

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on November 21, 2023, at the MSRC office with a virtual option. Executive Board members in attendance at the office were Chairman Walter Chase, Delegate Chris Adams, Chuck Callahan, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, and Frank Bartz. Members attending via web conference were Bill Christopher, James Redman, and Kurt Fuchs. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

### Action Items

*Approval of May 26, 2023, Minutes*

*Approval of May 26, 2023, Closed Executive Session Minutes*

Chairman Chase stated he will entertain a motion to approve both minutes.

Delegate Adams made a motion to approve both minutes from the May 26, 2023, meetings. Mr. Bartz seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

### *Financial Report*

Treasurer Fuchs asked Mr. Warner to present the report since he was driving.

Mr. Warner stated that there are three reports making up the total MSRC financial report.

The first report was the MSRC operating budget report. Mr. Warner stated that all expenditures are on track. Regarding income, he informed the board that the first EDA payment is delayed as the agency has recently released a new reporting system; the MSRC staff is hopeful a payment is received soon. He asked if there were any questions.

The second report was the 2024 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) report. Mr. Warner stated that all funds have been distributed as listed. The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) funds are being held until all back logged ESEC monthly reports have been submitted to the MSRC; this situation should be rectified very soon. Mr. Warner asked if there were any questions.

The third report was the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Report. Mr. Warner explained the only changes since the last report have been to the Administration categories of MSRC attorney and Project Consultant. Additionally, he reminded the board that Dorchester County remains the only

county to not yet request their additional \$60,000 for administration which also be used towards a project costs.

Ms. Haddaway-Riccio made a motion to approve all three reports as presented. Mr. Bartz seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Warner informed the board that Mr. Darian Sump of Sump Associates communicated with Ms. Deighan that the MSRC's FY2023 Financial Reports will be completed the last week of November.

*Ratification of electronic vote "Resolution accepting the MTA FY24 MTA Coordination Grant"*

Mr. Warner stated that we received 5 responses from the Executive Board, and they were all marked "Accept".

Mr. Bartz made a motion to ratify the vote. Delegate Adams seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

*Discuss/approve recommendation of the 2024 MSRC Executive Board*

Mr. Warner reminded the board of the automatic changes to the Vice Chair positions that occur due to the MSRC By-Laws. They are 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair will be Dorchester County, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair will be Talbot County, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair will be Caroline County. Additionally, the General Assembly member will be Senator Johnny Mautz.

After a brief discussion the following 2024 MSRC Executive Board slate was proposed.

- Chairman: Walter Chase
- First Vice-Chairman: Ricky Travers (Dorchester)
- Second Vice-Chairman: Chuck Callahan (Talbot)
- Third Vice-Chairman: Frank Bartz (Caroline)
- Secretary: James Redman
- Treasurer: Kurt Fuchs
- General Assembly: Johnny Mautz
- Member-at-large: Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
- Member-at-large: Bill Christopher

Delegate Adams made a motion to accept the Executive Board slate as presented. Mr. Bartz seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. The proposed slate will be presented to the full council at their December 6, 2023, meeting for consideration.

## Status Updates

### *MSRC membership*

Mr. Warner stated there is one opening under MSRC voting members. It is the representative from Maryland Seafood Industries. This is designated by the association. Mr. Warner asked Mr. Christopher if he would facilitate a meeting for them to meet with Aubrey Vincent. Mr. Christopher responded that he would.

### *Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund – Caroline County project changes*

Mr. Warner informed the board that from the MSRC perspective the Caroline County changes to their projects is complete and went very smooth. He asked Mr. Bartz how it went from the Caroline County perspective. Mr. Bartz stated that everything went well.

Mr. Warner then provided the following recap to remind the board what was done to make the changes.

- On 8/14/23 an email was sent to MSRC Executive Board and Counties' Administrator/Managers serving as the review/compliance board for the MSRC's Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund grant application. The request was to review Caroline County's three new projects for eligibility. The committee approved.
- On 8/22/23 an email to review/compliance board informing them that the change order was submitted to the Maryland Department of Commerce on 8/22/23 at 4:07pm.
- On 9/14/23 a 'Notice of Approval – Reallocation of RMEDF for Caroline County' was executed between the Maryland Department of Commerce and MSRC.
  - Caroline County ultimately allocated the funds to two of the original three projects.
    - Denton Industrial Park Improvement
    - Choptank Marina Infrastructure Improvement
  - The third project, Maryland Rural Development Corporation HQ Improvements, was eliminated and the funds were added to the Denton Industrial Park Improvement project.
  - On 9/14/23 Mr. Warner emailed review/compliance board.
- On 9/19/23 the MSRC and the Maryland Department of Commerce executed a grant modification for the reallocation of Caroline County funds.
  - MSRC attorney approved.
  - On 9/20/23 Mr. Warner emailed review/compliance board.
- On 10/24/23 the MSRC and Caroline County executed a modified memorandum of understanding (MOU).
  - MSRC attorney approved.
  - 11/6/23 Mr. Warner emailed review/compliance board.

## *Summer Career Enrichment Program (SCEP)*

Mr. Warner informed the board that a meeting was held on October 24, 2023, with the superintendents' of the three mid-shore counties to discuss this past year's SCEP and their thoughts on 2024 SCEP.

Attendees were:

- Derek Simmons, Superintendent, Caroline County Public Schools
- Dave Bromwell, Superintendent, Dorchester County Public Schools (DCPS)
- Sharon Pepukayi, Superintendent, Talbot County Public Schools
- Walter Chase, Chairman, Mid-Shore Regional Council
- Scott Warner, Executive Director, Mid-Shore Regional Council
- Sandy Pruitt, Executive Director, People for Change Coalition (via web conference)
- Jerry McLaurin, Founder, People for Change Coalition (via web conference)

Discussions during the meeting included:

- Location for the 2024 SCEP
  - Dorchester Career and Technology Center (DCTC) will not be the location in 2024. DCPS needs to do a deep clean of the building.
  - Dr. Pepukayi and Dr. Simmons both offered to host the 2024 SCEP.
    - Since the meeting they agreed that Caroline County will host.
    - It will be held at Colonel Richardson Middle School or High School.
  - The county that hosts the 2024 SCEP will also determine if private school and homeschool students can attend.
  - Dates to hold the 2024 SCEP were discussed but not yet determined.
  - Career Coaches (working on Blueprint for Maryland) should be included on the SCEP planning committee.
  - The total number of slots (includes both sessions) will be 300.
  - It was determined that satellite locations would be detrimental at this point in the program. The SCEP needs to be in one location to build community among the students in the 3 counties.

Mr. Warner also updated the board regarding partnership organizations.

- Dream Big Academy held at Mace's Lane Middle School and Cambridge-South Dorchester High School (CSDHS) reached out to the MSRC to visit.
  - Program Directors are:
    - Chris Branch, Mace's Lane Middle School
    - Lashawn Tucker, CSDHS
  - Chairman Chase and Mr. Warner visited in October.
  - Several of the middle school students attended the SCEP the last two years and some of the high school students participated in an ambassador program with the SCEP this year.
  - They want to continue partnering with the SCEP.
  - MSRC and People for Change Coalition want to meet further with the directors of the program to continue building the relationship.
- St. Michaels Community Center reached out to host a SCEP.
- Mr. Warner and PFC representatives Jerry McLaurin and Sandy Pruitt have had two meetings with St. Michaels Community Center representatives and Tilghman Area Youth Association (TAYA).
  - Representatives:

- St. Michaels Community Center
  - Anthony Smith, Youth Coordinator
  - Patrick Rofe, Executive Director
  - Vicky Newman, Youth Coordinator
- TAYA
  - Krista Paquin, Board President
  - Ellie Fletcher, Executive Director
- They want to work with the MSRC and SCEP committee to promote the 2024 SCEP.
- They will work with the SCEP committee to offer after school programs and summer programs (and clubs) to support the various topics/programs being explored during the SCEP. This can help advance.
  - Advanced SCEP classes each year, e.g., Drones 2, Robotics 2, Media Arts 2, etc.
  - Interest in CTE programs offered at public schools

During this update board members offered several points of input. The consensus was to keep the program as a regional program, not offer smaller groups. The board confirmed the direction that was discussed in all the meetings summarized. Mr. Redman stated that having a development program is smart and working with the partnership organizations is a positive way to create such a program. Mr. Christopher stated that assisting Dream Big Academy to expand from Dorchester County to the other counties would be very beneficial.

Mr. Warner asked the board their thoughts on contracting a consultant to assist in raising funds for the 2024 SCEP. He stated that this is one area that is very challenging because of the time commitment necessary to make the contacts and follow up. The SCEP committee has a list of possible financial supporters, but there is not enough time for anyone committee person to stay on top of all the possible opportunities. The board was in favor of the MSRC looking into consultants assisting with the fundraising. An RFP will be drafted and circulated to the MSRC Executive Board to review prior to soliciting a consultant.

There was also discussion of the public school systems investing in the SCEP program, utilizing their available funds for summer programming. Mr. Redman will assist Mr. Warner in drafting a request to the school systems. This will be the immediate option explored.

#### *UM Shore Regional Health (UMSRH)*

Mr. Warner asked the Executive Board what if anything they would like the MSRC to do regarding the regional medical facility. He asked if it is necessary at this time to arrange another meeting with UMSRH President and CEO Ken Kozel.

Mr. Warner then provided the following list of MSRC activities this past year regarding the regional medical facility as a reminder.

- 1/4/23 MSRC Executive Board met at the Hyatt in Cambridge to discuss CON support letter for UM Shore Regional Health (UMSRH).

- 1/20/23 MSRC sent questions to UMSRH President and CEO Ken Kozel so he could address at upcoming meeting.
- 2/2/23 met with Ken Kozel at the MSRC office. (2 hours)
- 2/7/23 MSRC issued CON letter of support to Maryland Health Care Commission.
- 3/17/23 MSRC Executive Board held a meeting at the MSRC office regarding the new Regional Medical Facility with U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen.
  - UMSRH Vice President of Strategy and Communication Arvin Singh represented UMSRH.
  - Talbot County Manager Clay Stamp also attended.
- 3/29/23 met with Ken Kozel at the MSRC office. (1 hour)

After a robust discussion that included many items from development requirements to fundraising needs, the board agreed there is no need for the MSRC to call a meeting with Mr. Kozel at this moment. The board discussed the monitoring of the Certificate of Need (CON) approval process as a benchmark.

#### 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 date of each letter is in parenthesis.

- MDOT – US 50 project in Easton (9/13/23)
- ESEC – EDA grant to support F3 Tech Agbiotechnology Facility (10/24/23)

#### Upcoming Meetings

- December 6, 2023 (Wednesday) at the Hyatt in Cambridge
  - 10:30am – Mid-Shore Regional Council Meeting
  - 12:00pm – Eastern Shore Regional Councils' Joint Luncheon Meeting
- January 4, 2024 (Monday) at the Easton Firehouse
  - Mid-Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting
- Tentative 2024 MSRC Meeting Dates
  - Mr. Warner stated that a document with the tentative meeting dates is included with this meeting's materials. The dates are:
    - Thursday, March 7, 2024 – Talbot County
    - Thursday, June 13, 2024 – Caroline County
    - Thursday, September 12, 2024 – MSRC Meeting & Tour
    - Wednesday, December 11, 2024 – Dorchester County (during Winter MACo)

#### Member comments/requests

Delegate Adams stated that he recently toured the Maryland Broadband Cooperative (MDBC) headquarters and met with MDBC President & CEO Drew Van Dopp. He was very impressed with the operation and the role they play as the middle mile provider to support the Internet service providers (ISP) companies as Maryland strives to connect everyone to the internet. In speaking with Mr. Van Dopp he became aware of the concern and need to

keeping the middle mile capacity updated. It is challenging for the MDBC to borrow funds and would be a great help if some of the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program funding could support the MDBC. Currently, the BEAD funds can only support last mile ISPs. Delegate Adams, as the Eastern Shore Delegation Chair, with support of the MSRC would like to assist the MDBC in becoming eligible for a portion of the BEAD funds as a total solution to expansive internet access. The MSRC Executive Board responded that it would be supportive of Delegate Adams' efforts.

### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m. by unanimous consent.