

**Connecticut State Apprenticeship Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 15, 2018 at the**  
**Connecticut Department of Labor**  
**200 Folly Brook Boulevard**  
**Wethersfield, CT**  
**Conference Rooms A & B at 1:30 p.m.**

**I. Meeting Call to Order at 1: 35 p.m.**

**II. Roll call of Committee Members** – There was a quorum.

**Members in Attendance-** Chairman Scott D. Jackson, Melvin E. Olsson, Martin Alvarenga, Paul Costello, Christopher J. Brown, Richard DuPont, Robert Berkmoes

**Members Not in Attendance** Larry Vaillieres, Kelli Vaillieres, Frank DaCato, Gregory Raucci

**Others Present**

Deputy Commissioner Kurt Westby, Ram Aberasturia, Dan Laffin, Todd Berch

**Recorder**

P. DePhillips

**III. Minutes of previous meeting** – November 16, 2017 minutes passed unanimously.

**IV. Correspondence-** Ram Aberasturia, Director of Labor Operations, Employment Services

Ram Aberasturia said it was the vision of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Todd Berch to start a pre-apprenticeship program in East Hartford and he has been working with Todd on implementing this project in collaboration with the CCAT and Synergy Alternative High School. Todd and Ram intend to encourage connecting these non- traditional students with employers to train to work in the trades. The students train and then get certifications to obtain full time employment. He believes this will be a model for the state. Todd has ensured the students qualify for pre-apprenticeships if parameters are met. This program is also being duplicated in Waterbury with the goal of expanding it further and ultimately implementing the program in High Schools throughout CT. There is a need for workers in manufacturing and this program can take advantage of employment opportunities.

Richard DuPont commented on the implementation of the program in Waterbury and its importance to manufacturing because the need and demand for workers is the greatest he has seen in his forty years of working in manufacturing.

Comr. Jackson thanked Ram and Todd for creating programs for students to pursue careers in manufacturing noting that this program is among the most robust school instruction program in the nation. For the first time in 25 years a manufacturing trade component will be offered within school instruction. CTDOL believes in growing opportunities in partnerships with schools. We need to give students the opportunities to handle equipment and assess if it is interesting to them and if they want to pursue careers in the trades; that is why we are focusing on pre apprenticeship.

Pre- apprenticeship serves as a link between High School junior and seniors interested in working in manufacturing.

Deputy Commissioner Westby noted that the Synergy and Waterbury projects combine apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship and uses WIOA dollars to attract inner city disadvantaged youth. He also mentioned the increased participation of female students interested in the trades.

**V. Public Comment-** None.

**VI. Apprenticeship Report-** Todd Berch – as of last meeting, there were **1570** active sponsors, currently **1627** sponsors, last meeting 5538 registered apprentices, **currently 6252** apprentices with a net gain of 714. **128** Completions as of November 2017. This quarter, **252** completions from across all occupations.

Commissioner Jackson asked if there is a gap in the apprenticeship program and if anything needed to be addressed regarding its organization. We must have the right structure to ensure people go on to good careers. Robert Berkmoes said that he gets multiple reports on each apprentice and what makes a successful apprentice is the right positive attitude. He stressed it is essential that apprentices get proper training. The training includes certificates and the apprentices can also apply for associate degrees in community colleges.

Member Martin Alvarenga spoke about increasing hours for apprentices in the construction world. There are plenty of funds for developers and we have enforcement from CTDOL. Martin suggested that part of the subsidy of projects funded by taxpayers should be allocated for apprenticeship development and included within the projects that are granted to contractors. This would help to bring new people into construction trades and minimize the turnover rate.

**VII. Apprenticeship Veterans Committee – activity report**

Dan Laffin of the Office for Veterans Workforce Development apprised the Council of current Veteran activities. The Heroes for Hire Career Fair will be held on April 4, 2018. It is the largest Veteran’s Career fair in New England. This fair assists veterans with their transition into new careers. The fair is a good place to find apprentices; the veterans can use their post9/11 GI Bill. Dan said he is steering many veterans toward apprenticeship and explains the many advantages of the program to them. Member Rich DuPont asked the Council to take a look at Step Up because it reduces opportunities for veterans. The Commissioner said that event was well intentioned but has some issues.

**VIII. Department of Consumer Protection- status on DOL/DCP partnership regarding employment agencies seeking to employ, advertise for or supply apprentices.**

Todd said there is a memorandum of understanding between CTDOL and DCP from this year that created to pursue unscrupulous contractors since CTDOL cannot enforce violations. Both agencies developed a process to address this issue. Todd mentioned a couple of companies under investigation and said that penalties can now be levied if a company is found to be in violation.

**IX. Old Business- ACTION ITEM- Pre apprenticeship ratio for high school students previously tabled**

Program manager Todd Berch explained that pre-apprentices in the vo- tech high schools (juniors and seniors) are available for “work based learning release” during the school year when they are in shop cycle.

Example: When a senior pre apprentice is in academic cycle, the senior pre apprentice is not able to participate in work based learning yet the junior pre-apprentice is in a shop cycle and is eligible for work based learning release to a sponsor.

Due to these alternating schedules, a sponsor can have only one pre-apprentice at a time, either a junior or senior as described above, yet are charged for two apprentice slots for ratio purposes.

Todd explained that this will allow more pre-apprentices to gain experience in the trades. Paul Costello was concerned that pre- apprentices would take jobs away from apprentices and spoke about the twenty percent unemployment rate of apprentices. The CTDOL apprenticeship staff monitors if there is excessive turnaround of apprentices from sponsors.

A motion was made by Council member Melvin Olsson concerning pre-apprentices as follows: For purposes of ratio, 2 registered pre- apprentices (1 junior and 1 senior) shall be counted as 1 apprentice "slot" due to alternating shop cycles only permissible during the school calendar year and not permissible during holiday breaks nor summer employment.

The Motion carried- There were four in favor, two opposed; one abstention.

### **New Business**

Tracy Ariel, Director of Advanced Manufacturing at CSCU Board of Regents has taken on a new role at Tunxis Community College. Commissioner Jackson thanked her for her service to the Office of Apprenticeship and CTDOL and wished her well in her new endeavor.

Commissioner Jackson said there is empty language in proposed legislation regarding licensing and streamlining and that Apprenticeship will be monitoring this bill.

Member Paul Costello announced that NECA & IBEW Local 90 JATC will be hosting a Veterans career fair on March 29, 2018. The Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Conference (ESAC) will be held at Foxwoods Resorts and Casino in Mashantucket, CT from June 4 to June 8, 2018. Details are at [www.esaconference.org](http://www.esaconference.org)

Todd Berch informed the Council that CTDOL and the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring a free informational event called, "Building Solutions to the talent gap and opportunities for Connecticut Manufacturers", on February 26, 2018 at 9: 15 a.m. at the Radisson Hotel in Cromwell. Matthew Bromberg, President of Military Engines, Pratt & Whitney will speak following the prior meeting.

The next SAC meeting will be held on Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Rooms A & B at CTDOL.

Meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.