



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes

### MILLENNIAL TASK FORCE

**CHAIR: MARQUAYLA ELLISON**

**Jezamil Arroyo-Vega, Nick Carnahan, Angela Damiani, Jordan Donald, Tenia Fisher, Jeremy Fojut, Adam Gabornitz, Michael Hostad, Amelia Kegel, Noel Kegel, Elizabeth McLaren, Kacee Ochalek, Jason Rae, Ger Thao, and Tiffany Henry**

**Staff Assistant: Chris Lee, 414-286-2232**

**Legislative Liaison: Alex Highley, 414-286-8661**

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**Tuesday, May 12, 2020**

**8:00 AM**

**Virtual Meeting**

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This will be a virtual meeting conducted via Go To Meeting. Should you wish to join this meeting from your phone, tablet, or computer you may go to <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/967372605>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (224) 501-3412 and Access Code: 967-372-605.

**1. Call to order.**

*Meeting called to order at 8:07 a.m.*

**2. Roll call.**

*Also present were:*

*Bernadette Karanja, City Clerk's Office Workforce Development Section  
Alex Highley, Legislative Reference Bureau*

**Present** 15 - Rae, Fojut, Arroyo-Vega, Carnahan, Damiani, Donald, Ellison, Fisher, Gabornitz, Hostead, Kegel, Kegel, Ochalek, Thao and Henry

**Absent** 1 - McLaren

**3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes.**

*Meeting minutes from March 12, 2020 were approved without objection.*

**4. Discussion with or insight from interested parties or members of the public.**

*a. Tech Hub Coalition*

*Appearing:*

*Kathy Henrich, Milwaukee Tech Hub Coalition*

*Ms. Henrich commented. She is a tech executive involved with workforce development. The coalition is relative new (founded October 2019), a nonprofit, and an*

*initiative of Northwestern Mutual. Member organizations are active, want 70,000 new tech jobs, want to lift the ecosystem, and fill the gap. The primary goal of the coalition is to increase Milwaukee tech workers to approximately double what it was in 2017 by 2025. There are four strategic areas of focus to drive demand: startups, tech talent, Bold MKE Vision, and develop supply.*

*Coalition priorities include: Bold Vision - build the image of Milwaukee as a Tech Hub by amplifying existing capabilities and creating a unique value proposition; Startup - leverage cross-industry partnerships to accelerate local start up growth and drive innovation ; Tech Jobs - grow tech jobs in existing companies through successful digital transformation and recruit new tech companies; Freelance - develop the region as a strong community for freelancers while uniquely supporting their needs; K-20 - Retain top talent into the region through internships, entry level roles and inspire the next generation of tech talent; and Talent Reskill - accelerate reskilling of population to prepare for in-demand jobs with living wages to create the most diverse tech-talent.*

*Coalition success would require collaboration among the various sectors of post-secondary, economic development, community, government, K-12 education, corporations, startups, and re-skill (workforce development/training).*

*Further details of the Tech Hub Coalition presentation can be found within Common Council File Number 191649.*

*Members inquired about the coalition's connectivity to and involvement with youths and high schools, reasons why companies get involved in the coalition, incorporating IT courses into K-12 education, lobbying efforts, and outsourcing of new entry level tech jobs.*

*Ms. Henrich replied. The coalition is developing a social media strategy, updating its website, has newsletters, and has virtual internships available. The coalition is working with universities to solicit the virtual internships to students, and many applications have been received. The primary reason for coalition involvement has been investment for the greater good. Companies want to transform the tech economy, understand the shortage in tech talent, and increase their visibility. Internship applications are shared to member organizations. There has been work done with Milwaukee Public Schools to supply and provide access to tech technology. Funding and enforcement is needed to advance IT courses into schools. Although computer science is a required course per the State, there is no dedicated or consistent funding and enforcement mechanisms in place. The coalition has partnered with the Wisconsin Tech Council, and the council will lobby on their behalf. New entry level tech jobs are being developed by Galaxy, and people should contact Galaxy for further details.*

*b. Prism Technical*

*Appearing:  
Randy Crump, Prism Technical CEO*

*Mr. Crump commented. His firm does consulting on construction projects, focuses on workforce diversity and inclusion, and has been involved with major City projects like the BMO Harris tower and Fiserv Forum arena. He was involved with mentoring inner city youths through the Dream Chasing initiative from his church in the past. The initiative resulted in many success stories, but a majority of those youths who succeeded are not in the City anymore. There needs to be more interest and*

*opportunities, such as internships, from local company staples to recruit local young entrepreneurs and professionals who are in or have graduated from college. There is also lacking good recruitment of minorities.*

*c. Generation Iowa Commission*

*Appearing:*

*Shawn Rolland, Wauwatosa School Board member*

*Mr. Rolland commented. Twelve years ago, from 2007 to 2009, he was the Public Information Officer of the Iowa Department of Economic Development who was selected to serve as a liaison to the state's brand new "Generation Iowa Commission," a nonpartisan group of 20+ diverse young professionals and leaders from across Iowa who were tapped and selected (through an application process) to dig into Iowa's "brain drain," hold hearings across the state, conduct research, and subsequently report out findings as well as potential legislative solutions for the state legislature to consider.*

*Mr. Rolland gave a brief overview of the report that resulted from the commission. Data driven analysis and population comparisons were major components. Population studies showed that there was a brain drain of college graduate students despite students migrating to colleges in Iowa. Census data comparisons were done comparing the Midwest states regarding population tracking and annual average wages.*

*Conclusions of the report found that the most important factors are wage related that drive a young person's decision to stay or leave. Iowa's surplus of qualified, college educated professionals drive wages down forcing Iowans to choose between being underemployed in Iowa or leave the state. Without drastic overhaul of economic development practices, 20 percent of Iowa graduates would have to make this choice. The number of Iowa jobs for college graduates would have to dramatically increase to meet the next generation education rate and stem "brain drain."*

*Recommendations of the report included amending legislation to include voting seats for Next Generation Iowans on all boards and commissions relating to economic development and quality-of-life, making job creation programs more ambitious to increase job opportunities for the next generation's education level, expanding "Iowa Internship Program" that links top Iowa college students with internships in small and medium sized businesses, and expanding the Education Award to Iowa's AmeriCorps volunteers to attract service-minded, educated young professionals.*

*In summary it was found that Iowa attracted college students but did not retain college graduates; Iowa lacked adequate number of jobs, internships, opportunities, higher relative wages, and connection points for college educated people and of those out-of-state; and brain drain and net migration were tied to relative average wages.*

*Further details of the Generation Iowa Commission report can be found within Common Council File Number 191649.*

*Members added that there should be consideration to address student debt. Students desire high wages or salaries to pay off their debt. Students may benefit from programs that give them free tuition or discounted tuition for enrolling into universities within their same state of residence, such as in Florida.*

*d. Sherman Phoenix*

*There was no discussion. Mr. Lee said representatives of Sherman Phoenix could not be acquired to attend.*

*e. Youth Council*

*Member Ochalek gave a recap of the insight gained from discussion with the Milwaukee Youth Council at their May 6, 2020 meeting. Several members attended the Youth Council meeting to gain insight. There were eight Youth Council members participating. Some Youth Council seats were vacant. Major passions of those members included bettering the lives of marginalized and disenfranchised communities, helping others, human rights, address mental illness, and advocating the needs of the minority and black community. Two of the Youth Council members indicated coming back to the City after college and all members indicated their intention to not live in Milwaukee after college graduation. Their reasons to leave the City included that Milwaukee is not a safe place for youths and blacks, that they wanted to gain independence and expand their horizons, and that no HBCU exists in Milwaukee. Their positive thoughts about the City included diversity and a sense of community. Their concerns about living in Milwaukee included racism in white-majority spaces, lack of leadership to address inequality, lack of people knowing about the City's potential that is there, and flawed relationship between police and the community due to a history of distrust with and brutality by the police.*

*Members and Mr. Crump made various comments. Government should play a role to address issues raised by youths. HBCUs have merit and allows for minorities to embrace their identities. Minorities tend to flock to HBCUs and ignore other opportunities and universities. There is value to leave the City, broaden horizons, gain skills and experience, and then come back to invest in Milwaukee. College time is a prime opportunity to leave and that choice must be respected. The issue is to make Milwaukee a destination after college and to make people feel comfortable with their environment. Changes must be realistic. The City will not change in a day. Virtual HBCU campuses should be created in Milwaukee. Inner city youths have stigma of not being able to go to college. If given the opportunity to higher education early-on, youths do change their mindset. Many inner city kids are not aware of what Milwaukee has to offer and have not been to many parts of the City. Local colleges need to be more attractive. Independence and identity development can still occur locally and not necessarily through leaving the City. Lack of safety and police mistreatment are main issues to youths. Family, community, and parent have large influence on youths. That culture needs to be engaged to reduce the stigma that young people have about the City.*

*f. Other*

*There was no other discussion.*

**5. Discussion or review of data, assessment of major reasons, analysis of programs and policies, or establishing recommendations relative to the brain drain problem in the City of Milwaukee.**

- a. Apprenticeships*
- b. Talent pipelines*
- c. City identity and narrative*

*Member Gabornitz added comments. Narrative stories of people are important.*

*Milwaukee has positive attributes such as having lower student debt and diversity. The City has not done a good job telling its story. These positive stories need better promotion. There needs to be better, consistent, and investment in a City brand or narrative. At a minimum there needs to be awareness of the opportunities and assets that Milwaukee has.*

*Member Fojut added comments. More data is needed to help the task force make decisions and that he will look at population migration numbers for the City based on census data. Branding campaigns do not work, oftentimes, and costs millions of dollars to make a real impact. Lived experiences work better. Branding comes from entities and assets, and those things must create the brand.*

- d. Government support, promotion, or assistance
  - i. Startups
  - ii. Community initiatives
  - iii. Inclusion of all neighborhoods
- e. Other

*Chair Ellison said to hold discussion of task force priority items over to the next meeting, to add education as an item, and questioned how the task force should proceed further and what additional data it needs.*

*Members discussed having deeper conversations on task force priority items at the next meeting, adding items as necessary, entertained the possibly of breaking out into smaller groups to tackle the priority items, and questioned the task force's impact to make changes.*

*Mr. Lee said that there will be amendment to extend the deadline of the task force to the end of the year, which would give the task force more time.*

*Ms. Karanja added comments. The task force should try to meet as a whole group instead of breaking out into smaller groups. In her opinion breaking out may result groups to fall into the rabbit hole (disconnect from the mission of the task force, work in silos, or find difficulty to accomplish tasks). The task force is already empowered and have been vested to provide recommendations to government and make a difference.*

## **6. Agenda items for the next meeting.**

*To be determined.*

*Agenda items to include review of additional data relevant to the task force and discussion of task force priority items.*

## **7. Set next meeting date and time.**

*To be determined possibly for Tuesday, May 26 or June 2, 2020 at 8 a.m.*

## **8. Adjournment.**

*Meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.*

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant*

*Council Records Section  
City Clerk's Office*

**Meeting materials and documents related to activities of the Millennial Task Force can be found within the following file:**

[191649](#)

Communication relating to findings, recommendations and activities of the Millennial Task Force.

**Sponsors:** THE CHAIR