



# Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, March 7, 2019**  
**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 March 7, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 4:03pm by Chair Lapenn.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived/ Departed
Ruth Adams	Committee Member	Excused	
Russell Bartolotta	Committee Member	Excused	
James Calvin	Committee Member	Excused	
David Fingar	Committee Member	Present	
Tish Finnegan	Committee Member	Present	
Derek Grout	Committee Member	Present	
James Lapenn	Committee Chair	Present	
John Lee	Committee Member	Excused	
Maria Suttmeier	Committee Member	Present	
F. Michael Tucker	President/CEO	Present	
Andy Howard	Counsel	Present	
Lisa Drahushuk	Administrative Supervisor	Present	
Martha Lane	Business Development Specialist	Present	
Erin McNary	Bookkeeper	Present	
Carol Wilber	Marketing Director	Present	
James Church	Questar III	Present	

Mr. Tucker introduced Mr. Church to the Committee.

**Minutes:** *Ms. Finnegan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Suttmeier to approve the January 3, 2019 minutes as presented. Carried.*

**Twin County Recruitment Expo Update:**

Mr. Tucker stated nearly 20 businesses had registered to date. He stated pipes, drapes and signs had been ordered. He reminded the Committee the event was April 16.



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## **Internship/Leadership/Student Council Update:**

Ms. Wilber stated she had met with Ms. Suttmeier, the President and Vice-President of Columbia – Greene Community College, Director of Applied Learning and Job Development and the Chatham School District Superintendent to discuss the newly formed Columbia County Student Council.

Ms. Wilber informed the attendees the former Junior Leadership program had been renamed the 2019 Junior Career Institute. The program had been revised to provide a richer content with increased expectations. The program would include guest speakers, roundtables and one on one coaching.

She noted orientation and sessions would be held at the Columbia Greene Community College on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in September, with parents encouraged to attend. The sessions would take place on Saturday's in October, November and December. She stated the students would be completing an interest survey which would be matched to internships in the spring. Upon completion of the program, students would be given a certificate, a detailed write-up of the program, to be used as part of their college applications. They would also be provided a link to LinkedIn and a drawing would be held for a special prize. Ms. Wilber stated 2 students and an alternate from each district would be selected by the school superintendents.

Ms. Wilber stated the core of the original program remained unchanged with the focus of the program on soft skills and leadership. Mr. Tucker stated a write-up of the program would be provided to the Berkshire Taconic Foundation.

Mr. Tucker stated he had discussed the Columbia County Student Council with Neil Howard, Superintendent of Taconic Hills Central School and Jeffrey Hunt the President of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Tucker noted he, Ms. Wilber and Ms. Lane had met with several representatives of Columbia - Greene Community College to discuss partnering on new curriculum involving fabrication.

## **Career Jam:**

Mr. Tucker gave a brief overview of the program, which had been held in Saratoga and in Watertown. Mr. Tucker stated Mr. Church has been working on the program for a number of years. He asked Mr. Church to explain the program to the Committee. Mr. Church stated the program was similar to a career fair, but with each business offering an engaging hands-on activity. He stated the attendees were students in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The longest distance traveled to the Saratoga event was an hour and a half. He stated the events had attracted between 1,300 and 1,600 students.

Mr. Church suggested starting the planning early, with the first decision to determine a central location and a working committee. He stated diversity in areas of interest would be important as would



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transportation. He noted the full engagement of businesses was vital and suggested a larger event would allow greater exposure for businesses. He suggested having activities for teachers as well as students, noting teachers were removed from the world of business and appreciated connecting the information they taught to real world applications. He noted it was important to develop relationships with businesses and educators.

Mr. Lapenn felt it would be important to check with the Board of Supervisors to ensure they are comfortable with CEDC expending funds for an event that will cover multiple counties. He asked Mr. Church how the events were staffed. Mr. Church stated the staff generally was provided by the economic development agency, the school districts and the chambers of commerce. He noted the events required financial support as well, which are generally business sponsorships. Mr. Church stated an important component of the program was getting information out to the target audience. Mr. Tucker stated he would circulate the webpage from the previous year's event to the Committee members.

The Committee discussed locations out of the County. Ms. Suttmeier stated that Hudson City School District would require 10 busses to transport their 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders to the event location. She noted that the expense was large. She stated the additional issue was the logistics of having the buses return to the school in time for afternoon dismissal. Mr. Church acknowledged the importance of the issue. He agreed a location in the local area should be considered. Mr. Tucker suggested the event could be held at Columbia Greene Community College with the focus on Columbia and Greene County students.

## **CEDC Strategic Plan – Workforce and Education:**

Mr. Tucker stated he planned to have a public meeting prior to the Board meeting to allow for public input. He gave a tentative date of March 22.

Mr. Grout presented four objectives for consideration by the Committee: develop opportunities; develop human capital; attract outsiders; attract productive older workers. Mr. Lapenn stated the committee needed to know the resources currently in place in order to move forward. He noted the compendium would allow the Committee to understand which areas required attention and how to move forward.

With no further business to come before the committee and no public present, *Mr. Grout made a motion, seconded by Ms. Finnegan to adjourn the meeting. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.*

*Respectfully submitted by Lisa Draushuk*