



**Common Sense  
Initiative**

**Mike DeWine**, Governor  
**Jon Husted**, Lt. Governor

**Carrie Kuruc**, Director

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**Small Business Advisory Council Meeting – Minutes  
Thursday, November 5, 2020, 10:00 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Emily Groseclose, Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Senior Policy and Business Advocate.

Members Present:

- Representative George Lang
- Bill Bishop
- Mike Kahoe
- Crystal Faulkner
- Tom Demaline
- Doug Barry
- Tyeis Baker-Bowman

Mrs. Groseclose then introduced Carrie Kuruc, CSI Director, to give a CSI year in review. Ms. Kuruc reported that CSI was able to execute all its originally planned projects, despite the challenges of operating remotely during the coronavirus pandemic. CSI used the challenges exposed by the pandemic to help Ohio's regulatory agencies identify areas where regulatory compliance could be streamlined. In 2020, CSI implemented an artificial intelligence tool to aid state agencies' research in the Administrative and Revised Codes. CSI began training the first agencies in July to use the tool to identify outdated or overburdensome rules. Early work coming out of the tool supports the office of BroadbandOhio by researching differing definitions for similar terms throughout Ohio law. Among 62 words commonly used in the regulation of broadband, CSI found 303 definitions across 25 different state agencies. Similar research projects utilizing the AI tool are ongoing.

CSI has also been busy this year carrying out its statutory role, reviewing the adverse impact rules have on business. The office saw several permanent versions of rules that had begun as emergency rules issued in response to the pandemic, along with rules implementing workforce initiatives that were a focus of the Lt. Governor Husted throughout the year. There was also a lot of rule filing activity from occupational licensing boards after the passage of SB 7, requiring licensing boards to recognize out-of-state occupational licenses in good standing held by members of the military and their spouses.

Director Kuruc introduced the Lt. Governor for remarks expressing excitement to continue work in the regulatory sphere and to streamline state processes for business communities. Lt. Governor Husted emphasized that Ohio is still very much focused on fighting the pandemic, which has increased its spread in recent weeks. He advised people to be more diligent in fighting the pandemic in their personal lives, doing what they can to slow the spread of the virus and to protect vulnerable communities.

While Ohio has been on its way to getting back to some sense of economic normalcy, the state still faces significant hurdles. Ohio's unemployment rate has dropped, but there have also been troubling signs in the labor market that we need to address. To help with that, the Governor signed into law various protections for employers, so long as they follow the law during the pandemic. Additionally, Ohio has grants available for small businesses, as well as programs that have been instituted for rental assistance for those struggling during the pandemic. There is \$38 million set aside in grant money to help bars and restaurants survive the pandemic, and the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) is returning \$8 billion in rebates by the end of 2020 to Ohio's employers, the biggest wave of which is expected in early December.

Lt. Governor Husted restated that we are in a stressful period with the number of COVID-19 cases increasing, consumer confidence going down, and the federal government being delayed in helping. However, he expressed confidence that a combination of the programs currently underway in Ohio will help Ohioans make it through the difficult times of the pandemic. He thanked the council and panelists for their time and offered to answer questions.

Doug Barry asked the Lt. Governor if the BWC rebates this year will impact next year's rebates. Lt. Governor Husted stated that he was unsure how that would affect future rebates but stressed an importance that the state act during the most stressful times for Ohio's businesses. The BWC will have to assess future circumstances later. Bill Bishop asked if there was a message that the business community could help spread throughout the state. The Lt. Governor said that people should stress it is as important as ever that Ohioans take the necessary precautions to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Lt. Governor Husted expressed that Ohioans need to be responsible and accountable to help prevent the virus from worsening in Ohio. He thanked the council for its time and voiced an excitement for the future before departing.

Mrs. Groseclose then introduced Mike Duffey, Deputy Director of InnovateOhio, to give an InnovateOhio year in review. Mr. Duffey discussed two projects to save taxpayer money; the first being the identification and elimination of duplicate payments at state agencies. This project has already saved \$1.2 million in unnecessary duplicate payments. Second, InnovateOhio has been working on the Ohio Checkbook, a collection of state and local financial information, to consolidate services under the InnovateOhio Platform to save over \$1 million per year.

InnovateOhio is involved in several other major projects. It has been focusing on I.P. Promise, an initiative to make Ohio universities more attractive to innovators and entrepreneurs. The Ohio I.P. Promise brings together the state's higher education institutions to provide a unified process for commercialization, so students and faculty have a clear path to commercialization of their research in Ohio. In addition, InnovateOhio works with the newly established BroadbandOhio to

focus on telehealth services, wireless services, and legislative pursuits to expand broadband access across Ohio. Working on cyber security issues, InnovateOhio has adopted CyberOhio from the Attorney General's office.

Mr. Duffey also mentioned that the InnovateOhio Platform has been working on onloading state agencies to all its systems, including single sign on systems. InnovateOhio has also worked to fund a system that will allow Ohio law enforcement to identify warrants across all of Ohio via a single system.

InnovateOhio and the Ohio BMV teamed up to limit the long waits times by allowing Ohioans to check in online and to make updates to the BMV website which will hopefully be a template for other state websites. Lastly, Mr. Duffey pointed out that the CSI artificial intelligence software tool project is also funded by InnovateOhio, and Mr. Duffey expressed excitement about the work coming from that project.

Mrs. Groseclose then introduced Emily Fabiano from the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation to hear their year in review. Their year has been focused on working with agency partners to adjust strategies and projects to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help Ohioans succeed and gain employment opportunities throughout the state. The Office of Workforce Transformation also opened the Industry Sector Partnership grant at the beginning of the year. The program was put on hold due to budget challenges, but the application process was re-opened in October.

The office focused on supporting state agencies during the pandemic, to help with increased public traffic. In May, the annual In Demand Jobs Week took place fully online with over 40 virtual events across the state to offer career exposure to Ohioans. The pandemic highlighted the importance of tech skills for Ohio's workers, leading to record-setting credentialing in June for the TechCred program. The office is also working on a pilot program in the Cleveland area to help those displaced by the pandemic to connect with career counselors to find employment. Lastly, the office worked on the Choose Ohio First scholarships for students to stay in Ohio and pursue a STEM education and a micro-credential program to help Ohioans gain an in-demand job credentialing to help aid in career growth.

Mrs. Groseclose thanked the panelists for their time and asked if anyone had changes to the last meeting's minutes. She proposed meeting dates for 2021, and it was agreed that Thursday morning meetings would continue to be the set time. Mrs. Groseclose then closed out the meeting at 11:01 a.m.