

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on April 29, 2025, at the MSRC office. Executive Board members in attendance at the office were Chairman Walter Chase, Chuck Callahan, Frank Bartz, Delegate Tom Hutchison, James Redman, and Kurt Fuchs. Members joining via zoom were Bill Christopher. MSRC staff present were Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

### Executive Session

#### *Employee Matters*

Chairman Chase asked for a motion to go into closed session. Mr. Fuchs made the motion to enter closed session. Mr. Redman seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion. All in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. 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 3:28 p.m.

### Action Items

#### *Approval of November 26, 2024, Minutes*

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

#### *Financial Report*

Treasurer Kurt Fuchs' presented the financial reports. He stated there are three reports making up the total MSRC financial report.

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

The second report was the 2025 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment fund (RMPIF) Report. Mr. Fuchs stated that all funds have been distributed as listed. He noted that the MSRC Capacity Building Coordinator funding is disbursed monthly and the remaining balance of the Entrepreneurship Training Program will be paid at the conclusion of the programs. Mr. Fuchs asked if there were any questions.

The third report was the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Report. Mr. Fuchs stated that the only changes have been under the Project Consultant category which is billed monthly and the MSRC attorney for work done on the revised memorandum of understandings with the counties.

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

### Discussion

#### *FY26 Scope of Work*

Mr. Warner presented the FY26 Scope of Work stating, with the exception of changing the dates, there are no changes, it is the same as FY25. 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 to be held in May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

#### *FY26 Budget*

Mr. Warner stated that there were no major changes to the FY26 operating budget. There are increases to Fringe Benefits under IRA line item due to not updating for the 3% increase in salaries in FY25, the increase will be \$230, and to Health, Dental, and Life Insurance due to small increases in annual charges. The final change will be on the Rent line item. This increased because the landlord passed on increased Town of Easton and Talbot County taxes. Beginning August 1, 2024, the monthly rate went up \$157.77 (new total monthly rent = \$1,657.77).

The budget will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting to be held in May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

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

Mr. Warner stated that in FY26 the MSRC will be receiving \$215,000 less in RMPIF funding due to the reduction of the Rural Maryland Council/RMPIF state funding from \$9 million to \$6 million. According to the RMPIF formula allocation the regional councils will each receive \$385,000 rather than \$600,000. He pointed out there are two documents in the meeting packets regarding an initial draft of projects/programs the MSRC could support with RMPIF.

Mr. Warner explained to the Board the proposed FY26 changes compared to FY25. Projects that are suggested to remain at FY25 funding levels are the Delmarva Index, GIS Circuit Rider, MSRC Capacity Building Coordinator, Annie's Project, Regional Marketing, and the Entrepreneurship Training Program. A reduction to the Summer Career Enrichment Program is suggested; however, at this time a final amount is not available. This will be determined after a final tally of donations is received. After that figure is determined, Mr. Warner suggested that the remaining amount of RMPIF funds be utilized to support the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center.

The Board discussed various projects/programs and thought that this initial investment plan was on target. Mr. Warner welcomed more feedback from the board members if they think of this budget in the coming days. The RMPIF budget will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting to be held in May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

## Updates

### *MSRC membership*

#### Dorchester County municipal elected official

On April 22, 2025, Chairman Chase and Mr. Warner met with City of Cambridge Mayor Lajan Cephas to provide her an overview and orientation of the MSRC. Mayor Cephas is interested in serving. Mr. Warner stated that the mayor is supposed to get approval from the City of Cambridge Council this week. Mr. Christopher stated that the City of Cambridge approved the appointment during their council meeting yesterday, April 28, 2025.

#### Talbot County municipal elected official

Mr. Warner mentioned a few ideas for possible representatives. He also stated that Chairman Chase was approached by Ms. Rosalee Potter from Trappe expressing her desire to serve. Chairman Chase stated that he was comfortable with this as she had previously served on the council. The Executive Board members agreed. Chairman Chase and Mr. Warner will reach out to Ms. Potter as this appointment is done by a municipal corporation.

### *Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund*

Mr. Warner stated that an MOU between MSRC and Talbot County was prepared extending the original termination date to December 31, 2025. All grant objectives and required work and deliverables to be completed and delivered by January 31, 2026. Presently it is still in process, waiting for Talbot County to sign. The MSRC attorney approved the document March 3, 2025.

## UM Shore Regional Health

Mr. Warner stated the MSRC Executive Board meeting with Dr. Mohan Suntha was held on August 6, 2024. The minutes reflect the following:

- Dr. Suntha stated that in further meetings with the MSRC that he would like Dr. Jarrell and Mr. Hayman to attend and talk about the UM Baltimore commitment to the project and the Eastern Shore.
- Dr. Suntha offered to share the observation data with the MSRC on a quarterly basis.
- The group agreed that they should meet quarterly. Mr. Kozel and Mr. Warner will handle the date, time, and location.

This meeting has not happened so the board asked Mr. Warner to reach out to Mr. Kozel to set a time in May for a site visit to the Dorchester medical facility in Cambridge.

## Upcoming Meetings

The next Executive Board determined their next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 27, at 1:30 p.m. at the F3 Tech Agbiotech Facility in Easton.

The next MSRC full council meeting will be held on Thursday, June 12, at 5:00 p.m. in Caroline County.

### 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.

- Heron Boulevard Bridges Repair Project (3-4-25 Senators Van Hollen and Alsobrooks and Congressman Harris)
- Easton Utilities Commission projects (3-4-24 Senators Van Hollen and Alsobrooks and Congressman Harris)
- Community Project Funding Request by Caroline County (3-7-24 Congressman Harris)
- Easton Utilities new water treatment plant and new well on its water utility system (3-24-25) Congressman Harris)

### Member comments/requests

None

### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35pm on a motion by Mr. Hutchinson, seconded by Mr. Fuchs, and approved by unanimous consent.