

Business Environment Working Group

April 22, 2:30 - 4:00 pm,

Zoom Conference

Draft Notes

In attendance: Steve Pike, Galen Nelson, John Regan, Emily Reichert, Arelene Parquette, Paul Fortier (MassMEP), Ira Moskowitz, Farhad Vazehgoo, Helena Fruscio-Altman, Scott Martin, and Meghan Abella-Bowen.

Welcome and Introduction:

Ira Moskowitz welcomed the attendees.

Review of the Manufacturing Emergency Response Team and Funding Program:

Ira provided an overview of the Manufacturing Emergency Response Team (M-ERT) program including the mission, stages in the process, and initial companies that have pivoted to producing PPE. Helena provided an overview of the M-ERT Funding Program that had been established.

Members shared how COVID 19 has affected their organization.

Reviewed the original agenda of the working group and discussed if COVID 19 should cause any changes in the groups mission or priorities.

Previous Goals

- 1. Benchmark the State:** Benchmark our business environment, especially regionally vs. those of neighboring states.
 - a. What are advantages, gaps, headwinds relative to other states? What would be a strategy to be more proactive towards companies and industries?
 - b. Energy could be first thing to benchmark. Start with search for existing studies, data from AIM, MassMEP, MIT, etc.

- 2. Energy:** Work directly with manufactures to increase energy awareness. Familiarize manufacturers with work on efficiency generation, co-generation, storage, use of non-carbon/electrical vehicles, etc. For example:
 - a. Formalize relationship with utilities and add them to the Working Group.
 - b. Create peer to peer learning opportunities (e.g. presentation at Manufacturing Summit). Create a repository one-stop for energy costs as follow-up from events.
 - c. Engage state agencies (MOBD, etc.), to proactively connect eligible manufacturers to Eversource/National Grid outreach programs and resources on efficiency.

3. **Infrastructure:** Improve Site identification for manufacturers.
 - a. Benchmark what other states do for manufacturing districts, zoning, and developers.
 - b. Consider creating and/or communicating manufacturing-friendly communities and zone.

Suggested Pivot:

- **The COVID 19 Pandemic has impacted the priorities of the working group. Safety and how to support manufacturers now a top business concern.**
- **Use lessons learned from the M-ERT process to support the group's agenda:**
 1. **Phase One:** The immediate emergency response and re-opening of manufacturing. (Complete)
 2. **Phase Two:** Implementing best practices for returning manufacturers to work, and remain resilient if/when virus returns. (In-progress)
 - Inventory available resources and best practice for manufacturers integrating new safety protocols/procedures (OSHA guidelines, NAM resources, etc.)
 3. **Phase Three:** Focus on role as a connector and pivot back to original actions as work returns to new "normal".
 - Explore how we connect new startup's ideas with manufacturers.
 - Connecting companies capabilities to one-another (A Company Exchange).