

## **Minutes**

Regular Meeting of the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Committee  
October 31, 2014 – 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.  
Town Dock Restaurant, 125 Mulberry Street, St. Michaels, 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  
RMC Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture Representative, Erroll Mattox  
RMC Executive Board Member, John Hartline  
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 12:15 pm.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the August 7, 2014 Executive Committee meeting were reviewed. Mr. McLoughlin made corrections under the Health Care Committee report. The members also corrected the title of the document to read Executive Committee vice Executive Board Meeting. Ms. Mason moved to approve the minutes as adopted; Mr. Pennington seconded; the minutes were adopted as amended.

The minutes of the RMC Executive Board Meeting of August 20, 2014, were reviewed and the Committee was invited to provide corrections prior to the next Executive Board Meeting scheduled for November 13, 2014.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Financial**

Ms. Davis presented the Fiscal Year 2015 Financials as of October 27, 2014. To date the RMC has \$262,585.00 in revenue, and has requested a budget amendment to spend the special fund carryover. That request is in process and the RMC should be able to spend that funding soon. To date RMC has spent \$51,498.81. Mr. McLoughlin moved to approve the financial report; Mr. Pennington seconded; the financial report was approved unanimously.

#### **Legislative**

Josh Hastings advised that 52 people attended at the Legislative Committee Meeting on September 4, 2014. The meeting's guest speaker was Ann Jones, Director for Partners for Open Space. The Legislative

Committee continued its discussion of potential bills for the 2015 Legislative Session. The next meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2014, location to be determined. The RMC staff should try to obtain meeting room space in Annapolis.

After Mr. Hastings' presentation, Mr. Warner introduced a document listing the members of various committees some of which are currently active, others that have yet to be reconvened.

### **Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)**

Mike Pennington said the "Will you Fund the Aspirations of Rural Maryland" handout was distributed to a number of people including the staff for the Brown/Ulman Campaign, the Hogan/Rutherford Campaign and the Executive Director of the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA).

Mr. Pennington said he would like to reconvene the RMPIF Committee a couple weeks after the election. He thought it might be advantageous to have the members of the RMPIF Committee participate in a joint meeting with the Legislative Committee.

### **Health Care Committee**

Mr. McLoughlin referred to the earlier discussion regarding Mr. Warner's letter to MRHA regarding continuing a cooperative relationship between our organizations. He asked Mr. Warner if he received a response from MRHA. Ms. Davis offered MRHA might have not had an opportunity to respond as they just had their annual meeting.

Mr. McLoughlin told the Executive Committee the Telehealth Task Force has released their report. The report addresses three aspects of telehealth: clinical, finance and technology. The clinical dealt with ten use cases, all of which are good. One of them ties in with where we left off with our own Health Care Committee.

Mr. McLoughlin would like to reconvene the Health Care Committee after the election.

### **Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)**

Ms. Davis told the Committee the MAERDAF Grant Review Board met on August 25, 2015. They awarded 17 organizations grants totaling \$170,000. We have processed all the grant agreements except for Crossroads Community, Inc., which came in late. We picked three grantees to highlight with press events: Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation, and the College of Southern Maryland. We hope to conduct those press events after the election, sometime in November or December.

Ms. Davis told the group there has been discussion with the MDA AG regarding COMAR regulations for MAERDAF. Potential topics for regulation include term limits for Grant Review Board appointees, a suggestion that priorities determined by the RMC Planning and Development Committee become the focus for grant applications considered, and a requirement for measurable deliverables.

### **Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA)**

Erroll Mattox told the Committee the last meeting of GICA had 40 individuals in attendance. There were a number of topics discussed including the need for regulation regarding agri-tourism. There is currently no definition for agri-tourism and it varies county by county. The Commission concluded there should be guidance to the counties to write regulations for agri-tourism.

Another topic of concern was food sampling at farmer's markets. Legislation has passed to allow it, but not all counties have implemented it.

There was a presentation from the Department of Labor regarding H-2A worker housing issues. H-2A housing involves temporary housing of farm workers. In one example, there was a project discussed where someone was going to put up a metal building, a Martin building, and the county fire marshal required a sprinkler system installed. This requirement added to the expense of the project. In another example, a winery wanted to put in a pressing room. Although there would only be two workers, the county told them they had to put in handicapped accessible bathroom facilities. Again, regulation varies county to county.

Mr. Mattox concluded most issues discussed at the Commission meeting were not issues that occur at the State level, but at the county level. It may be there should be more outreach to the counties.

John Hartline of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland observed a number of these issues have been addressed by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). It might be worthwhile for Dr. Christine Bergmark of SMADC to make a presentation at a quarterly meeting or for the RMC to host a meeting of the Regional Councils to discuss how the Councils can share these issues within the counties. Mr. Mattox suggested another possible presenter might be Lisa Staley of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene who might address food sampling at farmer's markets discussing COMAR regulations.

### **Joint Planning and Development Committee**

Mike Thielke reported that the Joint Planning and Development Committee has been meeting every six weeks. The last meeting was September 11, 2014. The Committee has fundamentally developed a draft work plan for the next three years, 2015 through 2017, and plans to present the work plan during the annual meeting next month. The priority issues identified by the Committee include broadband, agriculture, youth, energy, workforce and economic development, and health. The Committee has come up with activities/programs/initiatives to present at the annual meeting.

A suggestion was made for the Committee to take the proposed work plan to some of the tri-county areas. During a two-hour roundtable we would invite members of the RMC and the public to comment and help refine the work plan so that it not just the work of the Committee, but truly represents what the issues of priority are for all of rural Maryland. We would attempt to hold these meetings prior to the legislative session so that when speaking to legislators whether it is the members of the Executive Committee or Legislative Committee there would be credibility when we say these are truly rural

Maryland's priority issues in support of the RMPiF. These roundtables might be a vehicle to premier the Aspire video. Ms. Mason and Mr. Mattox expressed an interest in participating in these roundtables. Mr. Warner suggested the RMC engage Western Maryland through the broadband priority. Mr. Hartline said he really liked the idea of the roundtables. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has the Workforce Investment Board and would send directors to participate in the roundtables.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Charlotte Davis presented the Executive Director's Activity Report. The report described all the activities the RMC has conducted or participated in for the period August through October 2014. The RMC exhibited at the MACo Summer Conference. Ms. Davis attended the Partners for Rural America Annual Meeting in Wyoming. She participates in meetings of the Sustainable Growth Commission and is a member of the Awards Committee. She has been busy organizing meetings of the various RMC committees, acting as administrator of the FY15 MAERDAF Grant process reviewing applications, conducting Grant Review Board Meetings, processing grant distribution and engaging local media to promote the grant. Ms. Davis has also been busy initiating and managing the youth engagement project in the Upper Shore region conducting conference calls, developing contact lists, drafting correspondence, scheduling meeting venues.

Ms. Davis presented her draft work plan for the RMC for fiscal year 2015. There was some discussion as to how the Joint Planning and Development Committee work plan might be reconciled to the RMC Work Plan. The group agreed the Joint Planning and Development Committee would make recommendations for RMC Work Plan consideration. Mr. McLoughlin requested changes to the Healthcare Committee timeline.

Ms. Davis presented a draft of FY 2015 Rural Maryland Council Board Committees and Working Committees. The group should review these documents and contact Ms. Davis with suggestions.

The 2015 RMC Calendar was reviewed. The group decided to move RMC's Legislative Advocacy Day to February 19, 2015. Ms. Davis asked the group for possible dates for a Rural Summit in fall 2015.

### **Executive Board Meeting Agenda for November 13, 2014 Meeting**

Mr. Warner asked the group to review the agenda. Ms. Mason said several rural partners have expressed an interest in hearing from Verizon. Tabb Bishop, Vice President - State Government Affairs, would be happy to speak at our meeting. Ms. Davis said Lori Stone, Maryland FirstNet Broadband Coordinator for the Statewide Interoperability Program Management Office also expressed an interest in addressing our board. A decision was made to invite both Mr. Bishop and Ms. Stone to speak at the annual meeting along with Dr. Bill McGowan, State Director for USDA Rural Development.

### **Nominating Committee**

Mike Pennington said Ms. Davis has been working to reach out to all the organizations that have representation on the Executive Board. Some organizations seem to be waiting until the November election before they designate representatives. The Nominating Committee has been working on a slate

of officers, but since multiple individuals have expressed an interest, we will have open nominations from the floor. We will publicize the open nomination format prior to the annual meeting.

Ms. Mason said the RMC has historically presented a slate of nominations and we should continue that practice. There was some discussion and the group decided the slate should be put forth at the annual meeting with Scott Warner as Chair, Doris Mason as First Vice Chair and Josh Hastings presented as Second Vice Chair in place of Thomas McLoughlin leaving Mr. McLoughlin to concentrate on the Health Care Committee. Ms. Mason moved to approve the slate for presentation to the Executive Board at the Annual Meeting; Mr. McLoughlin seconded; the slate was unanimously accepted.

### **Youth Engagement Project**

Doris Mason said we have done some wonderful things in the last few months with our partner, Craig Schroeder of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. We have conducted two webinars with the community champions. We have engaged the school superintendents of all three counties, Dr. Williamson, Dr. D'Ette Devine, and Dr. Karen Couch. We have had individual conversations with them as well as identified key members on their teams who have helped to facilitate the survey. We identified a representative sample group in Cecil and Queen Anne's Counties due to the size of those school systems. We have finished the electronic portion of the survey.

Starting the week of November 17, we will move to the second phase of the survey. We will conduct youth focus groups in each of the counties. In the final phase of the survey, we will hold town hall meetings on December 8, 9 and 10 where we engage young people as well as key stakeholders in each of the counties. Out of these meetings will come some strategies to address what we have learned in the survey, focus groups and town hall meetings. We will also create a geo dashboard of the results so we can share those results with everyone in the community. We would like to use Washington College to complete the dashboard because of their proximity to the Upper Shore. The Upper Shore Regional Council applied for and received a grant from the Verizon Foundation to help complete the dashboard.

### **Rural Maryland Foundation**

Dan Rider reported the Foundation has completed an update of their Bylaws.

There is a proposal to ask all Trustees of the Foundation Board and members of RMC's Executive Board to donate to the organization. Ms. Davis has drafted a letter to members of each organization to make this request. We will announce this proposal at the annual meeting.

The Foundation is underwriting the cost of production of the Aspire Maryland video.

Mr. Rider expressed thanks to all those who have contributed their time and energy in reinvigorating the Foundation. The Foundation will have their annual meeting at 10:30 a.m. on November 13, in the Neall Conference Room of the James Senate Building in Annapolis.

### **Adjournment**

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Mr. Pennington moved to adjourn; Mr. McLoughlin seconded; motion passed. The meeting adjourned 2:55 p.m.

The next RMC Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. at Annie's Paramount Steak and Seafood House, 500 Kent Narrow Way North, Grasonville, MD 21638