

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on May 13, 2021. The meeting was held in person and virtually via web conference due to COVID-19. The meeting was facilitated from the Mid-Shore Regional Council office. Chairman Walter Chase, James Redman, Kurt Fuchs, and Delegate Johnny Mautz were in attendance in person. Members attending via web conference were Dan Franklin and Bill Christopher. MSRC staff Scott Warner and Terry Deighan attended in person.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

### Executive Session

Chairman Chase called for a closed session so Mr. Warner and Ms. Deighan were asked to leave the meeting so the Executive Board could discuss the MSRC staff's performance and the Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation. The staff was asked to return at 1:25pm.

### Action Items

#### *Approval of November 18, 2020 Minutes*

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to approve the November 18, 2020, minutes. Mr. Redman seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously with Mr. Christopher and Delegate Mautz abstaining.

#### *Approval of MSRC FY20 independent financial statements*

MSRC Treasurer Mr. Fuchs presented the MSRC's FY20 financial statements. Mr. Warner stated it was prepared by Sump & Associates and is similar to past statements. The Board reviewed the document. Mr. Christopher made a motion to accept as presented. Mr. Franklin seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

### *Financial Reports*

#### MSRC Treasurer's Report

Mr. Fuchs, MSRC Treasurer, stated all income is on track, a final EDA request should be made soon, and MTA is on time with their payments. Mr. Christopher had some questions on how the MSRC keeps track of expenses, e.g., quarterly vs. monthly. He was inquiring as a new executive board member so he could know how the MSRC stays on track of the yearly budget. Mr. Warner stated that since the MSRC operating budget is relatively small and simple with revenue provided by yearly grants and most expenditures are

evenly made throughout the year, the MSRC has preferred Treasurer's Reports made with "Totals to Date." Members of the executive board added that because of how funds flow and the consistency of the expenses, the MSRC operating budget is easily tracked. Mr. Christopher made a motion to accept the report as presented. Delegate Mautz seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

## 2021 RMPIF Report

Mr. Warner presented the 2021 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) Report. He stated as reported during the last executive board meeting and the full Council meeting that RMPIF funds had been received by the MSRC and disbursed to partnering organizations. Additionally, this report shows that the MSRC received additional funds on April 1, 2021, that were distributed to partnering organizations accordingly. These additional funds were from the State's request for the RMC to hold RMPIF funds in case they were needed due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The RMC was okayed to release these funds in the fourth quarter of FY21. The MSRC dispersed them according to the MSRC Executive Board's approval that was made at their October 14, 2020 meeting. Delegate Mautz made a motion to accept the report as presented. Mr. Franklin seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

## Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project Report

Mr. Warner stated: as reported to the MSRC at their March 4, 2021, meeting, the grant administration issue the MSRC and TCCLES have been communicating with EDA since November 16, 2020 was resolved. Special thanks to Senator Cardin's office for assistance.

The issue pertained to the relationship between the regional councils and the counties (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot) and Salisbury University/ESRGC. The regional councils provided the uniform grant guidance for **\$200.330 Subrecipient and contractor determinations** along with their ratiocination under each subsection. The EDDs respectfully requested EDA review the reasoning on which the determination was based and provide concurrence. On February 25, 2021, EDA confirmed the regional councils' plans and encouraged them to move forward.

In March 2021, the MOU and Agreement Between MSRC, TCCLES, Salisbury University/ESRGC, Caroline County Economic Development Office, Dorchester County Economic Development Office, and Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism was circulated for signatures/execution. The document signing was completed on March 29, 2021.

The Progress Report 2 (10/01/2020 – 3/31/2021) due to EDA by April 30, 2021, was submitted on time.

A first withdrawn of funds was submitted a few days later and was approved by EDA. Funds reflected in the report.

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to accept the report as presented. Mr. Redman seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second,

any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

*Ratification of electronic vote “Resolution accepting the MTA FY21 MTA Coordination Grant”*

Mr. Warner stated he received 5 responses from the Executive Board and all were marked “Accept”. Mr. Fuchs made a motion to ratify. Mr. Christopher seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

*Ratification of electronic vote “Authorizing Resolution to file an application with the MTA for a FY22 MTA Coordination Grant”*

Mr. Warner stated he received 6 responses from the Executive Board and all were marked “Accept”. Mr. Christopher made a motion to ratify. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

*Approval of Special GIS Project – RMPIF FY21*

Mr. Warner stated that due to the State’s release of the additional RMPIF funds as described during the RMPIF Treasurer’s Report the Special GIS project was funded.

This request is to have the FY21 funds (\$20,350) matched with FY22 funds (\$16,650) to conduct 10 Housing Quality Studies. The project will be to execute studies of 3 jurisdictions that were done 4 years ago: Cambridge, Trappe, and Federalsburg, as well as execute studies of 7 jurisdictions that have never been done before: Cordova, Wye Mills, Queen Anne, Bellevue, Jonestown, Templeville, and Marydel. The original idea was to periodically execute these studies of the various jurisdictions to see how the housing quality has changed, especially where efforts have been made to improve the quality of housing.

Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the proposed projects. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion/Approval FY22 Scope of Work*

Mr. Warner stated that there are two recommended changes to the Scope of Work.

Last bullet on page 2, delete “Support the Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council.” The Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council (ESMC) was dissolved. The last ESMC board meeting at which the vote was taken to dissolve the not-for-profit corporation was September 18, 2020.

Next to last bullet on page 3, delete “Support the development of the GeoDASH Initiative.” The purpose of the GeoDASH Initiative, launched in 2008, is to provide technical assistance to community leaders in matters involving the development of state-of-the-art data visualization tools that merge the

traditional business intelligence, geographic information, and dynamic modeling to support regional economic development decision making. The initiative is in its 13<sup>th</sup> year of existence. The GeoDASH Initiative has been completely integrated into ESRGC activities.

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to accept the Scope of Work as recommended. Mr. Christopher seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. The FY22 Scope of Work will be presented at the MSRC June 10, 2021, meeting for the full Council's consideration.

#### *Discussion/Approval FY22 Budget*

Mr. Warner presented the FY22 operating budget. He stated that on May 11, 2021, the MSRC received an invitation from EDA to submit a third-year grant amendment for the three-year cycle which was implemented on July 1, 2019. This is the first time since the MSRC has been an EDA Economic Development District (EDD) that one of the counties does not qualify for the standard qualifications to receive a Partnership Planning Grant as an EDD. The standard qualifications are the twenty-four (24) month unemployment rate is at least 1% greater than the national average, or the per capita income is not more than 80% of the national average. This year the MSRC will have to use Census Tract data to qualify. Additionally, Mr. Warner stated there are several changes this year and explained each change to the proposed budget. He also stated the MSRC will not need to utilize RMPIF funds this year to balance the budget; the MSRC will be using EDA Supplemental Grant funds.

Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the FY22 operating budget. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. The MSRC operating FY22 budget will be presented at the MSRC June 10, 2021, meeting for the full Council's consideration.

Delegate Mautz and Mr. Franklin had to leave during the above discussion due to other commitments. This did not affect the quorum.

#### *Including Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Funds (RMPIF)*

Mr. Warner stated that there are two documents in your packets regarding the MSRC's RMPIF proposed projects. One document is the proposed budget sheet and the other document entitled Mid-Shore Regional Council's request for funding support in FY2022 from the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) describes the projects. The project descriptions are in the same form as the actual grant that is being prepared. In prior years' the grant was prepared after the Council officially decided on how to use the RMPIF funds; however, last year the Executive Board and full Council were presented the writeup so they could see all the details of the proposed projects. Since this method was well received last year, it was prepared in the same manner this year. Mr. Warner added that the State of Maryland FY22 budget included full funding of RMPIF.

Mr. Warner then reviewed each project and its funding amount.

Delmarva Index – \$30,000

This is a continued partnership with The Tri County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore (TCCLES). The recommendation is level funding compared to FY21.

GIS Circuit Rider - \$30,000

This funding amount is the same as FY21, the GIS Circuit Rider is assisted with other ESRGC staff that is supported by other funding.

Online CEDS (Year 2 of 2) - \$35,000

This work is being done to create the online version of the Mid-Shore CEDS. The first year was creating the data visualizations and StoryMap. The second year will be refinement of interactive graphs, charts, and StoryMap, as well as the updating of narratives, and development of a hub site for the CEDS.

Housing Quality Studies - \$16,650

This will be added to the FY21 Special Projects funding amount of \$20,350 discussed previously in this meeting. The total funding of the project is \$37,000. A total of 10 Housing Quality Studies will be performed: Cambridge, Trappe, and Federalsburg which were originally completed four years ago and Cordova, Wye Mills, Queen Anne, Bellevue, Jonestown, Templeville, and Marydel which will be done for the first time.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) - \$125,000

This is continued support and partnership with the MSRC created ESEC.

Shore Gourmet (SG)/Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC) - \$108,500

During the Shore Gourmet Board of Directors meeting on May 3, 2021, the Board unanimously voted to continue the SG partnership with CCC to assist with financial support and guidance. The vote included SG's desire to financially support the partnership with level funding.

Annie's Project - \$9,000

This is the continued partnership with Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Cyber Security Program for students - \$5,850

This is a pilot project. The MSRC is facilitating this program to be offered by Dorchester County Public Schools (DCPS) in partnership with the People for Change (PFC) Coalition. The MSRC started these conversations a couple years ago with mid-shore school systems. DCPS is interested in offering the Cyber Security Program among others during their summer program. The MSRC funds will be matched with DCPS funds and possibly other grant funds from MAERDAF/RMPIF that PFC Coalition is applying. This pilot will hopefully be very successful and the career enrichment programs will be expanded next year, not only in Dorchester, but also in Caroline County and Talbot County schools.

Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the FY22 RMPPIF budget as presented.

Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion

and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

## Updates

### *MSRC membership*

Mr. Warner stated that the MSRC has four voting member openings that need to be filled. The openings are:

- Caroline minority leader - Maria D'Arcy moved out of state; this position is appointed by the MSRC Executive Board.
- Caroline private sector/private citizen - Gale Nashold is unable to attend meetings due to health reasons. This position is appointed by the MSRC Executive Board.
- Dorchester municipal elective official - Robert Hanson did not run for reelection. This position is appointed by their respective municipal corporations or if the municipal corporations located within a County are unable to choose a municipal elected official within a reasonable period of time determined by the Council, the Eastern Shore Municipal Association shall appoint an elected municipal official to represent the municipal corporations of that County. Mr. Hanson informed Mr. Warner that the Mayor of Cambridge Andrew Bradshaw is interested in serving on the MSRC. Mr. Hanson is setting up a meeting between he, the mayor, and Mr. Warner so Mayor Bradshaw can receive an orientation about the MSRC and ask questions.
- Representative from Maryland Seafood Industries - Kelley Cox recently passed away. This slot is designated by the association.

### *Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project (EDA CARES Act grant)*

Mr. Warner provided an update on the project.

The project has been focused over the past six months on developing tools unanimously agreed on by the Committee:

- Sales Tax Dashboard
- Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website
- Local Business Surveys

Sales Tax Dashboard: The ESRGC has developed four sales tax dashboards utilizing data from the State of Maryland Comptroller's Office, Maryland Department of Information Technology, and federal economic stimulus data.

The Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website utilizes publicly accessible data and resources and provides an interactive and highly customized experience focused on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It provides quick access to relevant information such as unemployment status, uninsured populations, poverty, socially vulnerable populations and more. This data will be presented as interactive dashboards, web mapping applications, interactive reports, key points, summaries, and statistics.

The ESRGC is finalizing the Sales Tax Dashboard and the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website, and the committee expects to release both by the end of May.

Local Business Surveys: The committee also made progress on the Local Business Surveys with input provided by the counties' economic development offices.

- The committee has agreed to utilize BEACON to conduct and analyze the survey.
  - Once the MSRC and TCCLES have received a proposal from BEACON regarding their work, it will be shared with EDA for final approval. The counties would like to pay BEACON from their monies from the grant. The MSRC and TCCLES spoke with EDA regarding this request from the counties and it does appear to be a legitimate expense to the grant. If not, the MSRC and TCCLES plan to pay for the services from other regional councils' funds.
- The committee will determine how to demonstrate the results of the survey.
- The ESRGC will develop a GIS-centric tool.

### *Regional marketing project for the counties*

Mr. Warner stated that Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties collaborated with MEDA to receive a grant from PNC Bank to support this project. This grant along with other funds secured by each county and the MSRC are helping to fund this project.

The regional marketing partners are the county economic development directors:

- Caroline County – Debbie Bowden
- Dorchester County – Susan Banks
- Talbot County – Cassandra Vanhooser

The partners asked the MSRC to facilitate this project.

The partners started working with APG Media to execute the project, but have agreed not proceed with APG Media due to limited funding to support such a large project that APG Media wants to develop and various parameters on the grant.

The regional marketing partners had meetings March with ESRGC representatives, Workforce Investment Board (upper and lower shore) executive directors, and TCCLES. The partners want to develop a workforce development platform that would coincide with the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project.

The partners met with the MEDA executive director to get her input. She thought the change was within the parameters of the scope of work and encouraged the partners to contact PNC Bank.

Requests have been made to PNC Bank asking if there can be a change in the scope of work for the project and to extend the reporting period on the grant until December 31, 2021.

### Upcoming Meeting

*MSRC full council meeting on Thursday, June 10*

The next MSRC quarterly meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, June 10, 2021. Mr. Warner asked the board if this should be an in person or virtual meeting. The group agreed it should be held virtual and decided on a 10:00 a.m. start time.

#### Letters of endorsement sent by MSRC

Mr. Warner reminded the Executive Board members of endorsement letters they approved to send. Copies of each letter were included in their meeting packets. The dates of each letter are in parenthesis.

- To support DCS' application for Low Income Housing Tax Credits submitted for the Senior Residences at Chesapeake Grove (11-30-20)
- MRDC's grant application to expand their Early Head Start and Head Start program (1/5/21)
- Establish a research and policy center on Maryland's Eastern Shore (2/3/21)
- SBDC's USDA grant application to continue to implement the Rural Business Recovery and Resiliency Program (3/18/21)

#### Member comments/requests

There were no comments/requests.

#### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:50 p.m.