



# UPPER SHORE Regional Council

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 20, 2019

Chestertown Visitor's Center Conference Room

Council Members in Attendance: Bob Meffley (Chairman), Cecil County Councilman  
Jackie Gregory (3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair), Cecil County Councilwoman  
Chris Corchiarino (Secretary), Queen Anne's County Commissioner

Via Conference Call: Jack Wilson (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair), Queen Anne's County Commissioner

Guests: Jim Massey, Cecil County Council Manager

Staff: Susan O'Neill, USRC Executive Director  
Janice Palmer, USRC Executive Assistant

### I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Meffley called the meeting to order at 4:17 pm. He welcomed everyone and declared a quorum.

### II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the September 18, 2019 Executive Board Meeting. Jack Wilson motioned for the minutes to be approved, Jackie Gregory seconded the motion. All in favor.

### III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Upper Eastern Shore Coordinated Transportation Plan:** The Federal Transit Administration provides funding for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program also known as the Section 5310 Program. One requirement of the program is projects selected for funding must be "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services "transportation plan". Therefore, MDOT funds the update of regional coordinated transportation plans. The Upper Eastern Shore Coordinated Transportation Plan is for Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties. This plan builds upon an initial version produced in 2007, and subsequently updated in 2010 and 2015. Future projects funded through the Section 5310 Program will be derived from this updated Coordinated

Transportation Plan. The Final Draft must be approved by our board members at our Annual Full Council meeting next month. Susan recommended focusing on Chapter's four and seven, chapters highlighting each county's needs. Dan Dalton, KFH Group Senior Transportation planner for MTA, will make a small presentation at the Joint Regional Council Luncheon, and then stop in at the Annual Board meeting to take questions. We will provide links or printed copies to our members prior to the Annual Meeting.

- B. **MACO Full Council Meeting:** Janice reminded the board members that the Annual Meeting will take place on December 4, 2019 at 1:15, directly after the Join Council Luncheon at the MACo Winter Conference.
- C. **Executive Board Member Nominations:** Susan reviewed by law requirements needed for the nomination and voting process to take place at the Annual Meeting. Board members discussed possible scenarios. A ballot will be ready for the meeting.
- D. **Industry Cluster Draft Plan:** Susan stated the EMSi Industry Cluster study is nearing completion. The study identifies the economic strengths and weaknesses of the region as well to identify potential industry clusters for business recruitment efforts. Once the study is complete it will be presented to our Directors. EMSi representatives offered to speak before the Economic Development Commissions as well as each county board of Commissioners &/or Council. Commissioner Jack Wilson and Councilman Bob Meffley both asked that a presentation be made to their respective boards. Commissioner Jack Wilson asked Susan to reach out to EMSi and ask them to take into consideration the ripple effect of the Kirwan Plan's tax implications and the ripple effect it will have on Economic Development.
- E. **Forestry Economic Adjustment Strategy:** Susan handed out a press release and letter of recommendation regarding an Economic Adjustment Strategy for Maryland's forest industry. The study is needed to formulate and coordinate Maryland's plans for redeveloping the industry after the closing of the Luke Papermill. As a result of the mill closing, 695 employees have lost their jobs, trickling to over 2,000 local citizens in the Allegany region. This loss effects the tax base as well as school funding for Luke, and Allegany County. Upper Shore Regional Council will be involved but the exact role has not been determined.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **Contract with WKHS:** Susan discussed the contract renewal with WKHA, a student led radio station out of Kent County High School. The contract provides for a minimum of 10 twenty second radio spots per week focusing on USRC. A handout, summarizing WKHA radio accompanied Susan's review of a recently renewed contract. Susan discussed how these radio spots can be used to market workshops, programs, and other pertinent regional items. Students can also do interviews and have offered a tour of the studio.
- B. **Go To Meeting:** Janice reviewed the Go To Meeting App available to our board members. The link to the App is embedded in the meeting request. Once downloaded a board member can ask the "meeting"

to call them. This avoids searching for the dial in number as well as the ID code. This is very useful for our board members who may be driving.

- C. **Maryland Rural Summit:** The RMC holds a Rural Maryland Summit once every two years. USRC is a sponsor of this year's event to take place December 12<sup>th</sup> in Annapolis. A handout of the all-day schedule with registration information was included in today's packet.
  - D. **Regional Farm Museum:** Several members of the Kent and Cecil Farm Museums met to discuss the merger of the two organizations. Several miscommunications were clarified, and ideas for future partnerships were discussed. The Kent Farm Museum representative thanked everyone for meeting and stated that there would be no merger, however he did welcome a future partnership in the education of our regional students. Cecil Farm Museum is going forward with a regional multi-purpose classroom, supported by the Ag communities.
  - E. **Governor's Office of Rural Broadband:** Susan reviewed a presentation made by Kendrick Gordon at the Maryland Broadband Cooperative annual meeting on November 7<sup>th</sup>. The Office of Rural Broadband has a \$9.68 million in capital funds in FY20. Mr. Gordon stated that 17 counties in Maryland have a significant broadband need. He also discussed the new Maryland Broadband Infrastructure Network Buildout Program. More information can be found at [DHCD.maryland.gov/rural broadband](http://DHCD.maryland.gov/rural%20broadband). Jack Wilson noted that although Queen Anne's had two projects that qualified for funding, both were "heavy lifts" and money had to be left on the table. Jack also noted that we need to keep an eye on legislation that Choptank is writing that would help many of our eastern shore counties. Jim Massey said that Choptank is making a presentation to the Cecil Council on December 3<sup>rd</sup> for those who wish to attend. Jackie Gregory asked if Cecil's special taxing district would be eligible for the 50% match. Susan will contact Mr. Gordon for more details.
  - F. **Ethics Commission:** USRC board members are required to file ethics forms with the state. The commission has reached out to USRC to help keep our board members in compliance. We will send reminders to our board members when each filing is due. Please note that the Ethics Commission is warning of fines.
- V. **Financials:**
- A. Two statements are enclosed in today's packet. A profit and loss statement and a profit and loss by class (of income). Susan explained that our internal reporting to Commerce and Rural Maryland Council follow the class statement.
  - B. Susan pointed out that the P/L statement shows negative income of \$2525. This line item is related to the PNC Foundation grant program. USRC will be receiving a check from PNC Foundation, through the TCCLES, which will eliminate the negative line item.
  - C. Discussion on an audit of USRC financials followed. Susan has discussed the need for an audit with our accountants, Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra. The accountants recognize that our organization is small and really doesn't warrant a full audit which could easily cost \$6,000. A basic financial statement will cost approximately \$1500 and should fit the need for documentation purposes. Our accountant can come speak before the board if so requested. Susan did note that if we apply for federal grant funds, we will need a full audit. She will reach out to our local USDA office to

confirm. Susan asked for a motion to table the decision for an audit for another year. The motion was made by Chris Corchiarino and seconded by Bob Meffley. All were in favor.

VI. **Staff Reports:** Staff reports were placed, along with an acronym key, in the back pocket of the board books.

VII. **County Updates:**

A. Queen Anne's: Chris Corchiarino announced that Heather Tinelli was hired as the new QA's Economic Development Director and started work last week. Susan noted that she is scheduled to meet with Heather next month.

B. No reports from Kent or Cecil County

### VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further discussion, Chris Corchiarino made a motion for adjournment. Councilwoman Jackie Gregory seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Palmer

USRC Executive Assistant