

Chamber Education Committee / Business Advisory Council Minutes

November 26, 2024

Location Host: National First Ladies Library & Museum 205 Market Ave South,
Canton, OH 44702

Attendance

Jeff Dafler	Stephanie Bohnack	Dave Fischer	Mike Hearn	Matt Ziders
Jennifer Kessel	Scott Campbell	Tamiko Hatcher	Matt Cola	Mattison Davis
John Richard	Christine Taylor	Michael Wheeler	John Rizzo	Jeff McClellan
Lisa Talbert	Alexis Raineri			
Online attendees	Rebecca Kuzma	John Milan	Barbara Bennett	Susan Koosh
Shawn Jackson	Brent Fatzinger	Derek Saylor	Lt. Col. Eric Craft	Melinda McNutt
Rachel VanDyke				

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Dr. John Richard called the meeting to order at 12:03pm.

2. Approval of an amended agenda and minutes

John Richard asked for approval of today's amended agenda and the minutes from the October 22nd meeting. Mike Hearn moved for approval, Dave Fischer seconded, the motion passed.

3. National First Ladies Library & Museum Welcome and Information

Stephanie Bohnak introduced herself and stated she is the Director of Education and curatorial services at the Library & Museum. The site is the only site in the world dedicated to First Ladies history and is the host site for the Ohio local history Alliance regional meeting for other historical organizations. This non-profit is a partner organization for the National Park Service as the 280th unit which makes the property Federal land. Stephanie is also the contest coordinator for Region Five Ohio History Day this year. The museum is showing the Literacy first ladies as teachers, educators and librarians' exhibit running through April 2025. Stephanie stated that a brand-new exhibit will open in May of 2025 and have a 2-year run called the Arrows exhibit, 250 years of First Lady's progress and power. Stephanie invited everyone for a tour after the meeting.

4. Introduction

John Richard thanked Jeff Dafler for helping to coordinate the guests for today. John introduced John Rizzo, who is the VP of the Akron Canton Advocacy Alliance to provide legislative updates and what is happening from both a state and federal government standpoint.

5. Presentation: Legislative Update – John Rizzo, Vice President Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance, Greater Akron Chamber

John Rizzo Discussed the Akron Canton Advocacy Alliance’s activities, including 20 events and meetings with elected officials. John emphasized the importance of engaging with the business community to align advocacy efforts. John provided an overview of the public policy agenda, focusing on priorities and the upcoming legislative session. The current legislative session ends 12/31/24. The new General Assembly 2-year term starts in odd-numbered years, completes in even -numbered years. John encouraged people to sign up for the Akron Canton Advocacy Alliance distribution list. John stated that by the end of January to the first week of March, the governor will introduce the state operating budget which will be finalized at the end of June after a 7-month process. John suggested bringing legislators in for a meeting in the first or second quarter of next year to discuss these issues.

6. Presentation: PortfoliOH: Introducing A Platform Driving Student Acquisition of Life and Workforce Skills – Jeff McClellan, Founding Director, STARTSOLE

Jeff McClellan was introduced by Dr. John Richard and spoke of his Cleveland area-based business and their concerns about school choice and public funds going to private schools. As a former teacher and school administrator, Jeff explained the purpose of the Portfolio tool, which helps students and parents document career opportunities and skills. Jeff highlighted the seamless integration of the tool with existing systems and the potential for long-term use by students beyond their school years. The tool was demonstrated to show how students can add evidence of activities and how it helps adults manage the process. Jeff says there are challenges in aligning K-12 education with workforce needs and career readiness. Jeff stated that privacy and security concerns related to student data in the Portfolio platform do exist. Jeff expressed concerns about the impact of property tax valuation changes on school funding and the difficulty of laying off teachers’ mid-year and the impact of federal funding changes on local school districts and the potential double or triple hit on funding. Jeff provided contact information for those interested in the Portfolio tool and mentioned future conversations with interested parties.

7. Education Bootcamp Update – Christine Taylor, Vice President, Stark Education Partnership

Christine said that an agreement to move forward with the teacher bootcamp on June 3rd, 4th and 5th has been decided. Thirty teachers will be able to participate. Christine requested volunteers to help with the boot camp and noted the need for participants to manage the healthcare day.

8. Adjourn & Tour of National First Ladies Library & Museum

John Richard made a motion to adjourn at 1:01PM and Michael Wheeler seconded.