

**Mid Shore Regional Council
The Fountains Wedding & Conference Center
Salisbury, Maryland**

The Mid Shore Regional Council held its scheduled quarterly meeting on December 13, 2006 at the Fountains Conference Center in Salisbury. Members present were: Walter Chase, Allen Nelson, Andy Hollis, Brad Broadwell, Burton Wilson, Charley Cawley, Father LaBarge, Delegate Eckardt, Ellery Adams, Fred Smyth, Gale Nashold, Hope Harrington, Jerome Stanley, Marty Gangemi, Mayor Rippons, Mindie Burgoyne, Paige Bethke, Scott Warner and Terry Deighan. Several guests were also present including Verna Asplen, Margaret Young and Bud Hankin of the League of Women Voters of the Eastern Shore, Vanessa Orlando of Rural Maryland, Pat Mitchell MdBC Project Manager, Jeff Ghrist Caroline County Commissioner and Bailey Fine, State Director for Ben Cardin.

Chairman Gangemi called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and introductions were made.

Mr. Hollis announced he was in possession of Ms. Spence's proxy vote for this meeting and Mr. Cawley announced he was in possession of Mr. Layton's proxy vote for this meeting as well.

Action Items:

The first order of business was approval of the September 13, 2006 Minutes. Mr. Gangemi asked for any changes or revisions to the minutes as presented, being none Father LaBarge made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Delegate Eckardt seconded the motion and the minutes were approved as written by unanimous consent.

In the absence of Treasurer Travers Chairman Gangemi presented the treasurer's report and asked for questions or changes. Having none Father LaBarge made a motion to accept the report as presented, Mr. Wilson seconded the motion and the treasurer's report was passed by unanimous consent.

Vote on Amendment to Mid-Shore Regional Council Bylaws Article V

Mr. Warner informed the board this action is a necessary step so the Mid Shore Regional Council can become an EDD which will put the Mid Shore Regional Council high up on the funding ladder with EDA. The additions included adding **6 business representatives as voting members as follows:**

- Maryland Seafood Industries Associations
- Association of Forestry Industries, Inc.
- Maryland Farm Bureau
- One private sector businessperson from each County (3 total)

Father LaBarge made a motion to accept the changes, Delegate Eckardt seconded the motion and it was passed by unanimous consent.

Vote to support the initial effort of the Tri County Council of Southern Maryland for an increase in funding to the five Rural Regional Councils by the State of Maryland.

Mr. Warner asked the Council for permission to support this request and for permission to add the Mid Shore Regional Council's support and signature to the formal request for additional funding. The Board as a whole agreed that any request for additional funds was acceptable and Father LaBarge made a motion to allow the Mid Shore Regional Council to be added to this request, Mr. Chase seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

The Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) voted to ask DBED for \$200,000 funding in FY08 budget. TCCSMD wants to know if the other four Councils would like to do the same. Mr. Warner asked the Council for permission to have the Mid Shore Regional Council be included in this request for funding. Again the Board agreed any additional funding source is welcome and Father LaBarge made a motion to support this funding request for FY08, Jeff Ghrist seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Old Business

Update on Mid-Shore Regional Council projects

Mr. Warner gave the following up dates on the following current projects:

Maryland Broadband Cooperative

MdBC has hired Adesta as the contractor for the fiber build between NASA Wallops Island facility and Salisbury State University.

Construction started on November 1, 2007.

W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. is the first cooperative member.

Pat Mitchell, MdBC Project Manager, is discussing the build out from Salisbury University through the Mid-Shore region with Adesta

MdBC is also negotiating a contract with the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Capital Committee to cross the Chesapeake Bay Bridge

When Mr. Warner finished Mr. Mitchell joined our meeting and gave a more detailed account of where the MdBC is in their efforts.

Rural Maryland Broadband Coordination Board

On October 6, 2006 the Coordination Board held a meeting via conference call and approved \$303,541 request of federal funds to begin build-out of fiber optic network from NASA Wallops Island facility to Salisbury State University. Mr. Warner announced the Coop have received these funds.

Workforce Issues Task Force

Conflict Management / Current Workplace Issues subcommittee phase 1 project "HR Solutions that Work" document was distributed throughout the mid-shore region in October via Dorchester and Talbot Chambers of Commerce and the Denton Business Breakfast mailing list.

MUST (Maryland Upper Shore Transit)

Scott was invited to attend a meeting of Shore Health Systems social workers where he had a chance to show the new video. It was well received and the audience suggested to show the video on the hospitals closed circuit television and to distribute the DVDs to doctors' offices.

New MUST schedules to be distributed in January 2007.

MUST is exploring bus advertising to make the program more self sufficient.

The MTA/KFH is working on Maryland State and Regional Transportation

Coordination Plans. They want to use MUST as the Regional Coordinating Body.

A regional forum of a variety of organizations will be held in February 2007 at Chesapeake College.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) – Fred Smyth

The MSRC has been told unofficially that ESEC will receive \$9,800 from the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) for its operating budget. Nothing has been sent in writing.

Waiting to hear about the USDA Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) for \$750,000.

Agricultural Economic Development Specialist – Scott Warner

The MSRC submitted a complete application for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) for \$66,900 to the USDA Rural Development on September 28.

The MSRC received the "Letter of Condition" from the USDA Rural Development office dated November 30, 2006. It has been reviewed by the MSRC attorney, signed by the Executive Director, and returned.

The "Letter of Condition" was faxed to the American Farmland Trust (AFT) so they could release the Rauch Foundation grant worth \$12,000. Currently, AFT and USDA Rural Development offices are discussing the grants.

Immigrant workforce / CASA study

CASA does not currently have the resources to follow through on the BEACON feasibility study recommendations.

An Immigrant Workforce committee has been formed and is setting up focus groups to explore the resources required to link immigrant workers and local businesses.

Changes to the Annotated Code of Maryland Article 20C

Mr. Warner announced the Changes outlined below are so the Code will match the changes made to the Mid Shore Regional Council's By Laws over the years.

First, changing "nine" commissioners to "six", two from each county to match the Bylaw revisions adopted at the December 3, 2003 Board meeting.

Second, adding a statutory section giving the MSRC immunity for being sued.

Using the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and the Tri-County Council of Western Maryland as precedents.

Delegate Eckardt's office submitted it to the bill drafting office in Annapolis on November 15, 2006. Delegate Eckardt assured the Council she would keep them up to date on the progress of this bill.

New Business

The following tentative dates have been established for the 2007 year.

- March 14, 2007 – Caroline County
- June 13, 2007 – Dorchester County
- September 12, 2007 – Talbot County
- December 12, 2007 – Caroline County

Officer Selection

Mr. Warner presented the following suggestions for the 2007 Mid Shore Regional Council Board Members and asked the Board for suggestions and or changes to his slate. There were none so on a motion by Hope Harrington that was seconded by Delegate Eckardt and passed unanimously the 2007 Board Members stand as listed below.

2007 Executive Board Members

- Chairman: Allen Nelson
- First Vice-Chairman: Jeff Ghrist (Caroline)
- Second Vice-Chairman: Ricky Travers (Dorchester)
- Third Vice-Chairman: Buddy Harrison (Talbot)
- Secretary: Gale Nashold (Caroline)
- Treasurer: Cleveland Rippons (Dorchester)
- General Assembly: Jeannie Haddaway
- One-at-large Member: Walter Chase (Talbot)

Other matters

Mr. Warner made the following announcements-

- Cindy Betts is retiring from Senator Mikulski's staff
- Paul Raetsch, Regional Director of the EDA Philadelphia office is retiring as well.
- Steve McHenry resigned from the Rural Maryland Council to accept the position of Executive Director of MARBIDCO (Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation)

Member comments/requests

None

Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Cawley and seconded by Father LaBarge the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.