



UPPER SHORE Regional Council

FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MACo Winter Conference

December 10, 2025

Council Members in Attendance: Ron Fithian, Kent County Commissioner
Jack Wilson, Q.A. County Commissioner
Patrick McLaughlin, Q.A. County Commissioner
Albert Nickerson, Kent County Commissioner
Rebecca Hamilton, Cecil County Councilwoman
Bob Meffley, Cecil County Councilman
Al Miller, Cecil County Councilman
Adam Streight, County Executive, Cecil County
Dawn Branch, Cecil County Councilwoman
Chris Corchiarino, Q.A.'s County Commissioner

Partners & Guests:

Jamie Williams, Director, Kent County Office of Economic Development
Shelly Heller, Administrator, Kent County
Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, Cecil County
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council
Heather Tinelli, Director, QA's Office of Economic Development
Alyssa Hastings, Eastern Shore Regional Director, Chris Van Hollen
Madison Bryce, Intergovernmental Affairs Liaison, Governor Moore
Kim Kratoville, Field Rep, Senator Angela Alsobrooks
Brigitte Peters, Sr. Business Development Rep. Department of Commerce
Tamar Osterman, Senior Director, Department of Commerce

Staff:

Susan O'Neill, USRC Executive Director
Janice Palmer, USRC Executive Assistant
Nancy LaJoice, CTE Liaison

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Fithian welcomed everyone. Each attendee received a packet containing the Meeting Agenda, Slate of Officers Ballot, July 30, 2025, Executive Board Meeting Minutes, Proposed, updated BY-LAWS, Financial Report, proposed 2026 meeting dates, and Staff Report. Each attendee introduced themselves.

II. USRC OFFICERS ELECTION

Chair Fithian recommended the slate of officers as presented on the ballot and asked if there were any questions or concerns. Chris Corchiarino motioned to approve the slate:

Chair	Jack Wilson
First Vice Chair	Bob Meffley
Second Vice Chair	Albert Nickerson
Third Vice Chair	Chris Corchiarino
Secretary	Donna Culberson
Treasurer	Ron Fithian

Adam Streight provided a second. All were in favor.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fithian requested a motion to approve the July 30, 2025, Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Jack Wilson motioned approval, Adam Streight provided a second. All were in favor.

IV. ESRGC Presentation

Erin Silva, ESRGC presented a review of programs supported by the tri county councils. GIS tools included GIS programming, Data preparation, and a GIS Circuit Rider. Erin highlighted a new program: MART, a software tool for grain producers to help manage all field and crop record keeping and data collection improving AIR reporting and allowing farmers to view trends and gauge performances.

V. TREASURERS REPORT

Director Susan O’Neill summarized the Treasurer’s Report. Adam Streight provided a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented. Dawn Branch provided a second. All were in favor.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Calendar

Susan O’Neill requested that the board decide if they would like to meet at the summer MACo meeting in Ocean City next summer. All agree that they would. A motion to accept the calendar with the addition of the summer MACo date was provided by Jack Wilson and a second was provided by Dawn Branch. All were in Favor. Meeting requests will be forwarded to membership electronic calendars.

B. Impact Report

USRC’s Bi-Annual Impact Report is in final editing stages and is being prepared for printing. Reports will be sent through the mail in early January.

C. Maryland Energy Association

This is a last-minute addition to the agenda. USRC has been approached to partner with Energy Select to bring resources to the community. Energy Select is in need of an administrative agency to be a “pass through” for distribution of funds. Upon some research and discussion with Energy Select there may be an ability to bring income to USRC, something Susan has wanted to do for some time. Susan is asking permission to move forward with the application which is due on 12/18/25.

Motion to move forward made by Chris Corchiarino and 2nd provided by Adam Streight.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund

USRC has received communication from the Department of Commerce stating that several tri-county councils have requested extensions for RMEDF projects. Susan is preparing a similar report also requesting an extension. The report will be submitted by the end of the year.

B. Projects

(a) **Regional Business Attraction:** USRC, along with the three county Offices of Economic Development have selected PPR Strategies to create a regional marketing plan focused on business attraction. The plan will be tied to Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne’s Counties strategic plans, the USRC Industry cluster study, Queen Anne’s County asset study, and will promote the DataStory for each county. PPR will develop a regional brand, create and implement a regional marketing strategic plan, and produce individualized county promotion material.

(b) **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

USRC and the Kent OED met with Drew DeVitis, an Economic Development Specialist from the EDA who has advised that there are regions in each of the three counties that would meet the qualifications for EDD designation. Andrew has advised on application procedures, and we have worked with Joanne McNamara, Kent County Grant Manager, to begin pursuing this application.

(c) **CTE Liaison**

Susan O’Neill introduced Nancy LaJoice who will be working with USRC to be a CTE Liaison for Kent County. Nancy joins Connie Dean of Queen Anne’s County and Jake Herman of Cecil County in the role of promoting CTE programs in the upper shore. Nancy will also help facilitate the launch of our Project Bright Future Website tentatively scheduled to launch this spring.

IV. COUNTY UPDATES

QA’s County Commissioner Chris Corchiarino stated that QA’s is proceeding to condemn and take over the old outlet center to create a community center. Chris also noted that Commissioner Jim Moran will be President of the Board of Commissioners for the upcoming term.

Cecil Administrator Dan Schneckengerger noted that Cecil also just received the go ahead for planning a new community center. Dan highlighted that County Executive Adam Streight had just

marked the one-year anniversary of his administration and looks forward to another successful year ahead.

Kent County Commissioner Ron Fithian announced a Congressional grant award signed by the President to build a new \$18M Wastewater Treatment Plant. Kent County is also wrapping up the completion of the horizontal infrastructure of the Millington Sr. Housing Project.

QA's County Commissioner Patrick McLaughlin updated the membership on the need for hospital beds/counseling for troubled/suicidal teens. He is working to find space to house these services before losing funding. Nancy LaJoice suggested he look to Qlarant for grant funding.

Al Miller, Cecil County Council President noted a recent "clean and lean" program making good strides in cleaning up properties fighting condemnation. It is a new public health and public safety initiative of the administration and is having good outcomes.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Ron Fithian requested a motion for adjournment. Jack Wilson made a motion, and Albert Nickerson provided a second. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Palmer
USRC Executive Assistant