

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on September 8, 2022. It was held at the Easton Volunteer Fire Department building in Easton, Maryland.

MSRC members in attendance included: Walter Chase, Bill Christopher, Carolyn Spicher, Chuck Callahan, Dan Franklin, Dan Rider, Delegate Johnny Mautz, Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes, James Redman, Lenny Pfeffer, Pete Leshar, Senator Addie Eckardt, and Talbot County Manager Clay Stamp.

Guests in attendance were: Chesapeake College President Cliff Coppersmith; TEDCO Rural Business Innovation Initiative Mentor Bill Bernard; Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Project Managers Erin Silva and Mary Buffington; U.S. Senator Ben Cardin's Field Representative Kim Kratovil; 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; Easton Town Councilman Al Silverstein; Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (USWIB) Executive Director Daniel Schneckenburger; USDA Rural Development State Director David Baker; Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES) Executive Director Greg Padgham and Executive Coordinator Stephanie Wilkins; Choptank Electric Government Affairs Manager Matt Tefteau; Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc. (CWDI) Matt Leonard; Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) Executive Director Mike Thielke; Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representatives Mindie Burgoyne and Nancy LaJoice; Delmarva Community Services President and CEO Santo Grande; SG Insights, llc principal Sarah Guy; Vets Helping Vets of Delmarva Secretary Stephanie Hallowell; ESEC Board President Tony Kern; Maryland Broadband Cooperative President and CEO Drew Van Dopp; and Talbot County Public Schools Board of Education President (and candidate for Delegate for Maryland's District 37B) Susan Delean-Botkin. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner.

Action Items

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m. and introductions were made. Pete Leshar was carrying a proxy for Frank Divilio. Chairman Chase was in possession of a proxy from Delegate Chris Adams. Mr. Warner was in possession of electronic votes from Anthony Casey and Kurt Fuchs who could not attend in person due to other obligations.

Approval of June 9, 2022, Minutes

The first order of business was to obtain approval for the June 9, 2022, minutes. Senator Eckardt made a motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Spicher 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 passed unanimously.

Ratification of Executive Board May 27, 2022, Minutes

The next order of business was to ratify Executive Board minutes from May 27, 2022. Senator Eckardt made a motion to ratify the minutes. Mr. Christopher 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 passed unanimously.

Ratification of Executive Board June 30, 2022, Minutes

The next order of business was to ratify Executive Board minutes from June 30, 2022. Mr. Rider made a motion to ratify the minutes. Senator Eckardt 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 passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

In Treasurer Fuchs' absence Mr. Warner presented three reports.

MSRC Operating Budget

The first report was the MSRC operating budget. He stated that all income and expenses are on track.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Budget

Mr. Warner informed the Council that the grant agreement should be received from the Rural Maryland Council in the next few days. He went through the line items of the budget reminding the Council what they voted on during their June meeting to fund this fiscal year.

Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project Budget

Mr. Warner reminded the Council that the two-year grant ended on June 30, 2022. He went through each line item explaining that all the funds were expended as budgeted.

Mr. Christopher made a motion to accept all three reports. Ms. Spicher 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 passed unanimously.

Program Updates

Summer Career Enrichment Program (SCEP)

Mr. Warner stated that the 2022 program has been completed. He provided the following overview.

The sponsors and funders of the program were the MSRC, Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund via the Rural Maryland Council, Mid-Shore Community Foundation, Truist, PNC Bank, Justin Ross, Skyward Apps, Mathis Realtors, Caroline County Public Schools, Dorchester County Public Schools, and Talbot County Public Schools.

The program was facilitated by People for Change Coalition (PFC Coalition). The PFC Coalition was formed in 2011, it has become one of the fastest growing nonprofit membership organizations representing over 300 Small and Minority Businesses, and Nonprofits in Prince George's County, Charles County, the Eastern Shore, Southern MD, and DC Metro Area.

This year's SCEP was held at the Dorchester Career & Technology Center from July 11, 2022, to August 4, 2022, Monday thru Thursday from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

Students attended from all three counties: Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot.

The students were exposed to requirements gathering, interviewing techniques, problem solving, critical thinking, working in teams, leadership development, time management, and presentation skills.

The SCEP is a 4-week program

- 2-week track for each program
- Each program can hold 10 – 15 students
 - Chess program 20 students
- Middle schoolers – 6th, 7th, and 8th graders

The programs offered this year were:

- 1) Animation for Youth
- 2) App Development for Youth – 2 classes
- 3) Drone Technology for Youth
- 4) Graphic and Presentation Design for Youth
- 5) Making the Right Moves Chess Immersion Program
- 6) Media Arts and Video Editing
- 7) Youth Cyber Security Program

All three superintendents toured/visited the program:

- Dr. Derek Simmons, Caroline County Public Schools
- Dr. David Bromwell, Dorchester County Public Schools
- Dr. Sharon Pepukayi, Talbot County Public Schools

The MSRC is planning to facilitate a meeting with all three superintendents and People for Change Coalition later this month.

Additionally, many non-profit organizations and private companies also toured/visited the program.

Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project

Mr. Warner provided an update of the status of this project. He first mentioned that the project has been branded the Eastern Shore Economic Resiliency Toolkit. He then

informed the two-year EDA grants provided to the MSRC and TCCLES have been completed.

Mr. Warner then announced the awards that the project has received.

- 2022 MEDA Economic Development Program Award
 - MEDA = Maryland Economic Development Association
 - The award was announced in April 2022.
 - The committee received the award on April 25 during the MEDA Annual Awards Banquet held during the MEDA Annual Conference in Cambridge, MD from April 24 through 26, 2022.

- IEDC Regional and Cross Border Collaboration Award
 - IEDC = International Economic Development Council
 - The award was announced in June 2022.
 - Cassandra Vanhooser will accept the award on the committee's behalf when it is presented during the IEDC Annual Conference at Oklahoma City, OK from September 18 through 21, 2022.

- 2022 NADO Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award
 - NADO = National Association of Development Organizations
 - The MSRC was notified last week of the award.
 - The public announcement will happen next month at NADO's 2022 Annual Training Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, October 15 through 18, 2022.
 - NADO will be featuring this year's awards on their new website.
 - Awards will be featured on October 17 at the Impact Awards reception during the conference.

Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund

Chairman Chase then called on Mr. Warner to lead the presentation of the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund grant that the MSRC submitted to the Maryland Department of Commerce.

Mr. Warner reviewed the process that the MSRC had decided on in the spring. He spoke about the constant communication between the MSRC and TCCLES. Both regional councils used the same process. The MSRC was also in constant communication with the economic development directors of Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot counties from the announcement of the Fund to the present. The MSRC applied for the full \$10 million offered by the State of Maryland. The application included 3% for administration fees as allowed and divided the remaining funds equally between each county.

Mr. Warner stated that the MSRC Executive Board along with the county administrator/managers served as a review/compliance committee to review project applications submitted through the MSRC for compliance with eligibility criteria as set forth by the Maryland Department of Commerce.

Mr. Warner introduced the consultant that the MSRC hired to help oversee and manage the grant process, Insights, llc. Principal Sarah Guy. Dr. Guy's company was also contracted by the TCCLES to oversee and manage their grant process.

Mr. Warner explained that he, Mr. Padgham, and Dr. Guy created a compliance checklist that was reviewed by the Maryland Department of Commerce. The checklist was shared with the county economic development directors and used by the MSRC review/compliance committee to determine whether or not each project submitted was eligible for funding. The committee met on August 24, 2022, to review the projects.

Mr. Warner reminded everyone that the grant period will be 24-months. The MSRC is required to report on the progress every 6-months to the Maryland Department of Commerce. The MSRC will get reports from Dr. Guy every 3-months and monthly updates that will be included in the MSRC's Monthly Activity Reports.

Since the MSRC will be providing regular updates on the various projects, the MSRC Executive Board thought it would be important for this meeting to highlight the projects that have been submitted to the Maryland Department of Commerce to be funded. Mr. Warner introduced each economic development director to provide an overview of their county's projects. A slide show was used to highlight each project and afterwards a handout was provided to all in attendance. The handout was derived from the support letters each county had to submit to the MSRC. The letters stated the projects that were being submitted by each county ranked in order of priority with the amount of funding for each project and a brief description of each project. (The handout is attached at the end of these minutes.)

The economic development directors in order of presenting:

- Debbie Bowden, Director, Caroline County Economic Development Office
- Susan Banks, Director, Dorchester County Economic Development Office
- Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism

Upcoming Events

Mr. Warner reminded everyone of the following upcoming events.

- Mid-Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting will be held on October 12, 2022 (Wednesday) at 12:00pm at Talbot County Free Library in Easton.
- Mid-Shore Regional Council meeting will be held on December 8, 2022 (Thursday) at 5:00pm at Chesapeake Grove Intergenerational Center in Cambridge

Announcements/comments

Mr. Silverstein made remarks about the University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Easton regarding the importance of building the new regional hospital in Easton. He advocated that everyone's assistance in supporting the new hospital will be greatly appreciated and much needed. Mr. Silverstein added that 2018 was the last time the University of Maryland Shore Health System submitted a Certificate of Need (CON) to the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) and that the next possible submission date is January 2023.

Mr. Warner responded to Mr. Silverstein's comments stating that the Regional Medical Facility has been a project on the Mid-Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for several years. Additionally, the MSRC's Scope of Work has also included an item regarding the health care industry and its importance to economic development in the region for many years. Mr. Warner thanked Mr. Silverstein for speaking about the importance of the new regional hospital and welcomed more discussion at the upcoming CEDS meeting and future discussions with the MSRC.

Adjourn

Chairman Chase adjourned the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund

Mid-Shore Regional Council

Projects by County

CAROLINE COUNTY

- 1) **Data Center** – Building and FF&E - \$2,000,000. Design and build through a public/private partnership with Choptank Electric a 10,000 to 20,000 square foot post and frame shell building on a parcel at the Mid Shore Regional Technology and Business Park. Choptank Electric will outfit with appropriate infrastructure for a boutique data center and provide leads to secure tenants. Construction will be managed by project manager with oversight by County Administrator and Economic Development Director.
- 2) **Chesapeake College Foundation** – Workforce Training - \$257,500. Modernize the College’s skilled trade programming and labs, thus creating opportunities for worker mobility and local business job creation, including tutoring/placement testing/certification support to prospective and current workforce and skilled trades students.
- 3) **Maryland Broadband Cooperative** – Point of Presence (POP) upgrade - \$240,000. Upgrade equipment, facilities, and service capacity to deliver 100-GB service through every Cooperative Member ISP in Caroline County and the region.
- 4) **Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center** – Farm to Freezer Facility and Program - \$300,000. ESEC and Chesapeake Culinary Center propose building a facility that would provide food processing of produce and meats in Caroline County.
- 5) **Tech Park Development Plan of Action** – Focused marketing and prep - \$200,000. Work closely with site selectors and commercial realtors to inform and promote the Tech Park to local and regional businesses. Work with Commerce and EDA on re-structuring the requirements pertaining to use of the Park.
- 6) **West Denton Infrastructure Study** - \$100,000. Gather data and information on the infrastructure needs and requirements to bring sustainable business growth to the area.
- 7) **Business Attraction Capacity Building** - \$135,833. Partner with commercial land holders and commercial realtors to market and promote Caroline County for business expansion and attraction.

DORCHESTER COUNTY

- 1) **Maryland Broadband Cooperative** – \$240,000. Funds used to upgrade equipment and service capacity in Dorchester benefiting members operating in the Region.
- 2) **CWDI** – \$1,000,000. Cambridge Harbor will promote Dorchester as an attractive destination for tourists and provide economic, cultural and recreational opportunities for residents. This funding will provide CWDI with Complete Design Deliverable (DD) set of documents site development, including roadways, associated underground utility mains and the streetscape.
- 3) **Woods Road** – \$1,192,748. Repaving Woods Road is a top Priority and will improve access and safety to businesses, the medical facility and through traffic. Paving is a necessity to keep manufacturing jobs in Dorchester as businesses expand and traffic flows increase.
- 4) **Chesapeake College** – \$257,500. This proposal supports a larger fundraising initiative Chesapeake College has embarked on: create a mobile welding lab, expansion of the Marine Trades program, create an Advanced Manufacturing Technology (AMT) program, form a Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Currently the College does not have tutors to help prospective students achieve acceptable scores on program placement exams, nor do they have staff who can advise non-credit program students or tutor in certification exams at either the Cambridge Center, at Wye Mills, or online. These monies would get those services established for non-credit students in FY23 and FY24.
- 5) **Chesapeake College- CDL Program** – \$338,085. This proposal is the first step to expanding Chesapeake College's current CDL program to a second location in Cambridge and having the capacity to offer class B certifications to 8 cohorts of students over two years.
- 6) **Uppershore Workforce Investment Board** – \$50,000. The WIB will work with Dorchester County Economic Development to target 7-10 businesses who want to offer training to some of their key employees. An application will be developed and businesses will register the employees and pay for the training with these funds. All training would result in a credential that confirms completion.
- 7) **Town of Vienna Maryland** – \$155,000. The Town of Vienna would like to acquire 104 Race Street which is known as The Community Hall. They would like to acquire this property to create a space for waterfront parking and bathroom facilities. This will attract more businesses/vendors to their waterfront. It will also allow bigger activities to be held at their waterfront park. It will also be used to attract more boaters and kayaking and those people will in turn support our local businesses while in Town. Phase 1 would be to acquire the property.

TALBOT COUNTY

- 1) **Chesapeake College, *Future Work Workforce Training*** – \$257,500. This regional project would provide gap funding needed to fully expand an existing trades program at Chesapeake College, kick-start the creation of a new trades program, hire staff for a new Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and provide scholarships for skilled trades students.
- 2) **Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc., *Mid-Shore Optical Broadband Network Upgrade*** – \$240,000. This regional project will upgrade Maryland Broadband Cooperative’s backhaul network equipment to increase broadband capacity in the MidShore area to include upgrading the Points-of-Presence in Cambridge, Denton and Wye Mills.
- 3) **Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center, *Ag Biotech Manufacturing Project*** – \$500,000. Funds will be used to develop an agbiotech (merging of agriculture and biotechnology) manufacturing center in Talbot County. The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center proposes to lease and equip a small pilot-scale agbiotech manufacturing facility that would position Talbot County as having the resources to expedite the advancement of start-up companies from lab-stage technology development to pilot-scale manufacturing. Eventually this will allow companies to proceed into large-scale manufacturing through the use of a contract manufacture or their own stand-alone manufacturing facility, capabilities, which do not currently exist elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic.
- 4) **Town of Trappe, *Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade to ENR Technology*** - \$500,000. Funds will be used to assist the Town of Trappe in upgrading their wastewater treatment plant to Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) technology to achieve the water quality goals of the Chesapeake Bay Program. By completing this upgrade, the Town will be able to offer additional sewer connections and support businesses.
- 5) **Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Inc., *New Welcome Center*** - \$300,000. Funds will be used to support the completion of Phase II of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum’s Master Plan which includes the construction of a new, 12,000 s.f. Welcome Center on the Fogg’s Landing side of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum’s campus.
- 6) **Talbot County Free Library, *Digital Literacy and Employment Skills*** – \$22,000. Funds will be used to purchase 25 laptops to create a mobile computer lab to support Talbot County Free Library with their Building Digital and Employment Skills Training Project.
- 7) **Building African American Minds, *Workforce Development Program*** – \$87,133. Funds will be used to support Building African American Minds’ adult Workforce Development Program which will partner with Chesapeake College, Workforce Investment Board (WIB) as well as community organizations to develop and implement a workforce development program for young adults (18-30 years of age).

- 8) **Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism, *Inclusive Ventures Program*** - \$50,000. Funds will be used to hire a consultant to develop and administer a training program to assist small, minority, woman and veteran entrepreneurs with education, mentorship, and access to capital.
- 9) **Talbot County Parks and Recreation, *Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe Phase II Predevelopment, Engineer, Architecture and Interpretation*** - \$300,000. Funds will be used to support Phase II of the Master Plan for the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe to include planning and implementation of archaeological investigations at the site, engineering for overlooks, expanded trail network as well as restrooms.
- 10) **Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism, *Strategic Plan*** - \$125,000. Funds will be used to hire a consultant to develop a strategic plan that integrates information about the county's five municipalities and 22 villages. The current Strategic Plan dates from 2018.
- 11) **Talbot County Public Works, *Goldsborough Neck Road Culvert Replacement Project*** - \$750,000. Funds will be used to reconstruct and improve the culvert on Goldsborough Neck Road where improvements are underway to support the development of the Mistletoe Hall Commerce Park, a project of the Town of Easton. Improvements will support the anticipated increase in heavy-duty truck traffic this industrial park will generate.
- 12) **Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism, *Visitors Center Feasibility Study*** - \$38,700. Funds will be used to hire a consultant to develop a feasibility study to provide an analysis of the current location of the visitors center as well as providing a recommendation for locating, funding and building a new visitors center.
- 13) **Oxford Community Center, *The Work Hub*** - \$13,000. Funds will be used to upgrade hybrid technology and live streaming A/V capabilities to enhance the facility as a workspace hub and meeting space.
- 14) **Classic Motor Museum of St. Michaels, Inc., *Automotive Technician Apprenticeship Program*** - \$50,000. Funds will be used to support the Classic Motor Museum of St. Michaels in the marketing of their new Automotive Technician Apprenticeship Program by hiring a consultant to build a website and marketing materials.