



# UPPER SHORE Regional Council

## EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

### Chestertown Visitors Center and Virtual

February 21, 2024

Council Members in Attendance:

Ron Fithian, (Chair) Kent County Commissioner  
Bob Meffley (Treasurer) Cecil County Councilman  
Jackie Gregory (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair) Cecil County Councilwoman

Virtual Attendance:

Albert Nickerson, (3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair) Kent County Commissioner  
Jack Wilson, (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair) Q. A's County Commissioner (proxy  
for Chris Corchiarino)

Partners & Guests:

Jamie Williams, Director, Kent County Office of Economic  
Development (in person)

Staff:

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

### **I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Fithian welcomed everyone, opening the meeting at 4:04 pm. Each board member received a packet containing the Meeting Agenda, December 6, 2023, Full Council Meeting Minutes, Financial Report and Staff Report.

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Fithian requested a motion to approve the December 6, 2023, Full Council Meeting Minutes. Jackie Gregory motioned approval Bob Meffley provided a second. All were in favor.

### **III. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Director Susan O'Neill requested a transfer of \$2,400.00 from the Meeting Expense Budget to cover a deficit in the FY24 Rent budget. USRC signed a new lease with the town of Chestertown with an increased yearly cost of rent of \$11,400. Jackie Gregory made a motion to amend the budget, Bob Meffley provided a second.

Susan summarized the Treasurer's Report saying most programs are on track to zero out. The only concern at this time is the Tech Micro Grant which has not been fully structured. Jack Wilson provided a motion to accept the amended Financial Report as presented. Bob Meffley provided a second. All were in favor.

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. FY25 Budget**

Susan reported that both RMPIF and Commerce funding is on track to be level funded for the FY25 fiscal year. Please bring any proposal for projects forward as planning for next year's budget is beginning to take shape.

#### **B. Full Council Meeting on March 20, 2024**

USRC will be holding a Full Council meeting on March 20, 2024. Board members were asked if they prefer to hold a breakfast meeting or late afternoon. Most suggested late afternoon would be best. Susan also asked for suggestions on a theme or speaker. Commissioner Wilson suggested that we reach out to Chris Garvey, President and CEO ABC Chesapeake Shores, he is an expert on apprenticeships on the Eastern Shore. Chair Fithian opened a discussion on the CTE Equipment Scholarship and how it relates to the proposed state funding cuts to local community colleges being debated in the legislature.

### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A. LGIT**

Susan reported that Queen Anne's County Commissioners agreed and voted upon sponsoring USRC for Primary Liability Insurance through the Local Government Insurance Trust.

#### **B. Press Release/WYPR Interview**

USRC works with Platinum Strategies who wrote and distributed a press release regarding USRC's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As a result, WYPR requested an interview with Susan. The radio spot aired on February 13, 2024, at the noon hour.

#### **C. Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund**

Susan reports that she is in contact with Sarah Guay who will be helping us with Commerce reporting on each of the RMEDF grants. Susan has also been in contact with Q.A.'s County HR Department in hopes of contracting with Rebecca Lepter to write RFPs for regional projects. Susan also updated the board on the Department of Commerce's documentation/confirmation of Kent County's request for change of program funding.

## **VI. UPDATES**

### **A. Staff Report**

Susan asked if there were any questions regarding the staff reports. There were none.

### **B. County Updates**

#### **Queen Anne's County**

Jack Willson reports that Q.A.'s County is watching the legislative session. Discussion followed on the overlap of Career Technical Education, and the many organizations that fund students and schools. The discussion then turned to the Maryland Blueprint and the large increase of funding mandated to the counties. Commissioner Wilson reported that 2027 will have the largest increase and that counties need to start preparing now. Capital Projects and Disparity Grants funding formulas were also discussed.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further discussion, Ron Fithian requested a motion for adjournment. Jack Wilson provided a motion, and Bob Meffley provided a second. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janice Palmer  
USRC Executive Assistant