufacturing, and whether or not it was inclusive or not?

Meg Hammond liked the job title, and then suggested the committee create a survey to see what ages have the strongest misconception of the manufacturing industry.

Victoria Biondolillo then shared the themes she saw arise in what the committee members thought the current public perception of the current manufacturing industry was:

* Limited career growth
* Negative work environment
* The work creates limited impact and is repetitive

Ashley Lipton contributed by stating that the public career development path for manufacturing jobs is often misunderstood to the public. However, in reality it’s an exciting career with one of the clearest career pathways.

The committee particularly guest Steve, Sarah Sanctuary, and Meg Hammond discussed the positive impact manufacturing industries would see if they opened their doors to the public and gave them tours of their facility.

Victoria Biondolillo then suggested in the future that videography would be an impactful tool as well. She believed that making a professional looking video that gave the public insight into the manufacturing companies could potentially bring in more employees. Carla liked Victoria’s idea to use videography as a tool to attract employees.

Meg Hammond reiterated the amount of opportunity the manufacturing industry gives to individuals.

Ashley Lipton then emphasized that it is important that the public knows what specifically each manufacturing company is making and how it impacts the local and national supply chain. Meg Hammond thought Ashley Lipton made a strong point.

Victoria Biondolillo concluded the meeting by highlighting next steps for the committee.

* Synthesize discussion for committee members who may have missed the meeting
* Abby and Tori will share progress they have made in regard to manufacturing month
* Discuss what a successful manufacturing campaign looks like

Victoria Biondolillo then adjourned the meeting.

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Respectfully submitted by Olivia Zubarik

Olivia Zubarik, Intern, Office of Governor Phil Scott