

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Board

Friday, April 10, 12:00 Noon to 2:00 p.m.

President's Conference Center West, Miller Senate Building

Annapolis, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Participants:

Peggy Alpert	Alicia Moran
Bill Barnes	Damiana Murphy
Richard C Blair	Temi Oshiyoye
Marilynn Bland	Gail Owings
Beth Brewster	Kate Patton
Betty Carlson-Jameson	Wendi Peters
Charlie Cawley	David Pruitt
Michelle Clark	Kristin Ramseur
Cynthia DuRant	Joanne Richart-Young
Nancy Easterling	Daniel Rider
Peter Ettinger	Bernie Sadusky
Colby Ferguson	Dorotheann Sadusky
Dean Fisher	Alice Settle-Raskin
Loretta Gaffney	Angela Spencer
Neil Gaffney	Ron Studds
Councilwoman Lisa Hall	Jeff Trice
Craig Hartsock	Fitzhugh Turner
Ron Hawkins	Sara Visintainer
Rick Hemphill	Roseanna Vogt
Royce Herman	Carol West
Kimberly Kratovil	Councilwoman Jennifer Williams
Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood	Dave Wilson
Loretta Lodge	Dr. Stephen Wright
Dr. William McGowan	Dr. Lih Young
Stephen McHenry	
Representative from Senator Montgomery' office	

RMC Chair, Scott Warner

RMC First Vice-Chair, Doris Mason

RMC Second Vice-Chair and Legislative Committee Chair, Josh Hastings

RMC Immediate Past Chair, Michael Pennington

RMC Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture Representative, Erroll Mattox

RMC Executive Director, Charlotte Davis

RMC Administrative and Communications Assistant, Kathy Vernacchio

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30pm.

Chairman Warner asked our Second Vice-Chair, Josh Hastings, to provide the welcome. Second Vice-Chair Hastings thanked Senator Addie Eckardt for sponsoring our use of the President's Conference Center West. He recognized various elected officials who were present including Florence Nelson, Chief of Staff for Senator Eckardt; Dorotheann Sadusky, Chief of Staff for Senator James Mathias' office; representatives from Senator Montgomery's office; Dr. William McGowan, State Director of U.S.D.A. Rural Development; Kim Kratovil representing U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin, and Jennifer Williams of the Talbot County Council.

Chairman Warner recognized Charlie Cawley of the Maryland Department of Agriculture in the audience and asked him to say a few words. Mr. Cawley spoke in support of the efforts of Charlotte Davis and the RMC. He also recognized the efforts of Senator Eckardt and the Mid Shore Regional Council in advocating for the interests of Caroline County and the Eastern Shore, and spoke of the importance of the rural areas of the State.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Warner reviewed the minutes of the January 30, 2015 Executive Board Meeting. The Chair asked if there were any questions on the content, comments, or corrections. With no modifications noted there was a request for motion to accept. Josh Hastings moved to accept, Erroll Mattox seconded and the minutes were accepted as submitted.

The Chair recognized the arrival of Wilbur Levengood, Commissioner of Caroline County who is also a member of the RMC Legislative Committee. He then asked RMC Executive Director, Charlotte Davis, to provide the financial report.

Committee Reports

Financial

For fiscal year 2015, the RMC received \$262,586.00 in revenue, and to date has spent \$156,378.48. The RMC is on target for spending. Ms. Davis asked if there were any questions. There being no questions, the Chair requested a motion to accept. Doris Mason moved to accept the financials as presented, Steve McHenry seconded; the financials were accepted unanimously.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)

Mike Pennington took the floor to provide a report on RMPIF. He also recognized Lisa Hall from the Berlin Town Council.

The Council is working with the Administration to get funding for RMPIF included in a supplemental budget. Mr. Pennington thanked the local elected officials, senators and delegates who participated in a letter writing campaign to ask the governor fund RMPIF in the supplemental budget.

Legislative

The Legislative Committee Chair Josh Hastings thanked Charlotte Davis, the members of the RMC Executive Committee as well as the members of the Legislative Committee for all their efforts during this Legislative Session. He recognized Commissioner Levengood, John McQuaid, Steve McHenry, Matt Tefteau, Senator Eckardt, Joann Richart Young, Michelle Clark of MRHA, Martha Sparks, Kurt Fuchs, and others for all their hard work keeping track of legislation and advocating for rural.

On January 30, 2015, we held a Welcome Breakfast for Rural Legislators. On February 19, RMC members met with approximately 22 legislators from across Maryland during RMC Rural Advocacy Day, a day of education and discussion about issues important to rural.

The Committee tracked approximately 110 bills during session. We obtained letters of support and gave testimony. We supported Delegate Beitzel's economic development bill, HB1089; Senator Manno's manufacturing bill, Maryland Strong; Delegate Stein's thermal energy bill, and transportation bills. We advocated for level funding of MARBIDCO and the regional councils.

The Committee has had discussions on broadband, the wind turbine situation, renewable energy, and other topics. We hope to have meaningful discussions prior to the next legislative session. We invite additional members to participate on the Legislative Committee. Please contact Charlotte Davis or Josh Hastings if you are interested.

RMC/RMF Joint Planning and Development Committee

The next meeting of this Committee is April 16, 2015. The Committee intends to provide recommendations on objectives and scope of work for both the RMC and the RMF. They will be presenting these recommendations to the RMC Executive Board and the RMF Board of Trustees for their consideration.

Health Care Committee

Letters of invitation were sent. Our first meeting was held on March 25, 2015. We reviewed the Committee's previous focus on behavioral health and discussed the Maryland Health Care Commission's Telemedicine Task Force recommendations. Committee members agreed to review the telehealth use cases included in the Task Force recommendations and submit two issues for Committee consideration. The committee chair and staff will review these recommendations and collate them for presentation to the committee.

The Chair applied for and received a scholarship to attend the Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center's telehealth summit in West Virginia to gather information on current trends in the field, particularly as it relates to nurse practitioners and behavioral health.

Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA)

Erroll Mattox said he had nothing new to report as the Commission only meets twice yearly.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee works to identify new members. Committee Chair Mike Pennington introduced Mr. Ronald Studds, one of two nominees presented to the Board. Mr. Studds, an Environmental Manager with PEPCO Holdings, has been with PEPCO Holdings for 33 years. A request for motion to approve membership for both Mr. Ronald Studds and Ms. Vanessa Finney was made. Lisa Hall made the motion, Daniel Rider seconded, the motion was carried unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Charlotte Davis provided the Executive Director's Report. In addition to committee work done by the RMC, we are planning an annual conference. Our conference will be in December. We just sent out a call for speakers. If anyone has ideas for agenda items, a keynote speaker or if you are interested in presenting before the group, we would appreciate your input. If you would like to participate on the conference planning committee, we meet via conference call and welcome your participation.

The RMC just wrapped up a series of information sessions in partnership with Volunteer Maryland. Volunteer Maryland administers the Americorp program providing volunteer coordinators for nonprofit organizations while the RMC provides funding to rural nonprofits through the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund.

The RMC is also partnering with Community Development Network (CD Network), Maryland's statewide community development association. We are sponsoring regional meetings to help organize community development organizations throughout the state. We have met twice in Southern Maryland, once in Western Maryland, and on May 6 there will be a meeting in Cambridge on the Eastern Shore.

Board member Angela Spencer asked for more information on the volunteer coordinator. Ms. Davis said Volunteer Maryland is a program through the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism. It is a federally administered program. Coordinators receive a stipend of approximately \$13,000.00 a year with an educational award bonus at the end of their 10-month commitment. They receive training while acting as a volunteer. The focus of a volunteer coordinator is on direct service. The organization that receives a volunteer coordinator is expected to provide a cash match toward the stipend.

Rural Maryland Foundation (RMF)

Foundation President Dan Rider reported on the Board fundraising campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to attain 100% participation from the RMC Executive Board and the RMF Board of Trustees so the organizations can confidently and credibly apply to private philanthropic organizations for funding. The suggested donation is \$100.00, however, we understand not everyone may be able to make that kind of commitment. One-hundred percent participation is important so please make a contribution.

The Foundation provided funding for the "Aspire" video. Its intent is to raise people's awareness regarding rural Maryland. We hope to use the video to engage individuals, to promote interest in the RMC and rural Maryland. Mr. Rider encouraged all members to share the video to promote the RMC.

He also asked that members contact us if they have suggestions for additional avenues whereby the RMC might promote the video.

Guest Speaker – Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford

First Vice-Chair Doris Mason introduced the RMC guest speaker, Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford.

Lt. Governor Rutherford said rural Maryland has advocates in the Administration. We need to make sure services are delivered equally and fairly to all jurisdictions. In many parts of the State, particularly in rural areas, counties are dealing with unemployment rates higher than the national average. Some rural counties have unemployment rates higher than the State average. We have to make sure businesses can thrive in many areas of the State. In the near future, you will hear more about regulatory reform. Many Maryland regulations are burdensome and encourage entrepreneurs and businesses to move out of state.

Lt. Governor Rutherford reviewed actions of the Administration since inauguration on January 21, 2015. The Administration presented a structurally sound budget for the Legislature's review. The budget calls for the lowest growth in decades. They submitted a legislative package that addresses many of the concerns voiced by voters on the campaign trail including elimination of the rain tax, reducing taxes on retirees, and repealing the automatic increase of the gas tax. The Administration presented initiatives to improve the education process through our public charter schools, tax credits for low-income individuals who want to attend private schools, and to address the current crisis of heroin addiction.

There was discussion among the Lt. Governor and members of the assembly regarding education in Maryland. Additional discussion surrounded the Administration's efforts regarding heroin addiction in Maryland.

Youth Engagement Project

First Vice-Chair Doris Mason provided an in depth demonstration of the Youth Dashboard produced by the Upper Shore Regional Council as a result of the Youth Assessment and Regional Planning Initiative conducted in partnership with the Rural Maryland Council. The Youth Assessment and Regional Planning Dashboard is a collaborative needs assessment survey of over 2,500 students from Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties. The survey was conducted in order to gain insight into local communities in order to plan for better community development relative to youth retention.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m. through a motion made by Mike Pennington, seconded by Erroll Mattox.

Next Executive Board Meeting is Friday, September 25, 2015, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway in Annapolis, Maryland 21401