



# UPPER SHORE Regional Council

## EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

### MACo Summer Conference

August 17, 2024

#### Council Members in Attendance:

Ron Fithian, (Chair) Kent County Commissioner  
Jackie Gregory (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair) Cecil County Councilwoman  
Chris Corchiarino (Secretary) Q. A. County Commissioner  
Jack Wilson Q.A. County Commissioner  
Danielle Hornberger, County Executive, Cecil County  
Patrick McGlothlin, Q.A. County Commissioner  
Albert Nickerson, Kent County Commissioner  
Rebecca Hamilton, Cecil County Councilwoman

#### Partners & Guests:

Jamie Williams, Director, Kent County Office of Economic  
Development  
Todd Mohn, Q.A.'s Administrator  
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council  
Bill Webb, Health Officer, Kent County  
Dave Culver, Manager, Cecil County Council

#### Staff:

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

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

Chair Fithian welcomed everyone. Each board member received a packet containing the Meeting Agenda, May 15, 2024, Executive Board Meeting Minutes, FY25 Proposed Budget, Financial Report, Staff Report, and proposed Full Council Meeting dates.

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

Chair Fithian requested a motion to approve the May 15, 2024, Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Chris Corchiarino motioned approval Albert Nickerson provided a second. All were in favor.

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

Director Susan O'Neill summarized the Treasurer's Report. Jack Wilson provided a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented. Albert Nickerson provided a second. All were in favor.

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. RMC Budget Cut Discussion**

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director of the Rural Maryland Council explained that both she and Susan O'Neill, as Chair of the Rural Maryland Council testified before the Maryland Board of Public Works on July 17, 2024, against proposed budget cuts to the RMC FY25 Budget. Despite testimony, and a written letter containing signatures, the Board of Public Works cut the FY25 RMC budget by the maximum allowed 25% resulting in a \$2.25 million dollar cut. The RMC Executive Board met the following Friday to determine where those cuts should be directed. It was decided that each of the five Regional Councils will receive their flat funding, and the competitive grants offered by RMPIF and MAERDAF would be impacted by the cuts. The USRC board members thanked Charlotte for advocating on behalf of the rural counties.

#### **B. FY25 Budget**

There was a question and discussion on the procedures of grant distribution for the FY25 Micro Ag Grants. Cecil and Queen Anne's counties match and distribute their grant money directly to the grant recipient. Kent County provides USRC with the match and USRC distributes the grant money to Kent grant recipients.

Jamie Williams presented the Millington PAR Project describing each of the agency and grant partnerships working towards the redevelopment of the Millington Elementary School project. USRC has proposed \$55,000 in funding towards the redevelopment.

County Executive Hornberger questioned the double entry/allotment to DataStory. The first allotment of \$10,000 is for 4 Memberships, each county's Office of Economic Development and USRC have access to DataStory's analytics. The second allotment of \$15,000 is for USRC's technical upgrade of a regional DataStory.

Chair Ron Fithian requested a motion to pass the FY25 Budget. Chris Corchiarino motioned, and Albert Nickerson provided a second. All were in Favor.

### **C. Full Council Meeting Dates**

Four dates were provided for Full council meetings. Susan asked for any known conflicts? Proposed meeting dates are:

- Winter MACo December 11-13, 2024 – Room and Time TBD by MACo staff
- March 12, 2025, 4:00pm – Chestertown
- June 11, 2025, 4:00 pm – Queen Anne’s County
- Summer MACo August 12-16, 2025 – Room and Time TBD by MACo staff

Chair Ron Fithian requested a motion to pass the FY25 Full Council Meeting Dates. Chris Corchiarino motioned, and Jack Wilson provided a second. All were in Favor.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Revolving Loan – Needs Assessment**

Susan has hired Bay Crossing Consulting to do a Needs Assessment of the Region, with the intent of providing revolving loans for local businesses. The needs assessment will provide data for the attraction of local banks as partners. It is important to note that the Loan will not to be competitive with established County Loans. Susan requested board members to be part of an advisory committee. Chris Corchiarino volunteered. A representative of each OED and two retired bankers are also recommended and requested. Jack Wilson and Todd Mohn suggested we reach out to Bill Stoope as well as Bill Walmsy.

Susan provided that the long-term goal of the revolving loan would be to help fill the financial gap for small businesses as well as prepare USRC to become a regional VLT grant manager.

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

The RMEDF will be coming to an end in November. Discussion focused on projects that are requesting an extension. Queen Anne’s has completed 9 of 11 projects and will be requesting an extension for the Centreville Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Town of Sudlersville Project Consultant.

Kent is requesting an extension for the Millington Wastewater Project as well as the Millington horizontal Infrastructure (Millington Elementary School) project.

Jackie Gregory asked for the status of the PARIS Foundation Project and whether that projects funds could be reallocated to another project. Susan noted that money could be reallocated, but only to an existing Commerce and USRC Board approved project.

### **C. Newsletter**

The next edition of the USRC Quarterly Newsletter should be distributed next week. Please forward to those you think would be interested in regional economic news.

## **VI. UPDATES**

### **A. County Discussion**

Q.A.'s Commissioner Patrick McGlothlin and Health Officer Bill Webb gave updates on the status and grant money allocated to the Carter Center. Patrick invited all to attend a meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup> at the Chestertown Hospital to discuss the third floor being renovated to a young adult/teen crisis center. Commissioner McGlothlin also noted that there is a need to find matching funds in order to receive a large grant.

Mr. Webb reported that \$4 million has been allocated towards heating and cooling and a core HVAC system at the Carter Center. The Health Department is the major tenant at the Carter Center.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further discussion, Ron Fithian requested a motion for adjournment. Chris Corchiarino made a motion, and Albert Nickerson provided a second. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 12:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janice Palmer  
USRC Executive Assistant