



UPPER SHORE Regional Council

FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MACo Winter Conference

Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, MD

December 6, 2023

Council Members in Attendance:

Ron Fithian (Chair) Kent County Commissioner
Chris Corchiarino (Secretary) Q.A.'s County Commissioner
Bob Meffley (Treasurer) Cecil County Councilman
Jack Wilson (2nd Vice Chair) Queen Anne's Commissioner
Jackie Gregory (1st Vice Chair) Cecil County Councilwoman
Danielle Hornberger, County Executive, Cecil County
Rebecca Hamilton, Cecil County Councilwoman
Albert Nickerson, (3rd Vice Chair) Kent County Commissioner
Al Miller, Councilmen, Cecil County

Partners & Guests in Attendance:

Nancy LaJoice, Sr. Director, Commerce
Jamie Williams, Economic Development Director, Kent
Heather Tinelli, Economic Development Director, Queen Anne's
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council
Shelley Heller, Administrator, Kent County
Dan Rider, Forestry, DNR
Alyssa Hastings, Eastern Shore Regional Director, Senator Chris Van Hollen's Office
Madison Bryce, Eastern Shore Representative, Governor's Office
Dan Schneckenburger, Executive Director, Workforce Investment Board
Dave Culver, Council Manager, Cecil County
Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Kent County

Staff in Attendance:

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

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chairman Ron Fithian welcomed everyone opening the meeting at 1:25 pm. Chair Fithian also welcomed and acknowledged that Cecil County Executive Danielle Hornberger is now a voting member of the Full Council. Each board member received a packet containing the Meeting Agenda, October 11, 2023, Full Council Minutes, 20th Anniversary Celebration Recognition Presentation Timeline, Treasurer’s Report, 2024 Executive Board Slate of Officers Ballot, and Staff Report.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Fithian requested a motion to approve the October 11, 2023, Full Council Minutes. Bob Meffley motioned approval. Chris Corchiarino provided a second. All were in favor.

III. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT

Board Chairman Ron Fithian asked for a motion for the approval of the Treasurer’s Report. Jack Wilson motioned for approval. A second was provided by Jackie Gregory.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Elections

Director Susan O’Neill asked if there were any questions regarding the proposed slate of officers, and if the election should be handled as a slate, or individually. Jack Wilson motioned for accepting the proposed slate of 2024 Executive Board Officers. A second was provided by Jackie Gregory. All were in Favor.

All officers on the 2024 proposed slate were elected to the USRC Executive Board of Directors.

Chair: Ron Fithian

First VP: Jackie Gregory

Second VP: Jack Wilson

Third VP: Albert Nickerson

Treasurer: Bob Meffley

Secretary: Chris Corchiarino

B. 2024 Calendar

Director O’Neill asked that everyone take a look at the proposed 2024 meeting dates for the Executive Board, the Full Council meetings as well as the quarterly Economic Development Directors meetings. Please get back to her with any conflicts.

C. RMEDF – Kent County

Chair Ron Fithian requested that there be a change to the funding of a Kent RMEDF project. He would like the \$1.6 million originally allocated for the Worton Service District Water & Sewer Extension to be reallocated to infrastructure in Millington. Continuing to support these infrastructure projects will attract new business development. Susan has asked Commerce about reallocation. Susan submitted a draft request to Commerce who require a letter of approval for the change by the USRC Board of Directors.

Commissioner Jack Wilson motioned to approve Kent County’s request to reallocate funds from the Worton Project to the Millington Project. A second was offered by Bob Meffley. All were in Favor. Commissioner Fithian thanked everyone for their support.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. LGIT

Susan reported that the new Business Mentor’s Group questioned whether or not they are required to have liability insurance. Susan reached out to the Local Government Insurance Trust (LeGIT) who reported that the business mentors should not need specific liability insurance. However, Upper Shore Regional Council should have it. The cost of this insurance will be between \$500-600.00 per year. USRC will need a county to sponsor them. Commissioner Corchiarino offered that Queen Anne’s County can be USRC’s sponsor, but it would need to be voted upon at the next Commissioners Meeting. Susan should reach out to Administrator Mohn to be placed on the agenda. Chris Corchiarino motioned for the approval, once voted upon by the QA’s Commissioners, to be a county sponsor of USRC’s Liability Insurance Coverage. Jack Wilson provided the second motion. All were in Favor.

B. RMEDF Webpage

USRC has placed a new Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund (RMEDF) page on the USRC website. RMEDF quarterly reports can be found here:

<https://usrcmd.org/rmed-fund-reports/>

Councilwoman Jackie Gregory asked for a discussion on the parameters of procurement, and whether or not procurement procedures were put in place regarding RMEDF projects. Susan replied that most of the projects went through the county Economic Development Offices, who follow their procurement procedures. Director Susan O’Neill stated that each of the projects have signed MOUs with their respected counties, and or USRC. As part of the MOU each project has been given a draw schedule. USRC does not have an RFP nor a procurement process. Susan will work with Nancy LaJoice, our Commerce representative, to see if USRC is required to have a procurement process.

C. Reissue of Bonds:

Janice Palmer reported that both Susan and Janice have been rebonded. Each are covered for \$500,000.

D. Business Mentor Program Kickoff

Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Kent County reported that a kickoff meeting was held on November 17, 2023. Mentors introduced themselves and their business expertise. Several important issues were decided upon, namely: a logo and branding will begin through USRC, liability insurance will be researched by USRC. Mentor recruitment will begin in earnest in December and early January. Press releases will go out regarding the recruitment of Mentors and launch of the program will be announced in late January.

VI. UPDATES

A. Staff Reports

Staff reports are found within the meeting packet, please follow up with Susan if there are any questions.

B. County Updates

Queen Anne's wishes everyone a happy holiday season. We are waiting for reports on County Growth and GDP, Queen Anne's hopes to remain number one in wholesale trades and manufacturing!

Cecil reports that they have received an improved bond rating and also wishes everyone a holiday season. The Maryland 5* had much improved attendance and was a huge success this year. They are looking forward to the Cecil Nights Winter Lights Campaign.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Ron Fithian requested a motion for adjournment. Jackie Gregory provided a motion, and Chris Corchiarino provided a second. All were in favor. The business meeting was adjourned at 2:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Palmer
USRC Executive Assistant