

BEST Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 4, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 1:37 p.m.

Attendance: Remote

Members Present: Scott Gafvert, Tate Borcoman

Staff Present: Becky Ehling, Traci Stivers,

Guests Present: Amy Miller, Jena Short, Eric Plummer

Absent: Zach Stanfield

1. Call to Order

Traci Stivers called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The March 2, 2026, meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.

2. Director of Community Relations Report

Traci Stivers, Director of Community Relations, provided an update on ongoing outreach and business engagement efforts. Highlights included:

- Continued attendance at chamber and community events to strengthen regional business relationships.
- Participation in the MADE manufacturing hub event in Warren County, where businesses collaborate through shared resources, mentoring, and workforce development initiatives.
- Discussion of the MADE Hub's partnership with Mason High School to expose students to skilled trades and career pathways through hands-on experiences.
- Attendance at the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partners (AMIP) Manufacturing Expo and networking events, resulting in new business connections and early coordination regarding potential layoffs with a local manufacturer.
- Exploration of partnerships to support work boot donations for job seekers entering employment opportunities requiring safety footwear.
- Additional communication and website responsibilities assumed following staffing transitions, including management of the BCW/Workforce calendar and event postings.
- Announcement of two prospective board members:
 - John Groom, Vega, Mason
 - Mark Leipert, Hamilton Caster

3. Discussion Items

Committee Direction and Priorities

Committee members discussed the need to re-energize the BEST Committee and identify focused priorities aligned with the committee's responsibilities outlined in the bylaws. Topics discussed included:

- Economic indicators and business needs
- Rapid response and layoff monitoring
- Grant opportunities and alternative funding sources
- Legislative monitoring
- Business outreach and education efforts

Workforce and Business Outreach

Scott Gafvert discussed the challenges businesses face navigating workforce and economic development resources and emphasized the need for more condensed and focused outreach materials for employers and economic development partners.

Discussion followed regarding stronger collaboration with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the possibility of involving SBDC representatives in future business service representative meetings to improve awareness of workforce programs and available services.

Workforce Awards and Membership Initiatives

Staff revisited prior discussions regarding:

- Workforce recognition awards in partnership with local chambers of commerce
- Membership tiers associated with the BCW/Workforce nonprofit structure

It was noted that progress on several initiatives has stalled pending resolution of ongoing fiscal agent discussions and evaluation of the organization's nonprofit structure.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:37 p.m