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Columbia Economic Development Corporation

## **COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION NOTICE OF MEETING**

Please take notice that there will be a meeting of the Columbia Economic Development Corporation Workforce and Education Committee held on January 4, 2018 at 4:00pm, at 4303 Route 9, Hudson, NY 12534 for the purpose of discussing any matters that may be presented to the Committee for consideration.

Dated: December 29, 2017

Sarah Sterling

Secretary

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

### **CEDC Workforce and Education Committee Agenda**

#### **Chairperson:**

#### **Members:**

Ruth Adams

Jim Calvin

Tish Finnegan

Triona Fritsch

Tony Jones

James Lapenn

John Lee

Michael Polemis

Maria Suttmeier

1. Minutes, September 7, 2017\*
2. Current Youth Education Programs
3. Discussion of Initial CEDC Programs & Initiatives
4. Public Comment

#### **Attachments:**

Draft September 7, 2017 minutes

- \* Requires Approval



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**MINUTES  
COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
Thursday, September 7, 2017  
4303 Route 9  
Hudson, New York**

A regularly scheduled meeting of Columbia Economic Development Corporation’s (CEDC) Workforce Development and Education Committee was held at their offices located at 4303 Route 9, Hudson, NY 12534 on September 7, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 8:31am by Ms. Fritsch, Committee Chair.

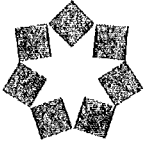
Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived/ Departed
James Calvin	Committee Member	Present	
Tish Finnegan	Committee Member	Present	Departed 9:16am
Triona Fritsch	Committee Chair	Present	
Tony Jones	Committee Member	Present	
James Lapenn	Committee Member	Present	
John Lee	Committee Member	Present	
Michael Polemis	Committee Member	Present	
Maria Suttmeier	Committee Member	Present	
F. Michael Tucker	President/CEO	Present	
Andy Howard	Counsel	Excused	
Brandon Dory	Project Manager	Present	
Lisa Drahushuk	Administrative Supervisor	Present	
Martha Lane	Business Development Specialist	Present	
Erin McNary	Bookkeeper	Present	
Carol Wilber	Marketing Director	Present	

**Minutes:**

*Mr. Calvin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lapenn to approve the minutes of February 14, 2017. Carried.*

**Committee Discussion:**

Mr. Tucker reviewed the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) recently awarded to the City of Hudson. He handed out a packet of information containing a workforce op-ed piece written by CEDC, published in the quarterly Register Star publication. The packet also included a copy of the fourth



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pillar of the CEDC Strategic plan, addressing Workforce and Education and an executive summary of a Workforce Investment Board commissioned study on manufacturing companies and their employees.

Mr. Tucker briefly reviewed the executive summary of a Center for Economic Growth study. He noted it pointed to several common needed skills; communication, math and computer skills. He noted employers had the most openings in production jobs.

Mr. Tucker suggested creating a “manufacturing boot camp”, partnering with the school districts, BOCES and Columbia Greene Community College in order to raise career awareness.

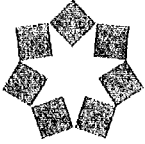
Mr. Lee questioned the idea that businesses needed employees to grow. He referenced an article where a town addressed the employment issues by focusing on the conditions affecting startup businesses. Instead of focusing on training employees, they focused on increasing the business community, thereby attracting employees.

Mr. Tucker informed the Committee Mr. Jones and he have been working closely with the County on their commissioned housing study. He felt the study was a good start, noting the DRI had brought affordable housing to the fore.

Mr. Tucker noted of the top twenty five employers in the county, seven were privately held businesses. He informed the committee that in the past month he had identified the specific need for a job fair or a similar type of event connecting job seekers and employers, suggesting working with the college on training gaps. He stressed the need to develop further career training. He referenced the summer leadership class created jointly by the Chamber and CEDC.

Mr. Tucker stated five to ten employers would need to be identified who would work with a Columbia Greene Community College staff person to match young adults interested in internships/apprenticeships. The age and skill set would need to be identified and targeted. He suggested focusing on the 16 to 22 year old minority not currently attending school. He referenced the county’s slow population growth noting it limited job growth. Mr. Polemis noted the aging population of the county. Mr. Tucker stated the low unemployment in the county was misleading, noting some people no longer qualified for unemployment and others worked outside of the County.

Mr. Tucker felt the plan could be fleshed out, utilizing businesses including Etsy. He stated the applicants could be shepherded through obtaining a job, seeking housing and other areas not currently addressed. Marketing to be done via social media. Dr. Suttmeier noted there appeared to be two separate goals. The first, finding jobs immediately, and the second doing something for students. Mr. Tucker stated CEDC had the resources to do both. He noted the need to create a critical mass.



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Dr. Suttmeier informed the Committee she had met James Church of Questar who had expressed his ability to provide coordination for projects. Mr. Jones noted the difficulty continued to be transportation in the rural areas. Mr. Tucker stated he had considered utilizing busses for the CEDC/Chamber summer leadership course, but it was too cumbersome due to insurance and legal issues. In the end, students provided their own transportation.

Mr. Tucker handed out a sample pathway chart obtained from the Workforce Investment Board. He stated it showed the career ladder for advanced manufacturing jobs.

### **CEDC/Chamber of Commerce High School Leadership Program:**

Ms. Wilber provided an overview of the CEDC/Chamber summer junior leadership course. She noted the class had been held at the Basilica and the Chamber of Commerce offices. High school juniors from Hudson, Chatham and Taconic Hills had participated in the week long session. Ms. Wilber stated the Chamber of Commerce was interested in continuing the program in 2018 and expanding it to all school districts in the County.

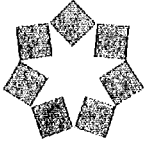
Ms. Wilber felt working with Questar had been beneficial in reaching the students. She noted a Questar staff member had created and presented the curriculum. Students and parents had attended an orientation prior to the course. Presenters had a great deal of interaction with the students and both groups felt that had been beneficial. Mr. Lapenn asked if there would be any followup with the attendees. Ms. Wilber stated she would reach out to the students later in the school year and ask them to become an ambassador for the program, assisting in recruiting the 2018 class.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Lee if he felt there was a need for in-house training for workers. Mr. Lee stressed that would be difficult due to the variety of programs/skills each company required. He informed Mr. Tucker, Questar had taught the software program Solidworks. He stated he had hired one worker but was unsure of the success rate of the program.

Dr. Suttmeier stated there were high school graduates on the street because of a lack of jobs and a lack of skills. Dr. Suttmeier noted they were the lost workforce. She stated soft skills, while important, would be learned on the job. She suggested a certificate program through the college that would allow students to obtain a job once the requirements were completed. Dr. Suttmeier also suggested mapping out the school districts and inserting the locations of the internship/apprenticeship business partners.

Dr. Suttmeier noted she had a scheduling conflict with the meetings held on Thursday mornings. Mr. Tucker stated alternative dates would be determined and sent to the Committee for review and feedback.

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Ms. Fritsch announced she would be stepping down from the Chair's seat effective immediately. She stated she intended to remain on the Committee. She requested those interested in chairing the committee contact Mr. Jones.

With no further business to come before the committee and no public present, Ms. Fritsch called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. *A motion was made by Mr. Lapenn, seconded by Dr. Suttmeier to adjourn the meeting. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29am.*

*Respectfully submitted by Lisa Drahushuk*