



UPPER SHORE Regional Council

FULL COUNCIL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 17, 2021

Hybrid Virtual “Go to Meeting”

Council Members in Attendance:

Ron Fithian (Secretary) Kent County Commissioner
Bob Meffley (Treasurer) Cecil County Councilman

Council Members Virtual Attendance:

Jackie Gregory (2nd Vice Chair), Cecil County Councilwoman
Chris Corchiarino (Chairman), Q.A.’s County Commissioner
Tom Mason (1st Vice Chair) Kent County Commissioner
Bob Jacob, Kent County Commissioner

Guests:

Shelley Heller, Kent County Administrator
Jamie Williams, Director, Economic Development Kent County
Gordon Wallace, Pick 6 Digital
Jim Massey, Cecil Council Manager
Dan Rider, DNR Forest Stewardship & Forest Products Utilization
Dr. Mark White, Virginia Tech
Scott Kessel, USDA Rural Representative
Melissa Kelly, Eastern Shore Regional Director, Senator Van Hollen’s Office
Kim Kratovil, Field Representative Senator Ben Cardin’s Office
Bridgette Peters, Commerce
Ryan Snow, Governor’s Office
Sandra Edwards, Cecil Office of Economic Development
Steve Overbay, Director, Cecil Office of Economic Development

Staff:

Susan O’Neill, USRC Executive Director
Janice Palmer, USRC Executive Assistant

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chairman Chris Corchiarino welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Director Susan O'Neill who introduced Dan Rider, Forest Stewardship & Forest Products Utilization Director from DNR. Dan thanked Susan and the Upper Shore Regional Council for linking state (Commerce), private sector (Pollo Pallet) and a research institution (VA Tech) making a partnership eligible for RIMPIF grant funding. Dan introduced Dr. Mark White, a Materials Scientist at Virginia Tech who made a power point presentation to the Board on the establishment of Heat Treatment of logs as an alternative to methyl bromide.

II. HEAT TREATMENT PRESENTATION

Dr. White reviewed that methyl bromide (Mbr) was banned by the European Union in the treatment of log fumigation back in 2016. This resulted in a \$100 million dollar loss in commerce to the state of Maryland and the Port of Baltimore. The use of a steam vacuum on logs is an excellent alternative to methyl bromide fumigation.

This project establishes the commercial introduction of "heat treatment" as an alternative to fumigation. It also will document the minimal risk of the heat treatment system to log quality and recapture the regional multi-million-dollar forest product market, lost when Mbr was banned. The field demonstration and test shipment process, from beginning to end, will be documented in a comprehensive report by Virginia Tech researchers and submitted to the sponsors. VT will work with Polo Pallet Company (Elkton) to coordinate the log heat treatment and shipment with a regional log exporter to at least two importers in selected EU countries.

After treatment and measurements, the logs are loaded into freight containers and shipped to the selected receivers in the EU. Upon arrival at the processing location the logs will be inspected by VT researchers for changes in appearance. The researchers will document the processing and measure of lumber and veneer yields. These yields will be compared to industry best practices. The lumber will be graded according to the NHLA hardwood lumber rules (NHLA, 2019) and veneer graded according to local rules. Both buyers and seller will be interviewed to document perceptions.

III. BUSINESS MEETING

A. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of 2/17/21 Executive BOD Meeting Minutes

Chairman Corchiarino called the business meeting to order. Prior to the start of the meeting board members were provided with a packet of information. The packet included the following: 3/17/21 Agenda, 2/17/21 Executive Board Minutes, September 16, 2020 Full Council Meeting Minutes, 12/9/2020 Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 3/17/21 Financial Report, and 3/17/21 Staff Report. Chairman Corchiarino motioned for acceptance of the 2/17/21 Executive Board minutes. Jim Massey (held proxy for Bill Coutz) motioned; Bob Meffley seconded. All were in favor.

b. Approval of 9/16/2020 Full Council Meeting Minutes

Chris Corchiarino motioned for acceptance of the 9/16/2020 Full Council Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Jim Massey and seconded by Bob Meffley. All were in Favor.

B. Ratification of Minutes

- a. Chair Corchiarino requested a motion for the ratification of the 12/9/2020 Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Motion made by Jim Massey and seconded by Bob Meffley. All were in Favor.
- b. Chair Corchiarino requested a motion for the ratification of the 2/17/21 Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Bob Meffley motioned, and Jim Massey seconded. All were in Favor.

C. Treasurer’s Report

Chair Corchiarino requested a motion for the 3/17/21 Treasurer’s Report. Jim Massey motioned, and Tom Mason seconded. All were in favor.

D. Old Business

- a. Susan reminded everyone that board documents can now be accessed on the USRC webpage and to contact Janice with any questions.
- b. Susan put a display up on the screen of the new GIS Rack Card that will be disseminated out to the community. The rack card advertises the GIS services available to municipalities and organizations in the upper shore.

Susan updated the board on the number of Ag Mini grants awarded in both Cecil and Kent Counties. Cecil received 16 applications and over \$66,000 in project requests. All applications were partially funded, three were fully funded. Kent received nine applications for a total request of \$45,000. Four were funded at the maximum amount of \$5,000 and two were funded at \$4,000. Two grantees want to leverage their money with the MARBIDCo program. We are awaiting updates from Queen Anne’s. Overall, the program has been successful, and plans are being addressed for the program to be funded in the FY22 Budget.

E. New Business

No comments or discussion.

IV. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

No comments or discussion.

V. UPDATES

a. Federal Relief Act

- i. Melissa Kelly reported that details on the Relief Act of 2021 can be found on Senator Van Hollen’s web page. Everyone should have received a press release from his office, if not, please reach out to Melissa.
- ii. Melissa met with CE Hornberger of Cecil County to discuss mapping issues with the FCC with hopes of getting the problem fixed as soon as possible.

c. Cecil County

- i. Steve Overbay thanked the USRC for the Cecil Nights Winter Lights campaign support. The program was so successful that plans are underway for a spring campaign.
- ii. Councilwoman Jackie Gregory shared results and recommendations of a local Broadband Task Force. She also announced that CE Hornberger will be holding an Opioid Summit on April 23, 2021 to address the 50% increase of overdoses in the county.

b. Kent County

- i. Jamie Williams thanked the USRC for the Ag Mini Grant support, it has been quite successful and has led to new Ag connections. She also noted that Kent and Cecil have had a new batch of employees hired, and all are in training mode.

c. Queen Anne's County

- i. Chris Corchiarino reports that QA's is very interested in learning more about the Starlink Program, with hopes of it being tapped to help rural areas connect to broadband. Chris also stated that QAs has a lack of supply of Covid vaccines, and the new Mass Site is too far away for seniors to access. He is hoping for a 2nd site or will be requesting that vaccines be brought directly to local seniors in a more efficient capacity.

d. Partners

Scott Kessle – USDA Rural Representative introduced himself and thanked the USRC for the invitation to attend.

d. ADJOURN

With no further discussion, Chris Corchiarion requested a motion for adjournment. Jim Massey motioned, and Bob Meffley seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Palmer
USRC Executive Assistant