

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Committee
August 7, 2014 – 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.
Town Dock Restaurant, 125 Mulberry Street, St. Michael's, Maryland

Participants:

RMC Chair, Scott Warner
RMC First Vice Chair, Doris Mason
RMC Second Vice Chair, Thomas McLoughlin
RMC Immediate Past Chair, Mike Pennington
RMC Legislative Committee Chair, Josh Hastings
RMC Planning and Development Committee Chair, Mike Thielke
RMF President, Daniel Rider
RMC Executive Director, Charlotte Davis
RMC Administrative and Communications Assistant, Kathy Vernacchio

Chairman Warner called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Warner reviewed the minutes of the March 14, 2014 Executive Committee Meeting. Mr. McLoughlin made a motion to approve; Mr. Pennington seconded and the Committee unanimously approved.

The March 28, 2014 Executive Board Meeting minutes were read. Mr. Pennington moved to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Warner reviewed the April 28, 2014 Executive Committee Meeting minutes and asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Pennington moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Mason seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

The May 29, 2014 Executive Committee Meeting minutes were read and a motion made to approve. Mr. Pennington moved for approval, Ms. Mason seconded and the motion carried.

Committee Reports

Financial

Ms. Davis presented the Fiscal Year 2014 Financials as well as the Fiscal Year 2015 Proposed Budget. There is \$95,585.00 in Reimbursable Funds (InvestMaryland) to carry over from fiscal year 2014. The RMC will require a budget amendment to spend these funds.

Mr. Thielke said the \$15,000.00 used for Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions in FY 2014 was actually given to the Eastern Shore Business Plan Competition/Invest Maryland. He asked the notation be corrected from ESEC to Eastern Shore Business Plan Competition.

Mr. Warner told the Executive Committee that Ms. Davis' contract was up for renewal. Mr. Warner motioned to approve the extension of Ms. Davis' contract and an increase in salary. Mr. Pennington made the motion; Ms. Mason seconded and unanimously approved.

While the FY15 budget was under review by the Committee, Mr. McLoughlin asked the members to consider grant funding for the Maryland Rural Health Association's (MRHA's) annual conference. After discussing the matter, the Committee agreed to allocate \$10,000.00 for Conference Sponsorships. The Committee further agreed to provide MRHA with sponsorship monies for their annual meeting.

Chairman Warner motioned the FY15 Budget be approved with changes as discussed. Mr. Pennington motioned to approve, Ms. Mason seconded and the FY15 Budget was unanimously approved by the Committee.

Ms. Davis advised the Committee there has been an issue with the RMC staff having to put all business related expenses on their personal credit cards. The Maryland Department of Agriculture Fiscal Services policy does not allow a contract employee to carry a State of Maryland credit card. RMC asked the members of the Committee to approve the RMC obtaining its own credit card for business purchases. Mr. Pennington made a motion, Mr. McLoughlin seconded and the request was unanimously approved.

Legislative

Josh Hastings presented the Legislative Committee report. Fifty-six people attended the June 26 meeting. Mr. Greg Farley with Chesapeake College was the featured guest speaker. He spoke on renewable energy. There was extensive discussion about bio-energy. The Committee went on to discuss legislative priorities for the next Legislative Session. The members reviewed previous legislation that was supported by the RMC. Most members felt the Rural Maryland Prosperity Fund should be supported in the next session. The next meeting of the Legislative Committee will be September 4 at the Wye Research and Education Building in Queenstown. The guest speaker for the September 4 meeting will be Ann Jones with Partners for Open Space.

Mr. Rider mentioned he would like to see the RPS amended to include thermal energy.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)

Mr. Pennington told the Executive Committee we would like to prioritize the RMPIF in the next Legislative Session. Mr. Warner said the RMPIF message requires clarification. Our message must clearly show the link between funding RMPIF and health care, entrepreneurship, broadband and other issues in the rural counties.

Mr. Hastings and Ms. Davis will work to draft a one-sheet document of talking points on why the RMPIF should be funded.

Health Care Committee

Mr. Mcloughlin advised that the Health Committee has been inactive basically awaiting the recommendations from the MHCC Telemedicine Task Force which had resumed its activities last year. In view of the changes that have occurred, especially in DHMH, he believed it is important for RMC to strengthen its relationships with DHMH and MRHA as a necessary step in developing its Work Plan for next year.

Mr. Warner opened the floor for Executive Committee input on possible approaches that would be valuable for RMC to consider but would not duplicate work being addressed by other organizations and are consistent with our role as a collaborator.

The Committee discussed some options, including a recent communication from MRHA's Board Chair. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Warner, in his response, would reflect on the collaborative effort between the two organizations.

Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)

Ms. Davis said the MAERDAF Grant Review Board met on the July 28 to review fiscal year 2015 MAERDAF applications. The RMC received 54 applications requesting over \$1,000,000.00 in grant funding. The Grant Review Board will meet again this month to further review applications.

Ms. Davis told the Committee that the Assistant Attorney General for the Maryland Department of Agriculture suggested the RMC put MAERDAF under COMAR in terms of criteria, guidelines, and MAERDAF board membership. Ms. Davis asked for direction from the Executive Committee. Mr. Pennington made a motion to approve; Ms. Mason seconded and unanimously passed. Ms. Davis will draft regulations with the help of the Assistant Attorney General and will present a draft document at the next Executive Committee meeting. Based on an initial suggestion by Ms. Mason, Mr. Pennington suggested the RMC include a requirement to produce specific outcomes as part of the evaluation process.

Planning and Development Committee

Dan Rider, President of the Rural Maryland Foundation (RMF), presented for the Planning and Development Committee. The Planning and Development Committee is a joint committee with representatives from both the RMC and the RMF. The Rural Maryland Foundation was established to support and serve as a financial vehicle for the Council. During the July 31 meeting, the Planning and Development Committee members worked to jointly set priorities.

One of the ideas brought forward by Mike Thielke during this was to hold the RMF as a service provider for organizations that cannot apply for grants as a nonprofit. The RMF would take an administrative fee for this service.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Davis presented the Executive Director's Work Plan for the Rural Maryland Council for Fiscal Year 2015. She asked for members of the Executive Committee to provide their input. What are we missing? What are we too heavy on? Mr. Warner asked the members to review the Work Plan and be prepared to comment at the next Executive Committee meeting on October 31.

Ms. Davis asked the members of the Committee to review the FY 2015 Rural Maryland Council Board Committees and Working Committees and be prepared to discuss the nominations for chair of each committee at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Ms. Davis submitted an example of the 2011 Rural Maryland Council State of Maryland Department of Budget and Management Managing for Results (MFR) document for the Committee's consideration. Ms. Davis advised we are not currently submitting a MFR. She suggested the Rural Maryland Council should consider submitting this document in April and May of next year. Ms. Davis recommended to the Planning and Development Committee Chair that any new program ideas include performance and accountability measures. Ms. Mason suggested the RMC consider asking MAERDAF grant recipients be required to provide performance measures as part of their MAERDAF reporting.

Rural Maryland Foundation

Mr. Warner presented RMC Board Members Mike Thielke and Kurt Fuchs as appointees to the Rural Maryland Foundation. Mr. Pennington moved to nominate Mike Thielke and Kurt Fuchs. Mr. McLoughlin seconded; the motion was unanimous.

Mr. Warner reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Rural Maryland Council and the Rural Maryland Foundation. The wording in the second paragraph was corrected to read, "**The purpose** of this agreement is to support the RMC by ensuring that revenue generated by the RMC may be held and invested by the Foundation so that they are available, when needed, to support the work of the RMC." Mr. Pennington moved that the Rural Maryland Council accept the MOU as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLoughlin and unanimously approved. Mr. Warner requested the Committee's approval to sign the MOU once the correction is made and approved by the RMF Board. Mr. Pennington moved, Mr. McLoughlin seconded and unanimously approved.

Ms. Davis requested approval to create a website for the Rural Maryland Foundation. Ms. Davis said she would use GoDaddy to obtain the domain name and host the website. Mr. Warner requested a motion from the floor for the RMC to create and pay for a Rural Maryland Foundation website. Mr. McLoughlin motioned, Ms. Mason seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

Dan Rider suggested the Rural Maryland Foundation make application to be included in the Maryland Charity Campaign.

Executive Board Meeting Agenda for August 20, 2014 Meeting

Mr. Warner told the group Peter Franchot will be speaking between 12:15 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. Ms. Davis said there would be presentations by Stewart Bruce of Washington College, and Shirley Collier and Keith Gordon from Energetics Tech Fire Business Incubator Project. Mr. Ken Ulman and Mr. Larry Hogan will be invited to give a five-minute presentation. The timeline for the agenda was reviewed and approved.

The date for the Executive Board and Annual Meeting was set for November 13, 2014.

Nominating Committee

Mr. Warner and Ms. Davis would like to be able to present the slate of nominations at the October 31 Executive Committee meeting so they can be approved prior to presentation at the Executive Board meeting November 13. The Nominating Committee will reach out to those Executive Board members whose term expires at the end of the year to see if they want to continue for another term.

Youth Engagement Project

Ms. Mason told the members of the Committee that Craig Schroeder of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship (Center) is the consultant for the project. He will be conducting the study for us in Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties. Ms. Davis has been very involved in helping to implement the study.

The study will survey youth in grades six through 12 and will ask them what they would like to see in a livable community. We will be asking questions relative to social, political, economic and educational issues and aspirations. We currently have 19 questions that the Center has used in previous studies. However, we will be adding three to five additional questions. The Kent County Economic Commission already provided a question regarding broadband connectivity.

We have already engaged local champions from the Boards of Education, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, and Local Management Boards with a webinar outlining the process. The Center will conduct a web-based survey; we will then conduct youth focus groups and finally conduct town halls bringing adults and youth together.

Our hope is to come out of this with some action steps that will help with political planning, economic, and workforce development planning.

Adjournment

Mr. Warner asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Pennington moved, Mr. McLoughlin seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.