

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on June 10, 2021. This meeting was held virtually via web conference due to COVID-19. The meeting was facilitated from the Mid-Shore Regional Council office with four MSRC executive board members (Walter Chase, James Redman, Delegate Mautz, and Andrew Bradshaw) and MSRC staff (Scott Warner and Terry Deighan) present.

MSRC members in attendance included: Carolyn Spicher, Lenny Pfeffer, Frank Divilio, Kurt Fuchs, Bill Christopher, Jerome Stanley, Joyce Harrod, Walter Chase, James Redman, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Anthony Casey, Clay Stamp, Andrew Bradshaw, Delegate Chris Adams, Delegate Johnny Mautz, Speaker Pro Tem Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes, Senator Addie Eckardt (joined at 10:50 a.m.), and Dan Franklin. Guests in attendance included: Congressman Andy Harris' Community Liaison Mike Arntz; Shore Gourmet Program Director Roxanne Wolf; Chesapeake Culinary Center Executive Director Beth Brewster; Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Project Managers Erin Silva and 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, Executive Coordinator Stephanie Wilkins, and Regional Communications Developer Monique Snyder; Choptank Electric Cooperative Government Affairs Manager Matt Tefteau; U.S. Senator Ben Cardin's Field Representative Kim Kratovil; U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director Melissa Kelly; Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Director Charlotte Davis; Caroline County Economic Development Director Debbie Bowden; Dorchester County Economic Development Director Susan Banks, Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism Director Cassandra Vanhooser; Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) Executive Director Mike Thielke; Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representatives Mindie Burgoyne and Nancy LaJoice; Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) Executive Director Steve McHenry; Delmarva Community Services (DCS) Deputy Director Andy Hollis; Maryland Cooperative Extension Educator Shannon Dill; Senator Eckardt's Chief of Staff Gabrielle Leach; Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (USWIB) Executive Director Dan McDermott; Easton Town Council Member Al Silverstein; Governor Larry Hogan's Eastern Shore Outreach Coordinator Ryan Snow; People for Change Coalition (PFC) Executive Director Sandy Pruitt and Founder/Business Development Jerry McLaurin; Easton Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Tracy Ward; and ESEC Board President Tony Kern. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Action Items

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. after Mr. Warner and Ms. Deighan completed checking members in and taking attendance. Mr. Stamp was carrying a proxy for Chuck Callahan.

Approval of March 4, 2021, Minutes

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to approve the March 4, 2021, minutes. Mr. Stanley 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 approved unanimously.

Ratification of Executive Board November 18, 2020, Minutes

Mr. Stanley made a motion to ratify the November 18, 2020, minutes. Mr. Pfeffer 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 approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the following three reports.

MSRC Operating Budget

The first report was the MSRC Operating Budget. He stated that all expenses are on track and the MSRC has received its final reimbursement from EDA. A final reimbursement from MTA should hit our account in a week or two and this will make the MSRC FY21 funding fully realized. Expenditures are on track with the exceptions of meeting expenses and travel/conferences. These two categories are under budget due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Pfeffer made a motion to accept the report as presented. Delegate Mautz 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 approved unanimously.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Budget (RMPIF)

Next, Mr. Fuchs addressed the RMPIF budget reporting that as of April 4, 2021, all the funds have been distributed. Mr. Pfeffer made a motion to approve the RMPIF budget report. Mr. Stanley 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 approved unanimously.

Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project Budget

Mr. Fuchs then presented the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 budget. Mr. Fuchs offered Mr. Warner to provide additional information. Mr. Warner stated the following items.

- In March 2021, the MOU and Agreement Between MSRC, TCCLES, Salisbury University/ESRGC, Caroline County Economic Development Office, Dorchester County Economic Development Office, and Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism was circulated for signatures/execution. The document signing was completed on March 29, 2021.
- The Progress Report 2 (10/01/2020 – 3/31/2021) due to EDA by April 30, 2021 and was submitted on time.
- A first withdraw of funds was submitted a few days later and was approved by EDA. Funds reflected in the report.

Delegate Adams made a motion to approve the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project budget report as presented. Delegate Mautz 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 approved unanimously.

Approval of FY22 Scope of Work

Mr. Warner stated that there were two recommended changes to the Scope of Work. During their May 13, 2021 meeting the Executive Board reviewed, discussed, and approved these changes for the full council's consideration.

The last bullet on page 2, delete "Support the Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council." The Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council (ESMC) was dissolved. The last ESMC board meeting at which the vote was taken to dissolve the not-for-profit corporation was September 18, 2020.

Next to last bullet on page 3, delete "Support the development of the GeoDASH Initiative."

The purpose of the GeoDASH Initiative, launched in 2008, is to provide technical assistance to community leaders in matters involving the development of state-of-the-art data visualization tools that merge the traditional business intelligence, geographic information, and dynamic modeling to support regional economic development decision making. The initiative is in its 13th year of existence. The GeoDASH Initiative has been completely integrated into ESRGC activities.

Delegate Mautz made a motion to accept the Scope of Work. Mr. Bradshaw 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 approved unanimously.

Approval of FY22 Budget

Mr. Warner stated that the Executive Board reviewed and discussed the FY22 operating budget at their May 13, 2021, meeting. They approved the budget for the full Council's consideration. Mr. Warner went through each funding source including that on May 11, 2021, the MSRC received an invitation from EDA to submit a third-year grant amendment for the three-year cycle which was implemented on July 1, 2019. The grant was submitted to EDA on June 1, 2021. It was due by June 4. Mr. Warner continued through the expenditures explaining any line item changes as compared to the FY21 budget and the reasoning for such changes. Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the budget. Delegate Mautz 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 approved unanimously.

Including Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Funds (RMPIF)

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 FY2022 from the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). This information is in the same form as the actual grant that is being prepared. Previously, this was written after the MSRC's June meeting, but last year Mr. Warner

presented this document along with the RMPIF budget to the MSRC Executive Board and then the full council. The bodies seem to appreciate this format, so it was repeated this year. The grant is to be submitted by July 15, 2021. The MSRC Executive Board reviewed the budget during their May 13, 2021 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 (TCCLES). The recommendation is level funding compared to FY21.

GIS Circuit Rider - \$30,000

This funding amount is the same as FY21, the GIS Circuit Rider is assisted with other ESRGC staff that is supported by other funding.

Online CEDS (Year 2 of 2) - \$35,000

This work is being done to create the online version of the Mid-Shore CEDS. The first year was creating the data visualizations and StoryMap. The second year will be refinement of interactive graphs, charts, and StoryMap, as well as the updating of narratives, and development of a hub site for the CEDS.

Housing Quality Studies - \$16,650

This funding amount will be added to the FY21 Special Projects funding amount of \$20,350 the MSRC Executive Board approved during their May 13, 2021 meeting. The total funding of this project is \$37,000. A total of 10 Housing Quality Studies will be performed: Cambridge, Trappe, and Federalsburg which were originally completed four years ago and Cordova, Wye Mills, Queen Anne, Bellevue, Jonestown, Templeville, and Marydel which will be done for the first time.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) - \$125,000

This is continued support and partnership with the MSRC created ESEC.

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

During the Shore Gourmet Board of Directors meeting on May 3, 2021, the Board unanimously 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.

Annie's Project - \$9,000

This is the continued partnership with Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Cyber Security Program for students - \$5,850

This is a pilot project. The MSRC is facilitating this program to be offered by Dorchester County Public Schools (DCPS) in partnership with the People for Change (PFC) Coalition. The MSRC started these conversations a couple years ago with mid-shore school systems. DCPS is interested in offering the Cyber Security Program among others during their summer program. The MSRC funds will be matched with DCPS funds and possibly other grant funds from MAERDAF/RMPIF that PFC Coalition is applying. This pilot will hopefully be very

successful and the career enrichment programs will be expanded next year, not only in Dorchester, but also in Caroline County and Talbot County schools.

Mr. Pfeffer made a motion to approve the FY22 RMPIF budget as presented. Delegate Mautz 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 approved unanimously.

Update/Progress

Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project

- *Supported by EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance*

Mr. Warner stated the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 project has been formulated to assist the Mid-Shore and Lower Eastern Shore counties (the region) utilizing trusted, proven partnerships to develop economic recovery and resiliency technical platforms to provide technical assistance to local governments, businesses, and other organizations that work within the region. Since the project's inception, it has been built on the Economic Resilience sections of the Mid-Shore and Lower Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs), the outcomes of this project will be incorporated into both CEDs, as well as other online technical assistance tools managed by the partners.

Conversations to develop this project started in April 2020, 14 months ago. Since the grant was awarded, 10 months of formal meetings have occurred. The first meeting was on August 5, 2020 and the most recent meeting was held on June 2, 2021.

The project's committee members represent the following:

- Mid-Shore Regional Council
- Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
- Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative
- Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board
- Lower Shore Workforce Alliance
- Caroline County Economic Development Office
- Dorchester County Economic Development Office
- Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism

Mr. Warner then introduced Ms. Silva who provided a slide show to demonstrate the work that has been accomplished to date.

Three major initiatives have been undertaken.

- Sales Tax Dashboard – the name has been changed to the Maryland Tax Revenue Dashboard to describe the tool more accurately.
- Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website
- Local Business Survey

Maryland Tax Revenue Dashboard

- The ESRGC has developed four sales tax dashboards utilizing data from the State of Maryland Comptroller's Office, Maryland Department of Information Technology, and federal economic stimulus data.

Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website

- The Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website utilizes publicly accessible data and resources and provides an interactive and highly customized experience focused on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It provides quick access to relevant information such as unemployment status, uninsured populations, poverty, socially vulnerable populations, and more. This data is presented as interactive dashboards, web mapping applications, interactive reports, key points, summaries, and statistics.

Local Business Survey

- The committee has been working with BEACON to design and conduct the survey.
- The counties have each started distributing the survey as of this past Tuesday (June 8).
- BEACON will analyze the results.
- The committee will then develop the GIS-centric tool(s) with the ESRGC.

Rollout

- The committee is finalizing its plan to start introducing the GIS-centric tools to various constituents.
- A media plan is also currently being drafted.

Next, Mr. Warner asked committee members to share their thoughts on the project. The three economic development directors Ms. Bowden (Caroline County), Ms. Banks (Dorchester County), and Ms. Vanhooser (Talbot County), USWIB Executive Director Mr. McDermott, and TCCLES Executive Director Greg Padgham each shared their individual insights. All sentiments summarized how pleased they were to participate in the project and believe the tools being produced will benefit the region for years to come.

Various questions and comments were made by MSRC members. Delegate Mautz discussed workforce/labor issues. Senator Eckardt commented about childcare issues related to workforce. Ms. Harrod and Chairman Chase discussed vaccine tracking.

Mr. Stamp commented that these tools which are focused on economic factors will be a great benefit. They will bring additional value to the counties' resilience plans. The health departments and emergency management departments focus health and other factors while these tools will bring in the business perspective.

Ms. Silva and Mr. Warner added that if there are certain dashboards that are present in other public, locations on the web, they could be added to the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery website.

Mr. Pfeffer from Dorchester County wanted to thank all the economic development communities for helping to keep business running in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties. One example was promoting the availability of COVID-19 related grant programs to assist businesses, in many cases it was a lifeline they needed. Mr. Franklin from Caroline County stated he was grateful for this board and the projects. The region adopted and personified the team approach, "hats off" to all the economic development directors.

Regional marketing project for the counties

Mr. Warner provided an update on the regional marketing project the counties asked MSRC to facilitate. The original concept was to work with APG Media; however, the ultimate scope of work that APG Media presented was much larger, in time commitment and funding amount, than the partners can take on at this time. Therefore, the MSRC and counties determined that they would like to engage the ESRGC to develop a workforce development platform that will coincide with the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project. All the organizations involved with the Economic Recovery Project are very willing to provide input on this new regional marketing project. The vision for this workforce development platform is to create a web portal for showcasing existing workforce programs available to both employers and workers. The project will also develop educational programs for promoting both the programs and the portal. It is the goal to address the workforce challenges in the region by making a single web portal more easily accessible to both employers and workers.

Mr. Warner added that there is a request into the grantee, PNC Bank, to extend the completion date of the project a few months to the end of December 2021.

Member comments/requests

There were no comments or requests.

Adjourn

Chairman Chase adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.