



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

**Draft MINUTES
COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Wednesday, December 14, 2022
One Hudson City Centre
Suite 301
Hudson, New York**

A special meeting of Columbia Economic Development Corporation’s (CEDC) Workforce Development and Education Committee was held in person on December 14, 2022 at 8:30 am.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Ruth Adams	Committee Member	Present via Zoom due to illness
David Fingar	Committee Member	Present
Derek Grout	Committee Member	Absent
Carlee Drummer	Committee Member	Present
Sean Sawyer	Committee Member	Present
Tarah Gay	Board Member	Present
Michael Molinski	Board Member	Present
F. Michael Tucker	President/CEO	Present
Andy Howard	Counsel	Present via Zoom
Jessica Gabriel	Senior Economic Developer	Present
Lisa Drahushuk	Administrative Supervisor	Present
Martha Lane	Business Development Director	Present
Cathy Lyden	Bookkeeper	Present
Riley Werner	Administrative Assistant	Present

Ms. Adams called the meeting to order at 8:34am

Minutes:

Mr. Fingar made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gay to approve the minutes from November 15, 2022. Carried.

Strategic Planning Discussion:

Mr. Tucker reviewed the present mission of the Workforce and Education pillar. He suggested the statement needed to be refined and updated. He questioned if CEDC could do any of the items. He noted that the items under “Leverage Columbia County’s education to improve workforce pipeline; Increase skilled workforce; Increase funding for and investment in skills training”



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

He questioned if some items had already been completed and CEDC may not be able to do others. He reviewed some of the items that had been done and could be tied into the statement. He expressed some things needed to be refined and others examined to determine if CEDC could or should be the organization to follow through with them.

Mr. Sawyer stated disconnect existed between education and employment in the younger grades. He suggested that was a missed opportunity, questioning if businesses could assist in connecting with children at a younger age to ready them for the workforce. He noted there was no awareness among young people of the diversity of job opportunities available. Ms. Gay stated it felt this made the young directionless. Dr. Drummer stated in Columbia and Greene counties most businesses had no idea how the college could assist them with their workforce. Mr. Tucker stated CEDC and the Chamber of Commerce Staff should be educated in the opportunities available to businesses regarding workforce.

Ms. Adams noted in the past a discussion had taken place about what the Committee and CEDC staff could actually do. She wondered if this was over ambitious and she reminded the committee that CEDC had stated they should not create programs. She stated that they were good at convening. She suggested this may be a reach, to take on programing. Mr. Tucker stated a part of convening could be reviving partner meetings to keep abreast of happenings. He noted referrals could be made with no problems. He stated CEDC couldn't run the program but understood the programs and could refer to resources.

Mr. Tucker suggested perhaps a higher level with greater detail communication plan which could be the Workforce & Education pillar. Ms. Adams thought the root of the mission should be examined in terms of what an economic development agency should do as well as what the staff can handle. Mr. Tucker noted the unemployment level was low. Mr. Fingar asked if this was something CEDC should lead or perhaps just assist. If that were the case, is it CEDC's role to establish pillars and guidelines or should it be outsourced and asking the College or BOCES and see how they need support.

Dr. Drummer thought the college was appropriate, noting this was the business of the College. She reviewed a retreat that took place at the end of summer. She stated the college would be investigating what they could do regarding human resources training after a large business stated that was an area in which they required assistance. Mr. Tucker suggested convening the Workforce and Education committee as well as other related individuals to meet. He stated he had been considering making Workforce a section of the newsletter. Mr. Fingar asked if the CEDC Workforce and Education Committee could get reports from Dr. Drummer on her committee as well as from BOCES and others. Those stake holders could be added to the Workforce & Education Committee and reports could be given. Mr. Tucker stated Mr. Church and Mr. Nardone, Mr. Gerlach and the Greene County representatives would be on board. He suggested Chris Nardone should be the lead as opposed to CEDC.



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Tucker stated the head of Workforce Development at Empire State Development could also be brought in as well as various other regional organizations. He felt two or three larger employers as well as representatives from several smaller businesses could also join the group, which could report back to the CEDC Workforce Committee. Mr. Fingar noted there were others who could handle the workforce issues better. Mr. Tucker suggested the Workforce and Education committee remain involved for 6 months after which a member of the current committee could be involved in the new group.

Mr. Molinski noted school districts could be educated on the parties involved in workforce, as well as the manner school districts could fit in. Mr. Sawyer questioned if businesses could be represented at the local events so others in the county would understand the potential employers who were seeking workers. He questioned if businesses could go to the schools. Mr. Tucker questioned if the schools could have their own career awareness programs. Ms. Adams suggested providing a list of businesses located within the school district would assist the schools. Dr. Drummer stated the college is very reactive to high school students, but stated they recognizes the importance of middle school and elementary school children as well. She stated they offered summer programs to them and made them familiar with the campus. The committee discussed ways CEDC could serve as a resource.

Mr. Fingar suggested at the next meeting in January, reach out to the stakeholders and invite them to the next Workforce & Education Committee meeting and explaining what the committee is trying to accomplish. Dr. Drummer suggested meeting in person, with the time to be determined. Ms. Adams suggested a list of people who CEDC would like to participate and spend some of the time contacting and explaining the goals. She noted workforce was tied to affordable housing, and wondered if the workforce topic would need to take a backseat to affordable housing. Mr. Tucker stated CEDC needed to be at the table, but didn't need to be the initiator or run the programs.

Mr. Tucker asked if CEDC should host the meeting or if another organization should take point. Dr. Drummer offered to host at the college. Mr. Fingar asked if the committee could add Mr. Molinski to the Workforce & Education Committee. The Committee agreed he would be a good addition due to his veteran status.

Public Comment:

With no public present and no further comments, Mr. Sawyer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fingar, to adjourn the meeting at 9:23am.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Drahusuk