Small Business Advisory Council Meeting – Minutes
Thursday, August 5, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Emily Groseclose, Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Senior Policy and Business Advocate.

Members Present:
- Carvel Simmons
- Tyeis Baker-Baumann
- Mike Kahoe
- Scott Schutt
- Robert Sielschott
- George Lang (By Phone)

Mrs. Groseclose then introduced the Ohio Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted who spoke on CSI’s work using an AI tool to make government more customer service friendly, as well as a workforce and economic development update. Husted discussed the work of Ohio Means Jobs to help find employment and job training for Ohioans, as well as working to diminish other barriers to work for those looking for jobs. Mr. Husted touched on the status of the economic recovery of Ohio, following the decline of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ohio. Furthermore, the Lieutenant Governor gave an overview of the recently passed state budget, and many of the notable provisions. Mr. Husted touched on the expansion of the Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformations TechChred Program, that has quickly outpaced its originally set goals, and the administrations work to expand Broadband access to more Ohioans. Mr. Husted then went on to give the Council an update of the work of CSI to limit outdated modes of interaction with state agencies to move government in a direction costumer services with businesses and individuals. Mr. Husted then fielded questions regarding meeting workforce demands for businesses moving to, and growing in, Ohio; the changing landscape of the ease of doing business in Ohio; housing demand in Ohio; and hurdles of bureaucracy in both local and state government. Mr. Husted then exited, and Brad Bales, of Governor DeWine’s legislative team, was introduced to give an update on the recent state budget.

Mr. Bales discussed the budget, and the push to “Build Ohio’s Future” with the funds included in the budget. This included funds related to the economic recover from struggles resulting from the pandemic, tax breaks given to Ohioans, demolition funding, broadband expansion grants, the TechChred program, education funding, environmental and agriculture development funding, and the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program and Rural Business Growth Program. Mr. Bales then addressed concerns regarding demolition funding, and programs offered by the Department of Development.
Mrs. Groseclose then introduced Peter Voderberg from Broadband Ohio to give an update on the Offices work. Mr. Voderberg gave an overview of the Broadband issues facing the state, and some of the administrations goals and efforts in addressing those issues.

Following Mr. Voderberg were representatives (Jerry Braugh, Terry Mescher, and Eric Saas) of differing state departments all working on the H2Ohio project, to give an overview of their work. This work includes funding from the Ohio EPA on critical water projects such as clean drinking water and sewage expansion projects, water monitoring programs, and the replacement of lead water service lines. The Department of Agriculture has focused on management of nutrients and nutrient loading on croplands, erosion of croplands, and the water management in agricultural practice. And lastly the Department of Natural Resources has focused on natural infrastructure on the landscape to improve the state’s water quality. This largely incudes wetland restoration programs, and nutrient reduction projects to inhibit harmful algal blooms. The panelists then fielded questions on the projects progress.

Mrs. Groseclose then gave meeting schedule updates to the Council members and received approval for the previous meetings minutes. Additionally, CSI Director Sean Mccullough gave a brief update regarding new outreach efforts from CSI to get in more direct contact with the business community.

Mrs. Groseclose then closed the meeting at 11:39 AM.