

**Connecticut State Apprenticeship Council
Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2017 at the
Connecticut Department of Labor
200 Folly Brook Boulevard
Wethersfield, CT
Conference Rooms A & B at 1:30 p.m.**

I. Call to Order at 1: 30 p.m. - Kelli Vaillieres chaired the meeting on behalf of Commissioner Jackson.

II. Roll call of Committee Members

Members in Attendance- Kelli Vaillieres, Laurence Vaillieres, Richard A. DuPont, Melvin E. Olsson, Martin Alvarenga, Robert M. Berkmoes, Christopher Brown

Members Not in Attendance- Commissioner/Chair Scott D. Jackson, Gregory Raucci, Frank DaCato

Others Present

Deputy Commissioner Kurt Westby, Todd Berch, Charles McNeil, Terry Brennan, Tracy Ariel, Winfield Cheske, Paul Costello, Mark Mastropasqua, Lynn Raicik, Alan Bergstrom

Recorder

P. DePhillips

III. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the May 18, 2017 meeting were unanimously passed.

IV. Correspondence- None.

V. Public Comment None.

VI. Apprenticeship Update

- **Vacant Positions** - Program Manager Todd Berch talked about the two vacant positions on the SAC Council. He informed members that individuals have applied for the open positions. A decision will be made by the Governor and his staff in the selection of new Council members.
- **Letters** - He remarked upon the letters of gratitude from the Commissioner sent to former Council members Jeffrey Merrow and Nivea Torres on behalf of the Council.
- **Renewals** - The Annual Renewal Notice has been revised and now requires email addresses for all sponsors. This policy change enabled us to capture 93 percent of the email addresses of all sponsors. The "Doomsday" (terminates all apprentices who have not re-registered for the program) letter regarding the June 30, 2017 deadline for renewal fees was mailed on September 15, 2017.

Todd is working with our partners at the Department of Consumer Protection to update the Renewal process with the goal of having payment submitted electronically by sponsors. Eliminating checks will make our department more efficient and save costs.

- Enrollment - There are currently 1,461 sponsors in the state of Connecticut. There are 5538 registered apprentices; the number dropped from 6128; this is a result of sponsors not submitting renewal fees for apprentices.
- Policy - Todd informed everyone of a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Consumer Protection with regard to tightening up the rules of apprenticeship. A policy change has been made.

VII. Apprenticeship Veterans Committee Report: Terry Brennan, Director of the Office for Veterans' Workforce Development spoke about the working relationship between his office and the Office of Apprenticeship and Training. Apprenticeship Representative Paul Femia is the liaison and chairs the team that meets to facilitate certification of Veterans in the trades. Each year Paul works at the events held for veterans including the "Heroes for Hire" career fair and "Stand Down Vets" (annual events that helps veterans gain employment) held in September. Paul reported that the Apprenticeship office had 58 contacts with veterans in June, 60 contacts in July, 52 contacts in August and 39 so far for the month of September. In August, Paul also attended a Veterans GI round table at the VFW in Danbury at the invitation of Senator Chris Murphy.

VIII. Old Business- Action Item- AT-8 ratio relief form as amended for final approval

The ratio relief subcommittee (Larry Vaillieres, Robert Berkmoes and Frank DaCato) discussed their revisions of the AT-8 form with the other Council members. They recommended including the following statement , "Ratio relief applicants must advertise open journey person position(s) for 30 days on CThrees.com prior to subcommittee review of application beginning January 1, 2018**".

- Program Manager Todd Berch went over the updated form and additional revisions with Council members. The changes in the AT-8 form will ensure that companies have looked for licensed journey persons before applying for ratio relief.

A motion was called by Melvin Olsson to accept the revised AT-8 form, Larry Vaillieres seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. New Business- Action Item- Minimum recommended apprentice starting wage

Larry Vaillieres proposed a recommended starting wage increase for apprentices in the trades. Recommended Starting Wages were last increased in 2013. A hand-out was distributed showing examples of the progression of wage rates from 2013 to the present. Council members discussed various rates that will benefit the apprentice but that can also be supported by the sponsors. Larry said that the recommended starting wage should be raised as an enticement to attract quality people into the apprenticeship program. The goal of the apprenticeship program is to increase and replace an aging workforce. Deputy Commissioner Westby noted that rates should be raised to retain students who sometimes leave the program to accept menial jobs that pay more. He also suggested the wage should be tied to the minimum wage. Council members agreed.

Charles McNeil (Federal DOL) clarified that the wage increase is a recommended rate to potential sponsors. The Council recommended a 23 percent recommended wage increase which will increase the recommended starting wage of an apprentice from \$11 to \$12.50 an hour. Larry suggested the new

rate could be effective as of January 1, 2018. Sponsors will get about three months to adjust to the change and factor it into their budgets.

Motion to raise the recommended minimum starting wage for apprenticeship from 11.00 to 12.50 an hour and going forward the recommended starting apprenticeship wage shall be no less than 25 percent above the minimum wage.

The motion carried unanimously. Todd informed members that he would discuss the vote with Commissioner Jackson.

X. Good and Welfare- Public Act 17-76

This act augmented the permissible amount of apprentices to journeyperson for hiring purposes.

- **Employment/Leasing Agencies:** Some apprentices have worked for leasing agencies for a year or two and then discover that they cannot receive any credit because they were not sponsored by a company directly. This means that the apprentice will not get credit for as many as 2,000 to 4,000 hours. Larry asked the Council how we can educate unknowing apprentices so they can avoid this problem. American Job Center directors notify Todd if they suspect this issue. He works with Wage and Workplace Standards (CTDOL) and the Department of Consumer Protection to apprise them of any issues and prevent exploitation of apprentices.
- **Building Pathways CT-** Mel Olsson reported on the successes of the Building Pathways CT program whose mission is to increase women in the construction trades. Nine female applicants graduated from the first class on September 1, 2017. Graduates were placed with the following unions: IUPAT, District 11, UA, Local 777, and the Carpenters Union. Three graduates are interviewing with the Laborers Union this week. Another graduate has decided to pursue the Operating Engineers in the summer of 2018. One graduate is waiting to retake the mechanical aptitude test with the Operating Engineers in January 2018. There are currently eight candidates enrolled in the second class of the program. Mel finds it very rewarding to see these women graduate and continue in the construction trade.

XI. Date of Next Meeting - The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m. The next State Apprenticeship Council meeting will be held on November 16, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. at the Connecticut Department of Labor.