

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on May 5, 2022. The meeting was held in person and virtually via web conference. The meeting was facilitated from the Mid-Shore Regional Council office. Chairman Walter Chase, Senator Addie Eckardt, Bill Christopher, and Chuck Callahan were in attendance in person. Members attending via web conference were James Redman and Kurt Fuchs. MSRC staff Scott Warner and Terry Deighan attended in person.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

Executive Session

Employee Matters

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 3:24pm.

Action Items

Mr. Callahan joined the meeting at this time.

Approval of November 24, 2021, Minutes

Mr. Christopher made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Senator Eckardt 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 Report

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the financial report in three sections.

The first report was the MSRC Treasurer's Report (operating report). Mr. Fuchs stated that all expenses and income are on track through the third quarter, no surprises.

Ms. Deighan stated that a payment from the Maryland Department of Commerce was pending on the Comptroller's website and should be deposited into the MSRC's bank account in a few days.

Next, Mr. Fuchs presented the 2022 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) Report. He stated there are no changes to this report as all funds were distributed in October 2021.

Lastly, Mr. Fuchs directed everyone's attention to the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project Report. He then asked Mr. Warner to provide updates. Mr. Warner stated that the Counties are doing a good job of drawing down their funds and he fully expects them to fully utilize their remaining funds within the allowable timeframe set. The ESRGC is also on track to expend their allotted funds on time. The MSRC has also utilized almost all funds allocated to them as well, with a small amount remaining in equipment.

Chairman Chase stated he would entertain a motion to accept all three reports. Senator Eckardt made a motion to accept the reports as presented. 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.

Discussion FY23 Scope of Work

Mr. Warner stated, with the exception of changing the dates, there are no changes to the Scope of Work for FY23; it is the same as FY22. He asked the Board to review it and determine if there should be changes made to the scope of work. This document will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting at the end of May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

Discussion FY23 Budget

Mr. Warner presented the MSRC's FY23 operating budget stating this year the staff included the FY21 budget as well as the FY22 budget for comparison purposes. The reason for this was the income sources over the last two years due to supplemental grants from Maryland Department of Commerce and U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). The only increases in expenses for FY23 will be in health care, dental care, accounting, advertising, and memberships. Mr. Warner explained the increases for each category. The board members had no questions. The budget will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting at the end of May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Funds (RMPIF)

Mr. Warner stated there was a document included in the meeting materials that provides brief overviews of possible RMPIF projects. This information was given to the MSRC as Mr. Warner reached out to the various partners to ask them for funding requests for possible projects. Also included in the meeting materials is an Excel spreadsheet summarizing the request amounts for these projects. Mr. Warner reviewed the spreadsheet explaining each project and the amount requested. The spreadsheet is not the official budget layout because these projects have not been finalized. During Mr. Warner's discussion with the Executive Board it was mentioned that the Shore Gourmet (SG) Board of Directors has not met to review the SG and Chesapeake Culinary Center partnership request. They will meet prior to the next MSRC Executive Board meeting and have a recommendation for consideration. Also, Chairman Chase recently asked the ESRGC to determine if they could create a crime dashboard

for the mid-shore region. It is being researched. The board members liked this suggestion and are interested in learning about the possibility at the next meeting. Additionally, the Summer Career Enrichment Program's financial need will be more accurately determined by the next meeting.

Mr. Warner asked the Board to review the information and communicate with him concerning additional questions and/or additional projects. The RMPF budget will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting at the end of May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

Status Updates

MSRC membership

Mr. Warner stated that the MSRC has three voting member vacancies.

Caroline private sector/private citizen – Mr. Gale Nashold passed away. This position is appointed by the MSRC Executive Board.

Mr. Warner will continue to work with Dan Franklin and Anthony Casey regarding recommendations.

Dorchester municipal elective official – Mr. Andrew Bradshaw (City of Cambridge Mayor) resigned. 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.

The Executive Board mentioned a few parties that may have interest to serve on the MSRC.

Representative from Maryland Seafood Industries – Ms. Kelley Cox passed away. This position is designated by the association. Several names have been discussed by Executive Board and MSRC members.

Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund

Mr. Warner stated that he attended a meeting during the MEDA conference on April 25, 2022, with county economic development directors, and Maryland Department of Commerce representatives, and regional council executive directors. There is a new person overseeing the regional councils' State of Maryland grants, Lori Ratzburg, Senior Director for Regional Growth & Retention. She replaced Elizabeth Carven. Ms. Ratzburg will also be the point person for the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund.

Mr. Warner told the executive board he received an email from the Maryland Department of Commerce on May 2, 2022, at 8:15 a.m. from Heather Gramm, Assistant Secretary, Business & Industry Sector Development, regarding the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund. The email contained two documents: (1) overview, instructions & application, and (2) frequently asked

questions. Both documents were included in this meeting's information packet.

Mr. Warner also informed the board that he spoke to Darian Sump, MSRC's accountant, a few weeks ago regarding these additional funds. The amount of State of Maryland money coming to the Council may require the MSRC to undertake an audit. Now that the application has been received, he will contact Mr. Sump again to inquire more information.

Mr. Warner informed the board that up to 3% of the total award may be used for new administrative costs associated with the grant. These costs may be shared with subgrantees. Mr. Warner suggested that the MSRC hire a consultant to help with the oversight and reporting of this grant. He stated that Sarah Guy formerly with BEACON has started her own consulting company, SG Insights, LLC. Since Dr. Guy has worked with the MSRC and other regional councils for many years and she is very good at program management, she may be a great choice.

This suggestion was most acceptable to the Executive Board and they gave Mr. Warner permission to reach out and discuss the details with Dr. Guy.

Mr. Warner noted that the deadline for the MSRC to submit the grant application to the Maryland Department of Commerce is August 5, 2022.

The board then discussed the process for administering this fund. At the conclusion they asked the executive director to share the information with the entire MSRC membership and the economic development directors via email. The following was determined. Mr. Warner said he would distribute it the next day, Friday, May 6.

Distribution of funds:

- The MSRC may request up to \$10 million. (\$300,000 can be used for administrative costs. The MSRC will notify the counties how much it will require to administer this program so the remaining balance may be divided equally among the counties.)
 - Initial allocation per county is approximately \$3.233 million.
- Regionally funded projects will be agreed to by all three counties. Regional project funds will be subtracted from the total amount first and the remaining balance divided equally among the counties.

Procedure to develop the MSRC application:

- 1) Distribute the two documents from the Maryland Department of Commerce along with this information to the MSRC and economic development directors.
- 2) The county economic development directors will communicate with their counties (and municipalities) to identify projects for funding.
- 3) The counties will rank the projects to be submitted. (#1 being the most important.)

Note: The MSRC encourages each county to submit more projects than their allotted funds allow to be funded, just in case a project(s) does not meet the endorsement criteria.

4) The counties will forward their project lists to the MSRC no later than July 15, 2022. (date subject to change)

5) The MSRC will review and endorse the projects to be included in the MSRC grant application.

Note: The MSRC's Executive Board along with the Caroline County Administrator, Dorchester County Manager, and Talbot County Manager will serve as the review/compliance board.

Upcoming Meetings

MSRC full council meeting

The next MSRC full council meeting will be on Thursday, June 9, at 5:00 p.m. in Caroline County.

Schedule MSRC Executive Board meeting

Mr. Warner stated that another Executive Board meeting needs to be established so the FY23 scope of work and budgets can be approved so they may be presented at the June 9 full council meeting for consideration. After comparing schedules, members present determined their next Executive Board meeting will be Friday, May 27, at 10:00 a.m.

Letters of endorsement sent by MSRC

Mr. Warner noted that endorsement letters that the Executive Board approved to send since their last meeting were included in this meeting's packet of information. The dates of each letter are in parenthesis.

- SU's Master of Science in GIS Management program being considered for American Association of Geographers Award for Excellence (12-7-21)
- Choptank Fiber application to the Connect Maryland Infrastructure Grant program for Caroline County (1-11-22)
- Choptank Fiber application to the Connect Maryland Infrastructure Grant program for Dorchester County (1-11-22)
- Easton Utilities request to Senator Van Hollen for funding of construction of a new water treatment plant and well (4-6-22)
- Dorchester County requests to Senator Van Hollen and Senator Cardin for funding to support Woods Road Improvement (4-8-22)
- Support for EDA grant for Cambridge Waterfront Redevelopment project submitted by Chesapeake Conservancy and CWDI (4-28-22)

Member comments/requests

There were no comments nor requests.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:54 p.m.