

Connecticut State Apprenticeship Council
Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021
Connecticut Department of Labor
Office of Apprenticeship Training
Virtual MS TEAMS Meeting

I. Meeting Call to Order at 1:30 p.m. There was a quorum.

Members in Attendance- Chairman/Commissioner Kurt Westby, Larry Vallieres, Paul Costello, Christopher J. Brown, Kelli Vallieres, Richard DuPont, Martin Alvarenga

Members Not in Attendance - Robert Berkmoes, Gregory Raucci, Frank DaCato

Others Present

State Apprenticeship Director Todd Berch, Deputy Commissioner Dante Bartolomeo, Alan Bergstrom, Eleanor Lennon, Charles McNeil, Bernard Treml, Michael Komaromi, Keri Valente

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting – February 2021 minutes passed unanimously.

Recorder

P. DePhillips

III. Correspondence - None.

IV. Public Comment – None.

V. Apprenticeship Director Report - State Apprenticeship Director Todd Berch informed the Council that the Apprenticeship office is currently in the Renewal period – a time when all participating sponsors of apprentices must pay an annual Apprentice renewal fee. Todd also reported that there are currently 1,696 Employers and 6,703 apprentices. There has been an increase in registered apprentices in nursing and a slight increase in manufacturing and construction apprentices the last quarter.

Federal OA Regional Director Bernie Treml thanked Commissioner Westby and the Office of Apprenticeship for their help in arranging for the U.S. Secretary of Labor and the Commerce Secretary to visit General Dynamics-Electric Boat in Groton, CT.

Federal OA Deputy Regional Director Charles McNeil informed the Council of some federal updates regarding apprenticeship:

- The Apprenticeship.gov website has been updated and EEO resources are available for sponsors to review.
- Budget Hearings – There will be 285 million dollars allocated in the next fiscal year for programmatic funding.
- The National Apprenticeship Act is currently moving through the Senate and is trying to negotiate a bi-partisan agreement.

- Charles is working with Todd on an Apprenticeship Review manual which will aid staff in the conducting of program reviews.

VI. New Business –

- Ironworker Apprenticeship and In-House Related Instruction program proposed by Erection and Welding Contractors, LLC of Berlin, CT. Council member Martin Alvarenga asked if they had met the criteria for curriculum and asked if provisions are in place to ensure apprentices are treated fairly. Todd reported that he toured the facility and they are in compliance with U.S.DOL approved national guideline standards approved by the U.S.DOL for Steel Erectors of America Inc. Federal OA Regional Director Bernie Trembl said all standards have been met and that each new sponsor's program will be granted a one-year provisional approval subject to review at the end of the year. A vote was taken to recommend the Commissioner of Labor to approve the program. Council Member Richard DuPont made the motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Martin Alvarenga and passed unanimously.
- Alan Bergstrom of the IUOE 478 sought the Council's approval for a Crane Operator Apprenticeship program facilitated by IUOE 478 on behalf of their signatory crane employers. It will be a three-year, 6,000-hour apprenticeship program to become a licensed crane operator. The program will be monitored by JATC as a complementary service to the contractors, but each contractor will sponsor their own apprentices. Database records monitoring for oversight of compliance will be taken under JATC. Council Member Paul Costello made a motion to recommend the program, Council Member Larry Vallieres seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- Unregistered Apprentice Subcommittee Update- Council Member Paul Costello, Council Member Larry Vallieres and Council Member Martin Alvarenga are the members of this subcommittee formed to recommend guidance regarding employers not properly registering apprentices. Paul said that the subcommittee identified problems such as delays with apprentices achieving journeyman status and wages being frozen without progression. Punitive suggestions include placing contractors on licensed probation in lieu of fines, extending the job-site work stop orders until workers are registered as apprentices and educating licensed journeymen about their responsibility of mentoring apprentices. The subcommittee will continue to meet to recommend resolutions to protect individuals not being properly registered as apprentices. Todd Berch stated that additional solutions to the problems of sponsors not in regulatory compliance include partnering with Wage and Workplace Standards (CTDOL) and the Department of Consumer Protection licensing to address the issues. Another long-term solution to problem sponsors may be a legislative initiative.

VII. Old Business- None.

VIII. Good and Welfare - Good and Welfare- Todd Berch thanked his federal partners Charles McNeil and Bernard Trembl and Commissioner Westby, Deputy Commissioner Bartolomeo, and his staff in the Office of Apprenticeship Training. Martin Alvarenga thanked the Commissioner and the Office of Apprenticeship for doing a good job through the pandemic and for continuing to emphasize the benefits of apprenticeship.

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

IX. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. Location: To be determined