

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on June 11, 2020. This meeting was held virtually via web conference due to COVID-19. The meeting was facilitated from the Talbot County Community Center in the Wye Oak Room with two MSRC executive board members (Chuck Callahan and James Redman) and MSRC staff (Scott Warner and Terry Deighan) present. The Wye Oak Room is set up to meet social distancing guidelines. Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) Executive Director Mike Thielke was also present as he managed the web platform during the meeting.

MSRC members in attendance included: Chuck Callahan, James Redman, Carolyn Spicher, Anthony Casey, Lenny Pfeffer, Bill Christopher, Frank Divilio, Jerome Stanley, Joyce Harrod, Kurt Fuchs, Dan Franklin, Delegate Chris Adams, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Kelley Cox, Robert Hanson, Keith Atkins, and Andy Hollis. Guests in attendance included: ESEC Executive Director Mike Thielke, Maryland House of Delegates Speaker Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes, Shore Gourmet Program Director Roxanne Wolf, Chesapeake Culinary Center Executive Director Beth Brewster, Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representative Nancy LaJoice, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Practice Manager Lauren McDermott and Project Manager Mary Buffington, Chesapeake College Vice President of Student Services Kamari Collins, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES) Executive Director Greg Padgham and Executive Assistant Brenda Howard, Caroline County Economic Development Director Deb Bowden, Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism Director Cassandra Vanhooser, Dorchester County Economic Development Director Susan Banks, Congressman Andy Harris' Community Liaison Mike Arntz, Vets Helping Vets of Delmarva Secretary Stephanie Hallowell, Maryland Cooperative Extension Talbot County Educator Shannon Dill, TEDCO Rural Business Innovation Initiative Mentor Bill Bernard, Senator Addie Eckardt's Chief of Staff Gabrielle Leach, Choptank Electric Cooperative Government Affairs Manager Matt Tefteau, Governor Larry Hogan's Eastern Shore Outreach Coordinator Ryan Snow, Delmarva Community Services President and CEO Santo Grande, Easton Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Tracy Ward, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin's Field Representative Kim Kratovil, BEACON (Business Economic and Community Outreach Network at Salisbury University) Director Memo Diriker, and Talbot County Chamber of Commerce Vice President Amy Kreiner. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan

Action Items

In Chairman Walter Chase's absence, First Vice-Chairman Chuck Callahan called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. after Mr. Warner took a roll call of all persons attending the meeting. Mr. Callahan informed the attendees that he spoke with Mr. Chase by phone and that Mr. Chase had a health issue a few days ago. Mr. Callahan said Mr. Chase is doing well, but would not be able to facilitate today's meeting so he asked Mr. Callahan to conduct it. Vice-Chairman Callahan was in possession of proxies from Senator Addie Eckardt and Delegate Johnny Mautz.

Approval of March 5, 2020 Minutes

The first order of business was to obtain approval of March 5, 2020 minutes. Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Minutes approved unanimously.

Ratification of Executive Board November 18, 2019 Minutes

The next order of business was to ratify the Executive Board November 18, 2019 minutes. Mr. Franklin made a motion to ratify the minutes. Ms. Cox seconded that motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the current Treasurer's Report. He stated the MSRC has received payment from EDA for the final funding request for the fiscal year and it fulfills the budgeted amount from EDA. The MUST program's May reimbursement was submitted the first week in June and the program's June reimbursement will be submitted in early July; this will complete the FY20 funding in full. Expenditures are on track with the exceptions of meeting expenses and travel/conferences. These two categories are under budget due to circumstances related to COVID-19. Maryland Department of Commerce and EDA funds have been fully expended and any unused funds can be transferred into savings. Mr. Divilio made a motion to accept the report. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of FY21 Scope of Work

Mr. Warner stated there are no changes to the Scope of Work for FY21; it is the same as FY20. During their May 29, 2020 meeting the Executive Board reviewed, discussed, and approved it for the full council's consideration. Mr. Franklin made a motion to approve. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of FY21 Budget

Mr. Warner stated there are no changes to the FY21 operating budget; it is the same as FY20 budget. The MSRC Executive Board reviewed and discussed the budget during their May 29, 2020 meeting. They approved the budget for the full council's consideration. He then stated the only concern is the State of Maryland funds that come to the MSRC via the Maryland Department of Commerce. The funds for all the regional councils were passed in the State of Maryland budget as the Governor allocated them. However, due to the current economic issues because of COVID-19, the MSRC was not able to obtain a matching funds letter as it usually does. During their meeting, the MSRC Executive Board suggested that Mr. Warner write a letter to the Secretaries of the Maryland Department Commerce and Maryland Department of Budget and

Management. The letter is in meeting packets (zip file). The day the letter was sent, Mr. Warner received a call from the Maryland Department of Commerce so they could thoroughly understand the importance of the issue and its ramifications. The Department is working to assist the Council and stated they would hopefully be able to communicate in the near future, but probably not in time for this meeting. Mr. Warner will keep the Council informed as he receives information.

Ms. Spicher made a motion to approve the FY21 operating budget. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Motion passed unanimously.

Including Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)

Mr. Warner shared a brief slide presentation created by ESRGC Project Manager Erin Silva. He briefly highlighted each slide that demonstrated various projects completed by the ESRGC over the past year. All but one project, a ventilator dashboard, was funded in some part by the MSRC's RMPIF investments. The slide show included: Delmarva Index, COVID-19 dashboard, ventilator dashboard, Agricultural Census info graphics – county pages, Economic dashboard, and Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative (Chicken farming on Delmarva and Delmarva chicken houses).

Mr. Fuchs, who is the current chair of the Delmarva Land and Litter Challenge (DLLC), thanked both the MSRC for funding the Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative project and the ESRGC for their tremendous work. He highlighted that the storybook is a very useful tool in helping explain the current state of Delmarva's chicken industry to a wide and varied audience.

Mr. Warner then informed everyone that the State of Maryland budget included full funding of the RMPIF. The proposed projects to be supported with MSRC's RMPIF grant are explained in detail in the document entitled Mid-Shore Regional Council's request for funding support in FY2021 from the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). This document is in the meeting packets (zip file). This information is in the same form as the actual grant application that is being prepared. Usually this is written after the MSRC's June meeting, but Mr. Warner thought it would be helpful for the MSRC Executive Board and then the full council to see them during their respective meetings. The RMPIF grant submission date is earlier than normal this year. The grant is to be submitted by June 24, 2020. The MSRC Executive Board reviewed the budget during their May 29, 2020 meeting and approved it for the full council's consideration.

Mr. Warner then briefly explained each project and its funding amount.

DelMarVa Index: \$30,000

This is a continued partnership with the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES).

GIS Circuit Rider: \$30,000

This funding amount was able to be reduced because projects headed by the GIS Circuit Rider are assisted with other ESRGC staff that is supported by other funding. The amount of work and effort will be the same as last year; just the RMPIF funding amount is reduced.

Online CEDS: \$35,000

This is the beginning work to take the Mid Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) online. The plan is to have the CEDS online in two years, but this project will allow for the first two parts to be completed.

CEDS Part 1: Visualizations

CEDS Part 2: StoryMap

Special GIS/COVID-related projects: \$27,135

Similar to last year's Special GIS projects, this funding allows the MSRC to assist with partial or full funding projects that arise during the year.

Shore Gourmet (SG)/Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC): \$108,500

The SG Board of Directors held a board meeting on May 20, 2020 via web conference. They reviewed this past year's reports and discussed the CCC request for continued partnership and funding support. The SG Board voted to continue the SG partnership with CCC to assist with financial support and guidance. The vote included SG's desire to financially support the partnership with level funding of \$108,500 with the understanding that if the RMPF monies provided the MSRC are reduced by a certain percentage that the funding to this partnership will be reduced by the same percentage.

Annie's Project: \$9,000

This is the continued partnership with Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Regional Marketing: \$5,000

This is the continued partnership with the TCCLES to support the Taste of the Eastern Shore legislative event.

Regarding the funding levels of all these projects, Mr. Warner stated that if the RMPF monies provided the MSRC are reduced by a certain percentage, the funding to each these projects will be reduced by the same percentage. All the partner organizations are aware of this stipulation.

Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the FY21 RMPF budget as presented. Delegate Adams seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Motion passed unanimously.

EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance

Mr. Warner stated the MSRC started communications with EDA on March 31, 2020 when EDA Philadelphia Regional Office officials held a conference call with the three EDA Economic Development Districts (MSRC, TCCLES, and Tri-County Council for Western Maryland) and Baltimore City. The MSRC has also been in communication with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) concerning the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act). The EDA Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released on May 7, 2020. EDA received \$1.5 billion through the CARES Act.

EDA competitive grants

The MSRC has been in communications with many partners, especially the county economic development offices, since early April in anticipation of the release of the NOFO. The MSRC provided a list of 19 potential projects to EDA on April 28, 2020.

Mr. Warner provided a basic overview with some of the key points in the EDA NOFO regarding the CARES Act.

- Match is expected to be 80% federal and 20% applicant. Cash match is best.
- Applications must address the underlying pandemic.
- The grant process is open and a grantee is encouraged to submit as soon as possible.
- There is no EDA Abstract requirement.
- Applicants should go directly to the application package link on Grants.gov. It is found on page 4 of Addendum to the NOFO pertaining to the CARES Act.
- EDA funds must be exhausted by the end of FY2022 (September 2022).
- Grantees have until the end of FY2027 to fully complete projects.

EDA non-competitive funding offer to MSRC

The MSRC received a letter invite for CARES Act Supplemental EDA Award on May 8, 2020. The MSRC received this invite because it is an EDA Economic Development District with a longstanding partnership with EDA. The total grant award could be up to \$400,000. There is no match requirement. Period of performance is 24 months. An application must be submitted within 30 days of invitation. The absolute last day for submittal was June 7, 2020.

Mr. Warner explained how the MSRC developed a project that would help the mid-shore region. Since the beginning of April, Mr. Warner has had numerous conversations with several of the MSRC's partnering organizations, including: the ESRGC, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (USWIB), the three county economic development offices (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot), and the TCCLES. These discussions culminated into a project that will help the region respond to this unprecedented challenge by developing economic recovery tools and technologies to address the wide-ranging impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The MSRC will partner with Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot counties, ESRGC, USWIB, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance, and TCCLES to execute this project. Working from the resiliency plan in the Mid Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, critical information will be gathered and analyzed from local businesses to better understand the recent economic impact. Several spatial data exploration tools will be created and distributed to all stakeholders to characterize the economic and cultural upheaval caused by the pandemic. Businesses, non-profits, and governments will use these tools to create data-driven strategies to help the region recover from the economic shock and build additional resiliency against future events.

The project was presented to the MSRC Executive Board at their May 29, 2020 meeting. The Board discussed it and voted unanimously to submit an application to EDA for the full \$400,000. The MSRC submitted the application on June 4, 2020.

Vice-Chairman Callahan asked for a vote to ratify the action taken by the MSRC Executive Board. Mr. Franklin made the motion to ratify. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Callahan stated we have a motion and a second. He called for a vote, any opposed? Motion passed unanimously.

Member comments/requests

No comments or requests

Adjourn

Mr. Divilio made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Mr. Hanson. The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m. by unanimous consent.