



UPPER SHORE Regional Council

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2022
Fisherman's Inn
4 pm

Council Members in Attendance: Chris Corchiarino (Chairman), Q.A.'s County Commissioner
Bob Meffley (Treasurer) Cecil County Councilman
Jack Wilson (3rd Vice Chair) Queen Anne's Commissioner
Tom Mason (1st Vice Chair) Kent County Commissioner
Ron Fithian (Secretary) Kent County Commissioner
Jackie Gregory (2nd Vice Chair) Cecil County Councilwoman

Guests: Jim Massey, Cecil Council Manager

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

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chairman Chris Corchiarino welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 4:33 pm. Each board member received a packet containing the Meeting Agenda, April 20, 2022, Minutes, Treasurer's Report, FY23 Proposed Budget, FY23 Proposed Scope of Work, copy of page 5 of staff/employee contracts with Section 17 highlighted regarding Bonding, and an updated power point detailing the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund (Rural \$10MM).

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Corchiarino requested a motion for the approval of the April 20, 2022, Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Jack Wilson motioned approval: Bob Meffley seconded. All were in favor.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Susan summarized the treasurer's report and asked for a motion to pass. Jack Wilson motioned, and Bob Meffley seconded. All were in favor.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED FY23 BUDGET/SCOPE OF WORK

Director Susan O'Neill reported that RIMPIF funds will increase by \$200,00 this year for a total of \$600,000. Commerce funding remains flat at \$200,000. Susan also reports that the Proposed FY23 budget will contain carryover funds from the FY22 Budget. Each line item is detailed in the budget and scope of work. Jack Wilson asked for the breakdown of subcontracts by county. Explanations of the following were detailed:

SUBCONTRACTS:

- **EMSI:** As requested, the Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's County Economic Development Departments will all receive funding for a year of access to the Mapdash Database.
- **DATASTORY:** each county will have their Datastory updated on a rotating basis, this year Kent County and Queen Anne's County will be updated. All three counties have the ability to access the database and each county highlights their Datastory on their county webpage. All three and the USRC Datastory are highlighted on the USRC web site.
- **MICRO AG GRANTS:** Following a second successful year, the program continues to grow. Each county will receive \$33,000 to market and encourage the Buy Local movement, improve access to fresh food, and open doors to resource sharing.
- **REGIONAL AG EDUCATION CENTER**– A strategic plan is needed for the Ag Education Center formally known as the Cecil Farm Museum. The Education Center continues to work with the Cecil School of Tech to bring classes to the students.
- **OYSTER ROTATIONAL PROGRAM** Jack Wilson asked that the Queen Anne's County oyster pilot program be included in this allotted money. Susan will make the suggested adjustments.

Chris Corchiarino asked for a motion to approve the operational FY23 proposed budget. Jack Wilson motioned, and Bob Meffley offered a second. All were in favor.

Chris Corchiarion also requested a motion to approve the FY23 RIMPIF application. Jackie Gregory motioned, and Jack Wilson offered a second. All were in favor.

- b. **Staff Bonded:** Section 17 of the USRC employee contract requires bonding of USRC employees. Susan spoke with Queen Anne's County Human Resources Director Beverly Churchill who believes the bonding is not necessary but will look into it some more and get back to Susan. Janice Palmer spoke with Angela Lancaster of Dukes Moore Insurance Agency who suggested that each Susan and Janice be bonded at \$500,000 and that a one-year term policy could be purchased for \$1750. A motion provided by Jack Wilson was made that if Queen Anne's County HR suggested that it be a good idea for the USRC employees to be bonded USRC will move forward with the purchase of the bonds. The motion was seconded by Ron Fithian. All were in favor.
- c. **MACO:** Susan reminded the board members that the MACO Summer Conference will take place August 17-20, 2022. The Regional Joint luncheon will take place on Friday,

August 21st. Our Full Council Meeting will take place but has not been assigned a time slot yet.

- d. **County Staff:** The board members asked that county staff be invited to attend Executive Board meetings.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Check Fraud: There have been no issues with the new bank accounts nor further ramifications of the recent fraudulent checks. USRC has reinstated two signatures for all checks.
- b. ICS Service Update: Paperwork for the new Cash Sweep program have been signed by USRC Board Officers and will be submitted early next week.
- c. Transportation: A recent press release regarding the Kent Shuttle was picked up by the Chestertown Spy.
- d. USRC received a “Partner of the Year Award from Cecil Tourism for its support of the Cecil Nights Winter Lights Campaign. An Official Citation also in recognition of USRC’s support of the Winter Lights Campaign was received from Senator Hershey’s Office.
- e. Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund (Rural \$10) Discussion

Susan opened the discussion noting a new deadline of September 2, 2022, for submission of applications to Commerce. The deadline for each county to submit their applications to USRC has been set at August 12, 2022. Jack Wilson reported that the Queen Anne’s Commissioners will approve their applications at July 26, 2022, Commissioner meeting. All USRC board members agreed that each applicant should be vetted by their respective county staff and elected officials prior to being submitted to USRC. It was agreed upon that USRC can add additional requirements to be considered for scoring, or ranking applicants such as “How does this fit into the county’s comprehensive plan?” and “Is this project sustainable after the 24-month expiration date?” Applicants should build a strong application.

A motion requested by Jackie Gregory that the county projects/applications be considered and approved at the MACo Summer Conference. Jack Wilson offered a second. All were in favor.

A second discussion followed regarding the process for Regional Project Grants. Susan suggested that USRC will reach out to all organizations who have previously shown an interest in applying for regional grants and request a two-page proposal be submitted. All proposals will be ranked by a committee consisting of Susan and the three county Economic Development Directors. The applicants that are selected will then be presented to the USRC Executive Board for final approval. Discussion ensued regarding the division of regional project money amongst counties as well as different projects that could be considered. This prompted Susan to present her idea of using this money to grow the CTE liaison program.

Jack Wilson motioned to approve the process stated by Susan O’Neill for the Regional Grants. A Second was provided by Bob Meffley. All were in favor.

Administrative Fee: An administrative fee of 3% is allowable within the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund. Jackie Gregory motioned that the 3% Administrative Fee be deducted from the \$1.3 M division of the USRC Regional Grant. Jack Wilson seconded, and All were in favor.

UPDATES

No updates given.

Chair Corchiarino requested that Susan and Janice leave the room. Upon their return they were told that the 6% raise given at the last Executive Board meeting is to be retroactive from July 1, 2021. This was motioned by Chris Corchiarino and Jack Wilson offered a second. All were in favor.

VI. ADJOURN

With no further discussion, Chris Corchiarion motioned for adjournment. Jack Wilson provided a second. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Palmer
USRC Executive Assistant