

The Mid-Shore Regional Council held a scheduled quarterly meeting on March 8, 2018. The meeting was held at the Talbot County Senior Center in Easton.

Members in attendance included Walter Chase, Dan Franklin, Kurt Fuchs, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Delegate Johnny Mautz, Joyce Harrod, Anthony Casey, Burton Wilson, Kelley Cox, Wilbur Levensgood, Dirck Bartlett, Carolyn Spicher, Chuck Callahan, Dan Rider, James Redman, Robbie Hanson, Andy Hollis, Delegate Jeff Ghrist, and Jennifer Williams.

Guests in attendance included Maryland Department of Commerce representatives Deborah Bowden (Talbot & Caroline) and Mindie Burgoyne (Dorchester), Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism representatives Cassandra Vanhooser (Director) and Sam Shoge (Coordinator), RMC Program Manager Meredith Donaho, USDA State Director Denise Lovelady, Governor's Eastern Shore Intergovernmental Affairs representative Bunky Luffman, Dorchester County Office of Economic Development Director Jeff Trice, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Project Manager Erin Silva, Shore Gourmet and Chesapeake Culinary Center representatives Roxanne Wolf (Development and Education Coordinator) and Holly Foster (Community Outreach & Hunger Coordinator), TEDCO Rural Business Innovation Initiative (RBI2) Lower Shore Region Representative Bill Bernard, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board Executive Director Dan McDermott, Chesapeake College President Stuart Bounds, Delmarva Community Services President and CEO Santo Grande, Dorchester County Council Chief of Staff Rebecca White, Senator Chris Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director Melissa Kelly, and Congressman Andy Harris' Community Liaison John Wingrove. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Action Items

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 5:25 p.m., at which time introductions were made. Chairman Chase was in possession of proxies from Senator Eckardt and Delegate Adams. Mr. Warner was in possession of electronic votes from Ricky Travers and Don Satterfield who could not attend in person due to budgeting sessions scheduled in Dorchester County.

Approval of December 7, 2017 Minutes

The first order of business was to obtain approval of the December 7, 2017 minutes. Mr. Fuchs made a motion to approve, Ms. Harrod seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second; all in favor signify by stating aye; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Ratification of revised CEDS document

Mr. Warner gave a brief overview of the work that the CEDS Committee and others put into the Mid Shore CEDS process this year. The sections of the document are: Analysis, Vision Statement, Action Plan, Evaluation and Appendices.

The full CEDS Committee met on October 4, 2017 and January 10, 2018 at the Talbot County Free Library in Easton. During these meetings they discussed and approved modifications to the CEDS Goals and Objectives. The CEDS Executive Committee met on December 11, 2017 to review three possible new projects. During the full CEDS Committee January 10 meeting all three projects were approved for inclusion in the CEDS. The projects were:

- Town of Denton – Broadband, Fiber Optic Network
- Woods Road (Cambridge) Infrastructure Improvements
- F3 Tech Accelerator Program

The Committee also decided to remove two existing projects for the Action Plan and placed them in Appendix F.

- Technology Incubation Innovation Fund
- Center for Leadership Environmental Education (CLEEn)

All project additions and removals were unanimous committee decisions.

Mr. Warner thanked the following organizations/people for their assistance in revising the CEDS document.

- ESRC staff (Technician Katy Maglio (now GIS analyst at Dorchester County) and Project Coordinator Ryan Mello) for completing updates of the statistical sections of the document: Chapter 1 – Analysis and Appendix E – Commuter Stats.
- Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representative Debbie Bowden for updating Appendix B – Tax Credits.
- USWIB Executive Director Dan McDermott for reviewing the Introduction and Income in Section 1.1
- BEACON Director Memo Diriker for assisting with Housing Characteristics for the Region in Section 1.6

Mr. Warner stated that the document was e-mailed to everyone on March 6, 2018 with this meeting's agenda. The MSRC will submit the updated CEDS document to the EDA Philadelphia office once ratified and posted on the website for public comment for 30 days. The updated document can be viewed on the MSRC website www.midshore.org, click on "About", "Documents", then "Download CEDS".

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to ratify the CEDS document, Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second; all in favor signify by stating aye; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the current Treasurer's Report stating all expenditures and funding is on track. He explained that there is a slight overage in Accounting due to the need of having the MSRC's accountant make adjustments in the QuickBooks account due to the health insurance plan the MSRC is now accessing. He asked if anyone had any questions, hearing none Chairman Chase said he would entertain a motion to accept the report. Mr. Hanson made a motion to accept, Ms. Spicher seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second; all in favor signify by stating aye; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Warner also stated that there is a second sheet in everyone's packets showing the status of the Rural Maryland Investment Prosperity Funds (RMPIF) monies. It details

the disbursement of the funds as the MSRC approved. The only project funds remaining for disbursement are for the Regional Marketing Initiative. These funds should be disbursed in the near future.

Maryland General Assembly Session

Mr. Warner gave a summary of future funding for the MSRC and RMPIF regarding the State's FY2019 budget, as well as a brief summary of past funding for RMPIF and MAERDAF.

State Funding – FY2019

MSRC / regional councils – Governor maintained council funding at \$200,000 for each regional council. This is the third year in a row the Governor has included the historical legislative intention of \$200,000 in the state budget.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) – Legislated in 2006 the RMPIF targets investments to regional, nonprofit, and education organizations. Full fiscal funding request is \$6,000,000. RMPIF was funded for the first time in the State's FY2017 budget at \$2,000,000. The Governor put a note in his proposed budget stating that he would fund the RMPIF at \$4,000,000 in FY2018 and \$6,000,000 in FY2019. In the Governor's proposed FY2018 budget he fulfilled his promise and funded the RMC/RMPIF at \$4,167,000; however, actual funding that passed the General Assembly was \$3,667,000. This year, FY2019, the Governor's proposed FY2019 budget lists RMC/RMPIF at \$6,167,000, full funding for RMPIF. Even though DLS has recommended a cut to level funding of the FY2018 amount, the Senate's budget keeps RMPIF at full funding. The budget is now being considered in the House. An additional note is that there is also a separate line item in the budget for MAERDAF. MAERDAF is funded by that line item and some funds through RMPIF.

RMPIF and MAERDAF grant awards for 2 years (FY2017 and FY2018)

Mr. Warner reminded the Council that he gave a detailed breakdown of FY2017 and FY2018 funding at their December meeting. He did summarize that citizens in the three counties (Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot) have benefitted over the two years by organizations that serve citizens in the mid-shore region receiving 52 grant awards (43% of all awards), which totaled \$1,526,927 (42% of all funding). These figures do not account for the MSRC grant awards.

Rural Maryland Day in Annapolis

Mr. Warner stated that Rural Maryland Day was held on February 8 in Annapolis. Ten teams of RMC members met with several legislators to express the RMC's FY19 budget priorities. The RMC's budget priorities include level funding for the RMC, MAERDAF, and the regional councils. The RMC also supports increasing RMPIF funding to \$6 million. The teams asked the legislators to reject the DLS recommendation to reduce RMPIF to last year's amount.

The RMC held a joint luncheon with the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts that was very well attended. Governor Larry Hogan spoke at the luncheon and presented the RMC with a Rural Maryland Day Proclamation. This event is held every year and everyone is invited to attend.

Mr. Warner then asked Meredith Donaho from the RMC if she had anything to add, and she stated that he pretty much covered it all.

"Taste of the Eastern Shore" legislative reception

Mr. Warner commented that since TCCLES Executive Director Mike Pennington had other obligations and could not attend this meeting he would give a brief summary of the event. Mr. Warner stated the reception was held the evening of February 8 at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis. It was the event's 16th year. He added that it was the largest turnout ever with over 500 people attending.

Updates/Progress Reports

Shore Gourmet/Chesapeake Culinary Center

Chairman Chase introduced Roxanne Wolf, Development and Education Coordinator, to give the report.

Ms. Wolf gave a PowerPoint presentation on the program's progress entitled "The Food Connection". Highlights included:

- The Food Connection was demonstrated on a slide as having six parts: Economic and Rural Development, Education, Branding the Mid Shore, Value Add Farmers and Entrepreneurs, Collaborations and Partnerships, and Hunger.
- One sheet meals utilized local products from several farms and producers. The program started in November 2017 and so far over 12,000 meals have been sold.
- A full time person was added to Shore Gourmet Market Place to assist with production, as well as, Caroline County public schools' cafeteria staff are getting additional hours to assist.
- Creation of a Maryland Cheese Board is being finalized. This project is being directed by Holly Foster, Community Outreach and Hunger Coordinator.
- Working to expand the Backpack program in Caroline County. 1 in 4 children are food underserved in the county. One school will be piloted to see how frozen meals with local produce can be part of the program.
- Developed a nutritious powder for smoothies, teas, rubs from ginger, and dehydrated hibiscus. Products received from local farm and used in various producers' retail drinks.
 - The nutritious powder of hibiscus and ginger is being tested with local smoothie producer. Local aronias have been dehydrated to add to the powder given their high nutritional and antioxidant properties.
- Working with UMES, UM Extension, farmers, and producers to test the possibility of growing and marketing Aronia berries as a high value alternative crop for local farmers.
- Working with USDA to get Shore Gourmet Market Place certified to accept SNAP for the one sheet meals.
- 4 Chinese herbs will be tested/grown at UMES Princess Anne to see growth viability on the shore. Shore Gourmet is partnering with UMES to process/dry the herbs and provide 2 mid shore farmers to pilot this niche product.

Health Dashboard, Education Dashboard, Eastern Shore Index

Chairman Chase introduced Erin Silva, ESRGC Project Manager, to give the next progress report.

Ms. Silva stated that the Health Dashboard's Phase 1 is complete. She and the ESRGC team made several presentations to receive feedback; much of the feedback has been incorporated into Phase 1. The Health Dashboard has been posted. It has a feedback button on the main page to continue to receive input from users. The ESRGC, MSRC, and TCCLES are presently working on an Action Plan for Phase 2.

The Education Dashboard Phase 1 is in development, with an anticipated roll out date sometime in May. The dashboard's features and functionality include "drill-down" charts for various statistics. Ms. Silva thanked MSRC Council Member James Redman for his valuable input and continued support on the dashboard.

The Eastern Shore Index will be an online repository and visualization tool that will function as a comprehensive data source for demographic, economic, geographic, and social data, pertaining to the Eastern Shore. It is meant to be a conversation driver. The ESRGC has been meeting with economic development professionals in the Mid-Shore region to discuss the Eastern Shore Index. The ESRGC will continue to engage in discussion with the contacts that have already been established as well as reach out to the other individuals in the region. The ESRGC has started working on data research and acquisition for appropriate datasets to include in Phase I of the Index as well as developing preliminary design mockups.

Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST)

Mr. Warner shared a PowerPoint highlighting the MUST program. These highlights included:

- Coordination
 - Schedules – bilingual (English and Spanish), includes MTA approved federal compliance information
 - Website – mobile friendly, bilingual (English and Spanish), includes MTA approved federal compliance
 - Toll free information line – bilingual (English and Spanish), partnership with Delmarva Community Services
 - Transfers
 - MTA State Committees
 - MUST assists with the Upper Eastern Shore Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, it covers Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties
 - Transportation 5310 Selection Review Committee – MUST is MTA's designated Regional Planning Office for federal and state funds for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
 - MUST participates on the State Coordinating Committee on Human Services Transportation (SCCHST) – SCCHST recently finalized Maryland Five-Year Human Services Transportation Plan
 - Mr. Warner was asked to establish a meeting with Deputy Chief of Staff Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio to inform the Governor's staff of the recent activity of the SCCHST. Also in attendance was Deputy Chief of Staff Sean Powell. SCCHST representatives from MTA (since MTA facilitates the SCCHST) conducted the meeting
 - Mr. Warner thanked Ms. Haddaway-Riccio for granting the meeting.
- Marketing/Advertising/Awareness

- Kiosks – 25 kiosks have been purchased (MSRC received concurrence from MTA to have MUST budget purchase 18; DCS/DCT paid for 7), MSRC is working with Mobility Management office of DCS to deliver to locations in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties
- Brochures
- Videos
- Employee Transit Survey
- Outreach/Education – MUST visits to promote community transportation, MUST has a display table and is available to promote at any upcoming functions or festivals
- Advertising/Public Service Announcements
 - Newspapers, Radio, Television, Signage on buses
- Bus Stop Signs – MUST has bus stop signs in stock to fulfill requests from jurisdictions that would like to work with transportation providers to place signs in their communities
- “Bike Bus” – a effort to promote that DCT and QACR buses now have buses in their fleets that have bike racks

Presentation / Discussion

Regional Technical School

Chairman Chase introduced Delegate Jeff Ghrist who asked to make a presentation, lead a discussion regarding the possibility of establishing a regional technical school.

Delegate Ghrist spoke about the advantages of having a regional technical school. He mentioned the Harford Technical High School and the Washington County Technical High School as examples in Maryland. In looking into the viability of regional schools he said that it seems as though you need a population of about 150,000 people, the size of Washington County. He said that would equal about three of the mid or upper shore counties feeding into a regional school. Delegate Ghrist also stated that the 21st Century School Facilities Commission that he has served on for the last two years has recommended new school construction funds should be increased. There is a bill being considered by the General Assembly requiring \$400 million a year for new school construction. He also stated that he has been meeting with members of large, local construction companies and they all have the same issue. They are having severe difficulty finding companies to sub work to because they cannot find enough qualified workers. This means the work has to be subbed to companies out of state at a considerably higher cost.

Delegate Mautz commented that he has spoken with representatives of ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.) regarding their facility on the western shore. Individuals that get certified can get jobs paying \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year.

Mr. Callahan made comments that students in 7th and 8th grade need to be engaged with regards to technical training. We should not wait until they are in high school. Ms. Harrod agreed, making similar comments.

Delegate Ghrist informed everyone that when the Eastern Shore superintendents spoke to the Eastern Shore Delegation a few weeks ago, he suggested that a tour of the Washington County Technical High School should be established.

Mr. Trice commented that the challenge is building the demand. Parents and guidance counselors have not been encouraging students to look at the trades as a viable employment option and they are the most influential people in a student's life regarding work opportunities.

Member comments/requests

None

Adjourn

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:59 p.m.