

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on November 26, 2024, at the MSRC office. Executive Board members in attendance at the office were Chairman Walter Chase, Chuck Callahan, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, James Redman, Senator Mautz, and Kurt Fuchs. Members joining via zoom were Bill Christopher. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

### Action Items

#### *Approval of May 21, 2024, Minutes*

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Haddaway-Riccio seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously

#### *Approval of August 6, 2024, Minutes*

Ms. Haddaway-Riccio made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Redman seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously

#### *Approval of MSRC FY24 independent financial statements*

- *Statement of Receipts and Disbursements*

Mr. Warner presented the independent financial statements prepared by accountant Darian Sump of Sump & Associates. Mr. Warner stated that the information in the statement follows the same outline as in past years. He stated that Mr. Sump also prepared a separate report entitled Statement of Receipts and Disbursements. It shows receipts and disbursements on a cash basis for FY24. This was the second year in a row that the later report was prepared. This report has been prepared since the MSRC has been administering the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund. The board reviewed the reports.

Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the financial statements. Ms. Haddaway-Riccio seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

#### *Financial Report*

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented three financial reports.

The first report was the MSRC Treasurer's Report (operating report). Mr. Fuchs stated all expenditures and income are on track for this time of year and he would entertain any questions.

The second report was the FY2025 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) report. Mr. Fuchs stated that all funds have been distributed as listed, noting the Capacity Building Coordinator is disbursed monthly. Mr. Fuchs asked if there were any questions.

The third report was the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Report. Mr. Fuchs deferred to Mr. Warner. Mr. Warner stated that the changes since the last presentation were under the consultant and legal categories.

Senator Mautz made a motion to approve all three reports as presented. Mr. Callahan 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 "Authorize the movement of funding in the MSRC's FY2025 RMPIF budget. The allocated funds shall be moved from the Summer Career Enrichment Program (SCEP) to the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC). The funds were made available due to the MSRC securing additional funds to support the SCEP after the June 13, 2024, MSRC meeting. The amount being moved is \$30,000."*

Mr. Warner stated we received 7 responses from the Executive Board, and they all were marked "Accept".

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to ratify the vote. Ms. Haddaway-Riccio seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it, motion carried unanimously.

*Ratification of electronic vote "Recommendation for Joyce Harrod to serve as a member of the Mid-Shore Regional Council as the Talbot County Minority Leader"*

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

Ms. Haddaway-Riccio made a motion to ratify the vote. Mr. Redman seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it, motion carried unanimously.

*Ratification of electronic votes*

- *"Recommendation for Scott Warner to continue to serve as the Mid-Shore Regional Council's Member Delegate to the Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc."*  
*and*  
*"Recommendation for Scott Warner to be nominated to the Maryland Broadband Cooperative's Board of Directors for a two-year term."*

Mr. Warner stated that we received 7 responses from the Executive Board, all were marked "Accept".

Ms. Haddaway-Riccio made a motion to ratify the vote. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. 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 FY25 MTA Coordination Grant"*

Mr. Warner stated we received 6 responses from the Executive Board, all were marked "Accept".

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to ratify the vote. Senator Mautz seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second. All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it, motion carried unanimously.

*Discuss/approve recommendation of the 2025 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 Caroline County; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair will be Dorchester County, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair will be Talbot County. Additionally, the General Assembly member will be Delegate Tom Hutchinson.

After a brief discussion, the following 2025 MSRC Executive Board slate was proposed.

- Proposed 2025 MSRC Executive Board
  - Chairman: Walter Chase
  - First Vice-Chairman: Frank Bartz (Caroline)
  - Second Vice-Chairman: Ricky Travers (Dorchester)
  - Third Vice-Chairman: Chuck Callahan (Talbot)
  - Secretary: James Redman
  - Treasurer: Kurt Fuchs
  - General Assembly: Tom Hutchinson
  - Member-at-large: Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
  - Member-at-large: Bill Christopher

Senator Mautz made a motion to accept the Executive Board slate as presented. Mr. Callahan 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 proposed slate will be presented to the full council at their December 11, 2024, meeting for consideration.

## Status Updates

*MSRC membership*

Mr. Warner provided updates on a few MSRC voting member positions.

Regarding the Caroline County municipal elected official position, he is expecting the MSRC to receive notice that Debi Sewell, Town of Federalsburg Councilmember, will be appointed. Ms. Sewell attended the September 12, 2024, MSRC meeting and tour and also attended the October 16, 2024, CEDS meeting.

Mr. Warner then informed the board that the Dorchester County municipal elected official position will soon be vacant. Current MSRC member Stephen Rideout, City of Cambridge Mayor, did not run for reelection and he will no longer be an elected official once a new mayor is seated. The City of Cambridge mayoral run-off election will be held on December 3, 2024. This position is appointed by Dorchester County's respective municipal corporations.

Lastly, the Talbot County municipal elected official position is vacant since Joyce Harrod, former St. Michaels Commissioner, is no longer an elected official. This position is appointed by Talbot County's respective municipal corporations.

#### *Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund (RMEDF)*

Mr. Warner updated the board of the progress of the RMEDF grant extension request. He reminded the members that the MSRC request was submitted to the Maryland Department of Commerce on August 16, 2024. It was due by August 30.

The MSRC requested an extension of the RMEDF grant period until December 31, 2025. The request included an extension of the use of administrative funds to support the management of the grant program through the completion of all projects.

The grant modification (extension) was signed by the Maryland Department of Commerce and MSRC and went into effect on October 10, 2024.

The MSRC is now working with each county (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot) to include the grant modification in the MOU's between the MSRC and each county.

The projects included in the extension were:

#### Caroline County

- Future Works Workforce Training
- Midshore Optical Broadband Network
- Business Attraction Capacity Building
- Choptank Marina Infrastructure Improvement
- Denton Industrial Park Improvement

#### Dorchester County

- Cambridge Harbor Streetscape Design and Partial Construction
- Rails to Trails
- Future Works Workforce Training

### Talbot County

- Future Works Workforce Training
- Talbot County Agbiotech Manufacturing Project
- Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe Phase II Planning and Implementation
- Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan
- Goldsborough Neck Culvert Improvements

Additionally, on October 18, 2024, the MSRC initiated another grant extension request regarding the Dorchester County project Incumbent Worker Training. A signed Notice of Approval was received from the Maryland Department of Commerce on November 14, 2024. The MSRC signed and returned it on November 18, 2024. The final step will be for the Maryland Department of Commerce to create another modification to the Grant Agreement. Both Commerce and MSRC will then sign.

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

Mr. Warner stated he is working with UMSRH President and CEO Ken Kozel to set up a meeting to tour Dorchester's free-standing medical facility. This meeting was agreed to after the August 6, 2024, meeting with University of Maryland Medical System President and CEO Mohan Suntha. After a discussion it was agreed the meeting should take place after the holidays – January or February, and Mondays will be best due to the General Assembly being in session. Mr. Warner stated he would work with Senator Mautz and Ms. Haddaway-Ricco to reach out to Dr. Suntha's office to see if an agreement could be reached to schedule the meeting.

### Request for consideration

#### *Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) – Maryland Eastern Shore Trail Network*

Mr. Warner stated that on October 18, 2024, he met with Owen Bailey, ESLC Director of Land Use and Policy, at Mr. Bailey's request. He wanted to provide an update on the Maryland Eastern Shore Trail Network (MESTN). There is a steering committee, they finalized a strategic plan, and a logo and brand will be ready by end of November 2024. MESTN will be exploring funding for a full-time trail circuit rider in 2025. Included in the board members' meeting packets was a one-page summary and an annual operating budget over two years that Mr. Warner asked the ESLC provide.

For various reasons the ESLC is looking for another organization to house the MESTN and administer any grants received to support the trail circuit rider. Mr. Bailey asked if the MSRC would be interested in being the administrative organization and if not is there another organization that may be.

Mr. Warner asked the board if the MSRC wants to provide this administrative oversight. The members discussed and concluded that the MSRC does not cover the whole Eastern Shore and it would set a precedent. Therefore, they were not in favor of providing this service. There were a couple of possible

organizations mentioned during the discussion so Mr. Warner will provide such information when he has a follow up phone call with Mr. Bailey.

### Upcoming Meetings

December 11, 2024 (Wednesday) at the Hyatt in Cambridge

- 10:30am – Mid-Shore Regional Council Meeting
- 12:00pm – Eastern Shore Regional Councils' Joint Luncheon Meeting

January 6, 2025 (Monday) at the Easton Firehouse

- Mid-Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting

### Tentative 2025 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 6, 2025 – Talbot County
  - Thursday, June 12, 2025 – Caroline County
  - Thursday, September 11, 2025 – MSRC Meeting & Tour
  - Wednesday, December 10, 2025 – Dorchester County (during Winter MACo)

### Member comments/requests

Mr. Warner stated that he, Chairman Chase, and Mr. Christopher had a meeting with the three county superintendents (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot) at the end of October. People for Change Coalition representatives Sandy Pruitt and Jerry McLaurin were also in attendance. The meeting was to review the Summer Career Enrichment Program (SCEP) this past year and plan for 2025. They spoke about each county school system contributing \$50,000 in funding for the 2025 SCEP. A follow-up meeting is scheduled in December to discuss the funding possibilities. The upcoming SCEP will be expanded to include two Ambassador programs. Additionally, all in attendance agreed that moving forward the SCEP Committee membership will be condensed considerably.

### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. by unanimous consent.