

The Mid-Shore Regional (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on March 7, 2024, at the Easton Fire Hall, Easton, Maryland.

MSRC members in attendance included: Walter Chase, Bill Christopher, Carolyn Spicher, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Lenny Pfeffer, Mike Detmer, Joyce Harrod, Kurt Fuchs, Frank Bartz, Larry Porter, Maria D'Arcy, Steve Rideout, and Caroline County Administrator Katheleen Freeman.

Guests in attendance were: Dorchester County Economic Development Director Susan Banks; Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism Director Cassandra Vanhooser; Rural Maryland Council Executive Director Charlotte Davis; Chesapeake College President Clifford Coppersmith; Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES) Executive Director Greg Padgham; CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield External Affairs Manager Melissa Kelly; Maryland Broadband Cooperative President and CEO Drew Van Dopp; Chesapeake Culinary Center Executive Director Beth Brewster; Shore Gourmet Program Director Roxanne Wolf; BEACON Director John Hickman; SG Insights, llc principal Sarah Guy; U.S. Senator Ben Cardin's Field Representative Kim Kratovil; U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director Alyssa Hastings; Governor Wes Moore's Intergovernmental Affairs Liaison Madison Bryce; Delmarva Community Services President and CEO Santo Grande; Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) Executive Director Michael Thielke; Caroline Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Tracey Snyder; USDA Rural Development Deputy State Director and Acting Director Letitia Nichols; Chesapeake Agriculture Innovation Center (CAIC) Program Director Emiliano Espinosa; Comptroller of Maryland Public Engagement Officer – Eastern Shore Mary Handley; Town of Trappe Commissioner Mike Sullivan; Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representative Mindie Burgoyne; Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc. (CWDI) Executive Director Matt Leonard; Chesapeake College Board of Trustees Chair and Talbot County Economic Development Commission Past Chair Reza Jafari; Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Project Managers Erin Silva and Mary Buffington; St. Michaels resident Lawrence Harrod; Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Research Analyst Matthew Kachura; and Maryland Department of Planning Maryland 250 Commission Director Michele Johnson. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 5:27 p.m. and introductions were made. Chairman Chase was in possession of proxies from Senator Johnny Mautz, Delegate Chris Adams, and Delegate Tom Hutchinson. Mike Detmer was carrying a proxy for Ricky Travers. Mr. Warner was in possession of an electronic vote from Dan Rider.

## Action Items

### *Approval of December 6, 2023, Minutes*

The first order of business was to obtain approval for the December 6, 2023, minutes. Mr. Christopher made a motion to approve 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 saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

### *Ratification of revised CEDS document*

The next order of business was to ratify the revised CEDS document.

Mr. Warner stated that all MSRC voting members and County Administrator/Managers are part of the CEDS Committee.

The CEDS Committee met on October 11, 2023. At the meeting they reviewed the intent of the CEDS process (ensure eligibility for EDA funds and serve as a regional forum) and MSRC's purpose in the process (MSRC is the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated Economic Development District and as such facilitates and constructs the Mid-Shore CEDS). They were reminded that the 1<sup>st</sup> CEDS document was submitted to EDA on October 16, 2002. They were also informed of the following:

- 35 projects are currently part of the Action Plan
- GPRA Data Collection period FY23 (7/1/22 to 6/30/23)
  - 23 projects reported funding, jobs, and/or investment activity
  - 335.00 estimated number of jobs created or retained

During the meeting, the committee reviewed and revised the CEDS Goals and Objectives and reviewed the progress status of the CEDS Action Plan receiving updates of each project.

The CEDS Executive Committee met on November 27, 2023. At this meeting they evaluated proposed projects. Three projects did not make it through the evaluation process or were removed by their champion. Four projects were unanimously supported to be forwarded to the CEDS Committee for consideration.

January 4, 2024, the CEDS Committee had their second meeting of the year. During that meeting the following occurred:

- Modifications were approved to update Goals and Objectives
  - Goal 3, Objective 6 (new)
  - Goal 7, Objective 1
- Four projects were unanimously approved for inclusion in the document
  - Chesapeake Country All-American Road
  - Choptank Marina Infrastructure Improvement
  - Denton Industrial Park Expansion Infrastructure
  - Delmarva Index
- Removal of an existing project from CEDS Action Plan
  - Data Center Shell Building
- 38 projects are included in the revised documents' Action Plan

Mr. Warner then thanked many for their assistance in revising the CEDS:

- USWIB Executive Director Dan Schneckenburger assisting with Unemployment data found under “Our Region,”
- Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Business Development Representative Nancy LaJoice assisting with Tax Credits and Incentives found under “Resources,”
- ESRGC GIS Analyst Nastya Suprunova assisting with Dashboard updates including language for updating the CEDS online and printable version, including the statistical sections,
- ESRGC GIS Programmer Tim Lanzi for all the computer programming including some image manipulation; however, he built such a comprehensive platform that technical updates were not needed,
- ESRGC Project Manager Erin Silva for all the projects updates, data updates, printable version, and the overall management of the CEDS online update process.

Updates made to the online Mid-Shore CEDS:

- Goals & Objectives (as stated above)
- Action Plan (as stated above)
- History
- Our Region
  - “Demographic & Socioeconomic” section
    - Population
    - Minority Population
    - Educational Attainment
    - Income and Poverty
    - Wages
    - Unemployment
    - Mobile Workforce
    - Business Establishments
    - Housing
  - “Major Industry Clusters” section
    - Tourism
  - Economy
    - “Factors Affecting Economic Performance” section
      - Opportunity Zones
      - Business, Personal, and Property Taxes
  - Resources
    - “Tax Credits and Incentives” section

Mr. Warner stated that the link to the revised CEDS online was e-mailed to you on February 29, 2024, with this meeting’s agenda.

The MSRC will submit the updated CEDS document to the EDA Philadelphia Regional Office once ratified and posted on the website for public comment for 30 days.

The updated document can be viewed:

- through the MSRC website [www.midshore.org](http://www.midshore.org)
  - Click on “About,” “Documents,” then “Visit CEDS online”
- Or the direct link <https://ceds.midshore.org>

Mr. Rideout made a motion to ratify the CEDS document. Mr. Christopher 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.

### *Treasurer's Report*

Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the following financial reports.

#### MSRC Operating Budget

- Mr. Fuchs stated that all income and expenses are on track, noting that EDA is a bit behind on payment due to a new system, but should be caught up soon.

#### Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Budget

- Next, Mr. Fuchs addressed the RMPIF budget stating nothing has changed since the MSRC meeting on December 6, 2023.

#### Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Budget

- During this report Mr. Fuchs deferred to Mr. Warner to explain the details.

Mr. Warner stated that all funds have been distributed to the Counties with the exception of the administration fee still payable to Dorchester County, the county should be requesting the funds shortly. The only other update is to Administration fees for the project consultant SG Insights, llc.

Ms. Haddaway-Riccio made a motion to approve all three reports. Mr. Pfeffer 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.

### *Authorizing Resolution to file an application with the MTA for a FY25 Statewide Coordination and Technical Assistance Grant (SCATA)*

Mr. Warner stated the MSRC received an email on January 19, 2024, from the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) regarding solicitation information for a Statewide Coordination and Technical Assistance Grant (SCATA).

- The solicitation encompasses the 12-month period for FY2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).
- The grant application submittal deadline is April 12, 2024, at 3:00pm.
- The MSRC has been applying for and administering this grant for many years to support the Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST) program.
- The grant request amount is \$40,000. (The same amount it has been since FY08.) These funds are matched by county funds (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot).
- The MTA process requires an authorizing resolution.

Mr. Warner informed the council the resolution is included in the meeting packets. This is a standard resolution that the MTA has requested over the past several years that the MSRC has applied for the grant.

Mayor Rideout made a motion to approve the authorizing resolution. 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.

### Special presentation

#### *Maryland 250 Commission*

Mr. Warner introduced Michele Johnson, Director, Maryland 250 Commission. Ms. Johnson joined the Maryland Historical Trust in April 2023 as Director of the Maryland 250 Commission. She previously served as Executive Director of a community leadership program and Vice President of a non-profit working to make higher education more affordable for Maryland students, where she was lead advocate for a successful first-in-the-nation bill in Maryland. She also worked as a transportation planner, served as Board Chair of Congressman Elijah Cummings Youth Program, served on a county Board of Zoning Appeals, and ran for political office. She graduated from the University of Maryland and the University of Virginia, and lives in Talbot County.

Ms. Johnson presentation of Maryland 250 was titled Planning, Encouraging, and Executing the U.S. Semiquincentennial in Maryland. The Maryland 250 Commission's charge is to develop, encourage and execute an inclusive statewide, yearlong observance of the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the U.S.; recognize all Marylander's struggle for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness before, during and after the Revolution; and celebrate our successes and reckon with our setbacks. The Maryland 250 Commission is made up of 33 members, chaired by Governor Parris Glendening, Vice Chair Judge Katie O'Malley, and includes Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, and Talbot County Councilman Pete Leshner. Ms. Johnson further explained that there are three themes (1) deepen public understanding of our complex history, (2) inspire public engagement in civic life, and (3) strengthen public appreciation for service to our country. Local 250 Commissions have already been established including the Dorchester/Cambridge 250. Ms. Johnson also provided suggestions on where to search for funding for the 250<sup>th</sup> which is a great opportunity to promote local jurisdictions.

Ms. Johnson provided links for more information:

<https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/> under grants  
<https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/grants-applications/> and  
resources <https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/resources/>.

Ms. Johnson encourages anyone interested to read Governor Moore's Executive Order at <https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/about/executive-order/>.

We thank Ms. Johnson for being available to join us this evening.

### Updates

#### *Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund (RMEDF)*

RMEDF project consultant Sarah Guy (Principal, SG Insights, llc) stated that most projects have been started and there are some projects that have already been completed. She tracks all projects by getting updates from each project manager monthly. The information is then put into a comprehensive report. Mr. Warner includes a RMEDF report with MSRC monthly activity reports. Mr. Warner stated that the counties' economic development directors have been doing a great job communicating with him and Dr. Guy. Mr. Warner thanked Dr. Guy and the county economic development directors for all their work and assistance on managing the RMEDF and its projects.

### *GIS Circuit Rider program*

Mary Buffington (Project Manager, ESRGC) leads the GIS Circuit Rider program and provided a presentation utilizing a slide show to share some of the projects the circuit rider program has performed. Some of the assistance provided have been:

- Eastern Shore Regional Trails Network mapping
- Delmarva Chicken House mapping
- Support to Caroline County with a GIS intern from October 2023 through January 2024
- Parcel analysis for Delmarva Real Estate Management Group

Some upcoming projects include:

- Blue Catfish story map
- Contour data development

For more information and other projects, Ms. Buffington provided a link to the slides presented. Please feel free to view them and reach out to the MSRC or ESRGC with any questions.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/briefings/56ff82178b44455f8f662e185e82079a>

Ms. Buffington reminded everyone to contact the ESRGC if they have a project which they could assist.

### *Shore Gourmet (SG)/ Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC) partnership*

Chairman Chase introduced Beth Brewster, Executive Director of CCC. Ms. Brewster also stated she works for the Caroline County Public School System, and she concentrates on feeding the area's youth. SG and CCC are part of a regional food resiliency effort – Chesapeake Food Connection. The mission is to create healthy, economically stable families through food equity, job training, youth prevention, economic development, and education. Shore Gourmet is integral to this effort that is working on several projects including:

- Re-purposing vacant poultry houses.
- Utilizing Blue Catfish to not only feed people economically but help the health of the Bay.
- Farm to Freezer Project – helping to make healthy food choices year-round not just when products are in season. This also serves as a supplemental income for seasonal cafeteria workers in the school systems.

Mr. Warner thanked Ms. Brewster for her update. Ms. Brewster told Ms. Buffington to contact her regarding the upcoming Blue Catfish story map.

### Guest speaker

#### *EDA-ARPA Statewide Planning Grant*

Mr. Warner introduced Matthew Kachura, Senior Research Analyst, Maryland Department of Commerce. Mr. Kachura informed the council the EDA-ARPA Statewide Planning Grant is for \$1 million and runs from October 2021 to March 2024. The grant includes:

- **Statewide Broadband Planning:** Pass funds through to the DHCD's Office of Statewide Broadband to assist in funding their upcoming statewide broadband implementation plan (\$400,000)
- **Cluster Analysis & Asset Inventory:** Jacob France at UB is creating a Statewide Cluster Analysis and Asset Inventory (\$200,000)
- **Supply Chain Study:** RESI at Towson University is researching statewide supply chain issues (\$100,000)
- **Online Resiliency Tools:** ESRGC at Salisbury University is extending availability of economic resiliency planning tools statewide that were created under a prior EDA Grant (\$208,000)

The Online Resiliency Tools was built upon the prior work of the Eastern Shore Economic Resiliency Toolkit facilitated by the MSRC and TCCLES. It was built upon prior capacity of the regional council boards, partners, meetings, projects, and experience/lessons learned. This project expanded the committee to statewide participation and statewide geography (at County level) to develop four dashboards. The dashboards created are:

- Manufacturing (2)
  - Industry and Workforce
- Transferrable Skills
- Maryland Economic Dashboard

Mr. Kachura was very complimentary of the dedication of the committee, the work of the ESRGC, and the facilitation efforts of the MSRC. The next steps are dashboard rollouts, data updates, continued participation, and possible project continuation/expansion (new grant, new dashboards, and new tools).

The MSRC was incredibly grateful Mr. Kachura could be available to address the council this evening.

### Maryland General Assembly

Charlotte Davis, Rural Maryland Council Executive Director, gave the following updates.

#### *2024 Legislative session*

She thanked the Governor for including RMPIF, MAERDAF, and the regional councils in the proposed FY25 Operating Budget, all at level funding. This is

the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row that RMPIF has been included in the state budget. She stated that this week the Bureau of Revenue Estimates is down \$120 million.

### *Rural Maryland Day in Annapolis*

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) held Rural Maryland Day on February 8, 2024. Several teams of rural Maryland supporters met with State of Maryland Senators and Delegates virtually. They thanked legislators for their support of rural Maryland and the RMC. They also expressed the vital importance of the grant programs administered by the RMC – RMPIF and MAERDAF.

She stated the RMC Legislative Committee has been very active again this year. Categories being tracked are housing, healthcare and telehealth, rural economic development, community development, and agriculture and the environment. Issues discussed by the Committee include taxes, affordable housing, DAF, data centers, Blueprint and solar-siting.

### *"Taste of the Eastern Shore" legislative reception*

Greg Padgham, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Director, stated the event was held on February 8, 2024, at Graduate Annapolis Hotel. It was the reception's 20<sup>th</sup> year. He stated the event was very successful with approximately 350 to 400 attendees. Mr. Padgham thanked the MSRC for continuing to be a partner and sponsor.

### *Maryland Day – RMC event Lawyers' Mall, Annapolis – March 25 at 4:00pm*

Mr. Warner announced that the RMC will be holding an event on Maryland Day at Lawyers' Mall in Annapolis on March 25 at 4:00pm. Please attend if your schedule allow.

### Member comments/requests

There were no comments or requests.

### Adjourn

Chairman Chase adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.