

Connecticut-Ireland Trade Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2026

10:00 a.m. in Commerce Conference Room 3803 in 3800 of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday February 17th, by Emmett Riley and Loretto Leary.

The following committee members were present: Emmett Riley, Loretto Leary, Colin O'Neill, Alex Daly, Marty Dunleavy, Christopher Dodd, Moriah Moriarty, Alex Peterson, Christine Kinealy, Representative Aniskovich, Casey Larkin (Hartley), Rep. Meskers, Paddi LeShane, O'Dea, Tony Sheridan

The following committee members were absent: Ed Cullinan, Senator Kelly, John Frey, Kevin Kelleher, Kevin Ryan, Gregory Butler

I. CONVENE MEETING

Emmett Riley and Loretto Leary made opening remarks.

II. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRS

There were no remarks by the chairs.

III. SPEAKERS - Thomas Hyde: Chief of Staff at [Advance CT](#)

Non-profit economic development organization that drives job expansion and capital in Connecticut. Help promote, maintain and discover new stakeholders.

4,223 Recruitment targets, 394 Qualified Leads, 135 New Projects, and 48 total wins in 2025. 11 new recruited businesses in the state of Connecticut. Currently Advance CT has a total of 87 open projects since December 2025.

Advance CT's project budgeting comes from DCD, board of members, and directors.

Rep. Meskers asks if there is something that should be looked at on the legislative side, in the interests of the Irish Trade Commission

Hyde states there are more issues at the Federal Level with funding. There are also constraints with pension obligations.

Alex Peterson asks if there could be a fan tour between Ireland and Connecticut?

Hyde would be interested in seeing the data between businesses and doing something in the future to support fan tours. Fan tours can be local or international. Sight selectors advise businesses on where to set up and locate operations.

Marty Dunleavy asks what's the best way to cooperate and continue to work with Advance CT?

Hyde says to connect businesses that the commission has worked with, and introduce them to Advance CT.

Paddi LeShane notes that Senator Daly feels that he can bring some Irish Businesses to Connecticut and asks to recommend businesses. Loretto Leary asks if Advance CT would want to look at the survey.

Hyde can send the surveys to the research team, and to current Irish businesses in the pipeline. Also asks for an introduction by the commission if there is interest beyond the survey.

Follow up about August visit to meet Senator Daly with the commission in August during trip the caucus in Ireland.

IV. IRISH BUISNESS / CULTURE SURVEY

Loretto states that the sub-committee decided that the survey should be divided into two separate categories. Shorter surveys may be conducive to full completion.

Dunleavy states the survey was made as simple as possible to maximize return. The division between culture and business is a natural split that will help in producing more information.

Loretto asks members to look at their counties and send them to respective sub-committees

Paddi LeShane asks if there should be a button for more information if some businesses are interested in learning further about the commission.

Administrator recommends that there is an information tab on Commerce's page on the Connecticut General Assembly site.

Dunleavy recommends that a cover letter is proposed to be sent with the survey.

LeShane and Riley recommend that the surveys be sent to Advance CT.

V. CT.GOV EMAIL ADDRESS – UPDATE

A meeting with Senator Duff has been scheduled to consider the creation of emails and a website.

Representative Meskers recommend that the commission does not move too far from commerce, as their purview is valuable.

Marty Dunleavy discusses that there is a need to start to fund the commission, and how to make the ask for funding a non-Partisan request as legislation may be needed to make the website.

VI. UPDATES FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Administrator has recommendation to change the arrangement of subcommittees as the one is all encompassing as it acts like a smaller trade committee. The subcommittee should be divided into smaller actionable groups with a more defined scope.

VII. IRISH AMERICA 250 - EVENT DISCUSSION

The event kicked off in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Kinealy is on the Irish-America 250 History Committee and has ideas for an event in Connecticut. Submarine site in Groton, CT and the first submarine was designed by an Irishman in Connecticut. Father Michael McGivney in Waterbury, CT and associated with the knights of Columbus, and is on the path to saint hood. 1840, there is a trial in New Haven, and a key witness was a Irish doctor, and the Irish connection is not very well known.

Marty Dunleavy suggests a green flag regiment of Irish soldiers who enlisted in wars. There was one in Hartford and New Haven. Marks the point of Irishmen cementing themselves as Americans, which helped to change the perception of Irish-Catholics as true Americans.

Paddi LeShane recommends a digital scavenger hunt of Irish American history.

Tony Sheridan recommends we honor Eugene O'Neill.

VIII. CT OPEN HOUSE DAY (JUNE 13, 2026)

Administrator notes that it is not held through the Capitol, but by the state. If there is a need for booths or tables in the capitol.

Loretto Leary asks for Dr. Kinealy's list of Irish American History and Colin O'Neill's Irish heritage trail.

Dr. Kinealy asks for help from the Administrative Intern in the creation and curation of the website.

IX. COMMISSION REPORT IS DUE

“(m) Not later than February 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the commission shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Governor, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce on the activities of the commission during the preceding year, which shall include, but need not be limited to, any recommendations for policy changes and amendments to the general statutes necessary to effectuate the purposes of the commission. Approved May 28, 2024”

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 7th is the St. Patrick's Day parade with a reception at the capitol afterward.

Senator Daly has announced that Senator Curley will be visiting on March 17th, if some of the commission members will be available.

The Lockwood Mathews Mansion will be having an exhibition of the Great Hunger.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 10:00 A.M likely in the Commerce Committee conference room.

XII. ADJOURN MEETING

Emmett Riley adjourned the meeting.