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**MINUTES
COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 4, 2021
One Hudson City Centre
Suite 301
Hudson, New York**

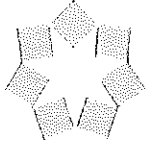
A regularly scheduled meeting of Columbia Economic Development Corporation’s (CEDC) Workforce Development and Education Committee was held via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic on November 4, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived/ Departed
Ruth Adams	Committee Member	Present via Zoom	
David Fingar	Committee Member	Present in person	
Tish Finnegan	Committee Member	Excused	
Derek Grout	Committee Member	Excused	
James Lapenn	Committee Chair	Present via Zoom	
John Lee	Committee Member	Present in person	
Carlee Drummer	Board Member	Present via Zoom	
F. Michael Tucker	President/CEO	Present via Zoom	
Andy Howard	Counsel	Excused	
Jim Church	Questar III	Present via Zoom	
Lauren Cranna	Business Development Partner	Present via Zoom	
Lisa Drahushuk	Administrative Supervisor	Present in person	
Martha Lane	Business Development Director	Present in person	

Minutes:

Mr. Lee made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fingar to approve the minutes from May 6, 2021. Carried.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Church to introduce his new program, which he will be discussing with the Hudson City School District. Mr. Church shared a link to “The Expertise Project”. He stated this website was created by a Hudson Valley Community College professor to be a resource for K-12 and on through college. He noted the website focuses on manufacturing, engineering, and construction in the region. He stated the program worked with many local businesses located in the Capital Region. He stated prior to students going in to a workplace, videos of workplaces are done by students. He stated the videos would be part of a curriculum involving lesson plans and activities. He felt this would be a good resource for the classroom, which was what he was currently discussing with Hudson City School District. Mr. Church stated they are



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still working out how the program can be integrated into school curriculum as well as be a gateway to employment.

Mr. Lapenn asked what CEDC's role would be. Mr. Church stated he wanted to hear what the Committee thought about the idea. He stated the teachers at Hudson, were excited to begin using the program. He also proposed a scholarship for a year, in order to see if it worked and to see how the program goals were met. Mr. Tucker suggested looking at a business plan.

Mr. Fingar asked how the businesses were selected. Mr. Church stated the program founder reached out to local construction businesses. He noted the program has been expanding. The Committee watched a sample video. Mr. Church stated he would obtain access to the full site for Mr. Tucker to review. Ms. Adams felt there were businesses in the area that would benefit, including the not-for-profits.

Ms. Drummer reminded the Committee that Columbia-Greene Community College has a building construction technology program that would be helpful to the Questar program.

Career Jam:

Career Connects:

Mr. Tucker noted the price of the event had doubled. He stated the Berkshire Taconic Foundation had given approval for the Career Connection, but stated they would advance a portion of the funds and hold \$25,000 which would be payable after the program met the metrics.

Career Jam:

Mr. Tucker notes the proposal for 2022 had been submitted and had doubled in price. He felt CEDC would be unable to participate at the past level.

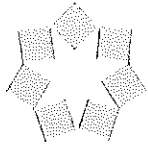
Career Fair:

Mr. Tucker stated the Workforce Investment office had held the job fair virtually, but planned on holding the next on in person.

Microbusiness Seminar:

Ms. Lane stated there were ten people in the program, three of which currently had a loan through CEDC with one planning to apply for a loan. Three were currently receiving technical assistance. She noted all would be eligible to receive technical assistance at the end of the program. The latest class instructor discussed writing a business plan. She stated she would send a list of students and instructors to the Committee.

Entrepreneurship For All:



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Mr. Tucker stated Peter Taylor of the Berkshire Taconic Foundation had brought this program to his attention. He noted there were approximately 10-12 people involved on the calls and included representatives who owned/managed shared workspaces, the Spark of Hudson and other organizations. He stated the program provided technical assistance to “pure” startups. Ms. Lane stated the focus was on the underserved, and those who have barriers that don’t exist for most of CEDC’s clients. They noted CEDC’s clients were generally further along in the process of beginning a business. Ms. Lane stated they were trying to find ways to reach potential clients. She stated the committee was setting up open hours at the Hudson Library. She noted Entrepreneurship For All was also holding a class, with one participant from Columbia County. Mr. Tucker stated this organization had various chapters throughout the country.

Mr. Tucker stated the organization was trying to expand. He stated they are holding an event on November 15th in partnership with the Black Entrepreneurship Market, which is funded by the Hudson Tourism Board. He stated they would be using this meeting to enable those exhibiting or who had booths at the summer market to learn how to participate in the Basilica’s Farm and Flea. CEDC agreed to provide \$250 for photography and food. Spark of Hudson and the Berkshire Taconic Foundation agreed to split the cost of a booth for up to 10 participants of the Black Entrepreneurs Market, allowing them to exhibit at the Basilica’s event.

Focused Training Opportunities:

Hospitality:

Clean Energy:

Manufacturing:

Coding:

Other:

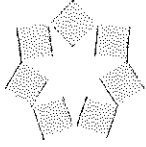
Mr. Tucker stated these were all under continual discussion because several IDA members are requiring each applicant provide some type of community workforce benefit. He stated he wanted to discuss these with the College.

Apprenticeship:

Mentoring:

Mr. Tucker stated an application had been submitted to the USDA to provide funding allowing CEDC to bring Economic Development and business services into the towns. He noted this was not successful. They stated the application wasn’t specific enough, naming businesses and the specific services required. They suggested CEDC should reapply in February.

Mr. Tucker stated he was working with Columbia County on their \$1 million they wish to set aside for small business support. He stated he had discussed how they wished to spend the funds. He suggested using the money over a 3 to 4 year period to mirror some of the services that the USDA grant would



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have been used for. He felt Ms. Lane could expand her technical assistance team and hold office hours or programs that would not compete with the Chamber of Commerce. As an alternative, he suggested CEDC partner with them and have them present the programs. He felt this would serve a broader group and could provide an online resource for county businesses, including not-for-profits. He envisioned it would be more of a platform to provide referrals and resources. Mr. Fingar stated the largest issue small businesses have right now is staffing, and wondered if there is any way to assist on that front.

Mr. Lapenn asked if he had spoken to Mary Ellen O'Loughlin regarding the fourth pillar of the Strategic Plan. Mr. Tucker noted she stated she needed to speak to the other Board members and meet again in November. He stated we needed to identify the issues and be the concierge to direct people to the right place.

Public Comment:

With no public present and no further comments, Mr. Fingar made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lee, to adjourn the meeting at 5:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Drahusuk