



**ROCKVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC.  
WORKFORCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES**

October 20, 2020  
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Via Zoom

---

**ATTENDEES:** Raquel Bunai, Alexis Castillo, Kathryn Davis, Steve Greenfield, Ed Harrington, Jennifer Hester, Kim Kelley, Carla Merritt, Julie Monshemvula, Cindy Rivarde

**SEPTEMBER 30 ROUNDTABLE DEBRIEF**

Dr. Kim Kelley welcomed the workgroup and congratulated everyone for such a successful roundtable on September 30. She mentioned that Alexis Castillo should send out one more survey request but the survey results Dr. Kelley has already received were extremely positive. Dr. Kelley mentioned that Dr. Ernesto Chanona was a rock star as a moderator and the panelists were fantastic.

Feedback from the REDI workgroup was as follows:

-  The roundtable went very well
-  We're getting better at this
-  There were a lot of interesting conversations about what people are doing
-  Discussions regarding hiring remote workers for jobs in Montgomery County were very interesting
-  There needs to be more conversations regarding reconfiguring of office space
-  There needs to be a paradigm shift into how we look at employment and growing businesses in the County
-  As long as we can keep the topics current and continue to bring experts to the table, future roundtables will continue to be successful

**IDEAS FOR THE DECEMBER 3 ROUNDTABLE**

-  Cindy Rivarde had a conversation with Dale Cyr, CEO, Inteleos, and they discussed a great deal about the changing environment and changes in the workforce. They also discussed the expectations of millennials in the workforce. Dale is willing to moderate the next roundtable.
-  Cindy wants to ask Morgan Sullivan to be a panelist at the next roundtable and speak from a broker's perspective.
-  Dale is looking at downsizing his company's headquarters and is working with Morgan on that as well as with a design firm.
-  Cindy thought having a panelist from the design perspective would be a good idea so that they can discuss how they're looking at office space.

- ✚ There should be a discussion regarding on how economic development should pivot now that there are so many changes due to COVID-19.
- ✚ Do we have the right physical locations for a business? We incentivize by giving money to a physical location.
- ✚ Carla Merritt mentioned that we give money to incentivize for jobs not locations.
- ✚ What are the incentive packages that we currently have? What should they look like? What do employers want? If we can get better incentives, it would be a strategic advantage to our region.
- ✚ This workgroup should look into how other regions are incentivizing their businesses.
- ✚ What should we be doing about Rockville if people are working remotely in other parts of the country but their position is headquartered in Rockville?
- ✚ What about a location would make a business want to be located here in the County?
- ✚ If you can do a job from anywhere in some instances, why do you choose where to locate?
- ✚ Carla mentioned that in any incentive package they're giving tax credits for job creation and giving a small amount of money towards incentivizing employers to use capital expenses to improve space for a landlord, but it's all based on jobs.
- ✚ Jennifer Hester mentioned that organizations that have labs and manufacturing are going to need a physical location, however, at Emmes they are predominately data driven and there is no need to have a physical location. In Rockville, they have the office space capacity for 463 employees. Prior to COVID-19, they were getting ready to sign a lease to extend their physical footprint in that building, however, they did not complete the negotiations prior to the pandemic, which is a good thing because now they have 110 employees that no longer want their office's. Emmes has grown by 10% but they're growing in a virtual space. Their primary client is NIH who still wants in-person meetings so they still need to have a physical location to accommodate them.
- ✚ Companies such as John Marshall Bank wouldn't be able to go 100% virtual as they need to attend to their walk-in customers.
- ✚ Millennials are more interested in working from home and will continue to seek jobs where they can do that. We should invite a millennial to the next roundtable discussion.
- ✚ We need to make sure that the companies that are in Rockville maintain the Rockville roots despite how many of their employees work virtually.
- ✚ People are starting to request to buy locally and get their supplies locally versus from foreign entities.
- ✚ How do we contribute to our community because we are Rockville?
- ✚ Businesses are moving to suburban neighborhoods because of the lower costs than, say, DC.
- ✚ Rockville has an advantage because of their easy access to public transportation and now the restaurants, stores, etc., in Maryland are open again.
- ✚ Rockville needs to sell itself as a hub that is important to people because not everyone can work virtually.
- ✚ We should try to present resources and solutions at the roundtable. Are there grants to help facilitate these conversations? WorkSource Montgomery and their on-the-job training (OJT) program?

## **NEXT STEPS TO PREPARE FOR THE DECEMBER 3 ROUNDTABLE**

-  Dale Cyr will be the moderator
-  Include Morgan Sullivan as a panelist to represent the broker side
-  Bob Fox could give the architect perspective on the panel
-  Find a millennial to be on the panel, perhaps somebody from MCEDC. Cindy will look into his.
-  Invite Douglas Frederick, CEO from ZeniMax, to be on the panel. Carla mentioned that her and Cindy can schedule a conference call with him.
-  Should we invite Ulyana Desiderio, Director of BioHealth and Life Science to be on the panel?
-  Carla mentioned that Cynthia Grissom would be happy to talk about OJT
-  Aneta Lefterov could talk about Maryland Business Works
-  Jennifer mentioned offering up her director from EMMES, Stacey Rollinger, to talk about recruiting and talent management.
-  Alexis Castillo will send out the invitations and include prior roundtable participants. We need a tagline for the invitation, such as “The Space Debate.”
-  The roundtable is scheduled for December 3, from 12:30-2:30 p.m.

## **FUTURE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

-  Dale Cyr had an idea to discuss mental health at a future roundtable and how people are dealing with stress, their life disruptions due to COVID-19, and the general wellbeing of people.
-  Dr. Travis Gayles from the Maryland Department of Health could be good speaker
-  Invite someone from Johns Hopkins

**The next REDI Workforce Education Committee meeting is scheduled for  
Monday, November 16, from 2:00-3:00 PM.**