



UPPER SHORE Regional Council

Executive BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 2019 Chestertown Visitor's Center

Board Members in Attendance:

Jackie Gregory, Cecil County Councilwoman

Bob Meffley, Cecil County Councilman

Ron Fithian, Kent County Commissioner

Tom Mason, Kent County Commissioner

Jamie Williams, Director, Kent OED

Chris Corchiarino, Queen Anne's County Commissioner (via phone)

Susan O'Neill, USRC Executive Director

Janice Palmer, USRC Executive Assistant

Jim Massey, Cecil Council Manager

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Meffley welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. There were 9 in attendance, 5 of which were voting members. A quorum was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes from the March 21, 2019 Executive Board meeting. Commissioner Tom Mason made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chris Corchiarino.

Ms. O'Neill also welcomed the board and gave an overview of a packet each board member received. Each packet contained an Agenda, March 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes, a staff report, Profit and Loss Statement, and a flyer announcing a Spotted Lanternfly Workshop.

STAFF REPORT

The staff report, highlighting activities from March 22nd through May 14th was reviewed. Director O’Neill, when questioned, reviewed & updated the Board members on a JARC (Jobs Access Reverse Commute) grant meeting she attended in April. The Maryland Jobs Access Reverse Commute (MD-JARC) grant program is modeled after the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant program. By using transportation services, this program is designed to connect targeted populations with employment areas that have experienced significant growth.

Chairman Meffley requested that the staff report be provided in advance of the meetings for review, and to include the definitions & or titles of all acronyms.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Director O’Neill reported that the Regional Council’s are expecting the same level of funding in FY20.

As of this afternoon, Commerce has donated a projector to the USRC. All USRC assets are documented and filed for future reference.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Cecil County Broadband Grant Agreement:** Director O’Neill gave an update on the amended Cecil Last Mile Broadband MOU. Attorney Thomas Yeager signed off on the amendment and requested bi-annual reports. A check in the amount of \$48,400.00 was delivered to the Cecil County Administration office on Tuesday, April 2, 2019.
- **Website:** Check out our new website: www.usrcmd.org, it is live, and we are very happy with our new webpage. Susan and Janice attended a webinar last Thursday on how to update and maintain the site.
- **Opportunity Zones:** Susan provided copies of an Opportunity Zone presentation offered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Several board members attended the presentation in Queen Anne’s County.
- **PNC Grant:** Susan reviewed the grant application provided to PNC. USRC and OED Director’s from Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne’s were acknowledged at the recent MEDA Annual Conference as recipients of a \$15,000 grant award to be distributed among the counties for marketing of Opportunity Zones in their respected counties.
- **Workplan Updates:**
 - **Goal #2: Workforce Needs: H2A Work Visa Workshops:** Upon discussing H2a Work Visas with several area ag workers, most did not feel the need for a review regarding the changes in federal legislation. The Cecil Farm Bureau recommended a workshop regarding a threat of the invasive Spotted Lanternfly which have been located in nearby counties. USRC is partnering with the Cecil OED, and the Cecil Extension Office to present a workshop with the hopes of videoing the presentation for dissemination on social media and our web page. The workshop can also be duplicated in Kent and Queen Anne’s.

- **Goal #4: Regional Planning: Galena Comprehensive Plan:** The town of Galena is processing their RFP for support on their Comp Plan, it is expected to be received shortly.
- **Goal #4: Regional Planning: Transportation:** Linda Kohler of Chesapeake Charities is scheduled to meet with Director O'Neill to discuss assistance with the implementation of the Kent County Workforce Transportation Plan. Discussion ensued over the transportation assets, and needs in Kent, the lack of ridership, and results of previous studies.
- **Goal #3 Marketing: Tourism:** USRC received a certificate of appreciation from Cecil Tourism at this morning's appreciation breakfast.
- **Goal #2 Workforce Needs: Addressing Gap in Trade Industry:** Per the Boards request, Director O'Neill researched the option of creating a scholarship program to help students transition from High School to a trade profession. Susan said this is allowable as long as it is tied to workforce development and the student remains in the position for two to three years. Discussion ensued regarding internships, apprenticeships, and the need for specialized tools. Director Meffley explained that some students need specialized tools to compete at state events. He offered to speak with a teacher at the Cecil School of Tech for more information. Susan and Bob will meet on Friday to brainstorm.
- **Quarterly Reports:** Susan passed around the third quarterly report submitted to Commerce for anyone interested in reading it.

NEW BUSINESS

- The next Office of Economic Development Officers meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2019.
- Commissioner Jack Wilson invited Charlie Rhodes to be a Board Member. He will represent the Queen Anne's municipal membership, he is a Commissioner for the Town of Church Hill. He will need to be voted in at the June Full Council Meeting.
Susan urged the board members to save June 12, 2019 on their calendars for a full council working lunch meeting. She noted a quorum was needed.
- County Updates:
 - Commissioner Fithian asked for updates on traffic studies regarding Rt. 1 and 301. Commissioner Corchiarino will forward the latest data from Queen Anne's. Councilman Meffley reported that Secretary Rahn and the Delaware Secretary of Transportation were scheduled to meet Monday to discuss the toll charges on 301 south of Middletown.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, a motion was requested for adjournment. Ron Fithian made the motion. Councilwoman Jackie Gregory seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Palmer

USRC Executive Assistant