**Location: Westerville Area Chamber office**

**Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 3:30-4:45 PM**

In attendance: Dr. John Kellogg, Brandon Lawson, Amy Balster, Gene Hollins, Tamara Howard, Michael McGreevy, Dennis Blair, Janet Tressler-Davis

With Chair Jeff Akers, out of town Janet started the meeting at 3:35 PM.

 Updates from Members of work teams:

* **Healthcare** – Janet noted the June 13 Membership Luncheon is a panel discussion on How Healthcare is Evolving.
* Taxation/Worker’s Comp. No updates reported.
* **Workforce: WorkWISE**- John Kellogg/Janet/Gene

Gene discussed the Columbus region being designated as a Federal Workforce Hub. There does not seem to be funding associated with the designation, although it is good faith that our region are making progress in workforce efforts. Janet passed around a list of three workforce related new college and university incentives from the Lt. Gov. office that have been included in the state budget.

* + *Teacher/Guidance Counselor Externship-* WorkWISE Collective has a date set in Sept. for 30 WCS teachers and guidance counselors to participate in the Externship for a day visiting three businesses.
	+ *Dennis shared a ‘make a thon’ that involved one of our Westerville School teachers and Intel*.

An additional topic discussed is the special election that includes State Issue 1 to amend the Constitution. The OCC took a position in support of the Issue. Our BAC is not taking a position on the issue. Constitutional Amendment Language: The resolution would **raise the threshold to amend Ohio’s constitution by requiring a vote of at least 60%** of the electors for passage. Require proposed amendments, beginning next year, to have **petition signatures from all 88 Ohio counties.**

Westerville School District –Dr. John Kellogg provided an excellent report on the state budget. The slide deck he referenced is attached to the email with these minutes.

* Timeline of the Biannual Budget was reviewed noting there is a $6 million surplus and $3.5 billion is in the rainy-day fund along with the State upgrade rating to a AAA.
* Projecting 30% property tax increase for Franklin County
* $8,240 state funding per student; Westerville receives a portion, approx. 24% of the amount per student.
* Base min. for teachers has been $30,000 and the budget increases the minimum to $40,000. Westerville is above the new minimum.
* Voucher system: the eligibility could move from 250% to 450% of federal poverty level for Ed. Choice vouchers.
	+ We currently have 35% of students on the Free & Reduced lunch program.

Dr. Kellogg added that there will be a ribbon cutting for the new middle school in July. With the school opening we will have under 700 students in each building.

Janet shared that the Election Academy has been moved to July 13, 20, 25. The original dates we set were to start the Thursday of Memorial Day. The thought is to move the date to get more registrants. Discussion occurred about a small group of people that have expressed interest in running or serving on a candidate campaign. It is important we identify people to run and encourage them to move forward. It is not ideal to have an uncontested race. We need at least four people to run for City Council and three for the Board of Education.

We are planning to have **Candidate Forums in the fall** for both races. She welcomes council members to help plan the forums with her.

July we will be on recess. Next meeting Aug. 1 with COTA update and possibly OCC Small Business Council

Update.

A reminder for people to volunteer at the Music & Arts Festival. This is the link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4cacaa22a3fc1-2023#/>

Meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM

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| ***Chamber mission*** | To enhance the business climate and quality of life in our community. |
| ***Committee mission*** | We are business advocates, collaborating with public officials to support and/or establish legislation, regulations and policies that represent our members’ top concerns and enable businesses to thrive and compete locally, nationally, and internationally. We further serve members’ interests by striving to generate revenue for the Chamber and the committee itself so that we may provide related educational programs and materials as well as information about government actions impacting business. |
| ***Member concerns*** | **Workforce Training | Business Regulations | Healthcare** |

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**Team Captains for Work Groups:**

Access to Workforce-Gene Hollins/Dr. Kellogg Healthcare – Bill Bishop/Andrew Hardy

Taxation-Charlene Kott/Brandon Lawson Business Regulation – Matthew Fisher

Federal Workforce Hub https://www.cleveland.com/news/2023/05/columbus-to-be-new-federal-workforce-hub-white-house-announces.html

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Governor DeWine’s budget proposal includes the following incentives to retain Ohio students:

• Ohio College Opportunity Grants (OCOG). OCOG grants provide need-based scholarships to Ohio students to attend colleges and universities in Ohio. The budget proposal significantly expands eligibility for these scholarships to ensure more working Ohio families have access to post-secondary education.

• Merit Scholarships. The governor’s budget proposal rewards students’ exceptional work by providing a $5,000 per year scholarship to every Ohio high school graduate who finished in the top 5 percent of their class if they chose to go to school in Ohio. It is expected that this merit scholarship would reduce the loss of Ohio students going to school in another state by 10-15 percent. Similar merit-based programs in other states have resulted in documented reductions in loss of students ranging from 9 percent to 28 percent.

• Choose Ohio First Scholarship. The governor’s budget proposal increases funding for the Choose Ohio First scholarship, allowing Ohio colleges to award more scholarships to students studying STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math).  The appropriation for the Choose Ohio First scholarship has more than doubled since the beginning of the DeWine-Husted administration, increasing from $13.8 million in 2020 to a proposed $32 million in 2025.