

*Rural Maryland Council
Executive Committee Meeting*

March 14, 2014

Harry Browne's Restaurant
66 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Minutes

Executive Committee Members Present:

Mr. W. Scott Warner, Chair; Ms. Doris Mason, First Vice Chair; Mr. Thomas McLoughlin, Second Vice Chair; Mr. Michael P. Pennington, Immediate Past Chair; Mr. Joshua Hastings, Representing District 5 - Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties; Mr. John Hartline, Representing Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

Staff Present: Ms. Charlotte L. Davis, Executive Director; Kathleen Vernacchio, Administrative Assistant, Rural Maryland Council

Opening Comments

Mr. Scott Warner welcomed Josh Hastings and John Hartline to the Executive Committee Meeting saying the Executive Committee Meeting is open to members of the Board. He gave a brief synopsis of the history of the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) and described how the RMC works in conjunction with the regional councils.

Call to Order

Mr. Warner called the meeting to order at 11:53 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Warner called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2014 meeting. Mr. McLoughlin moved that the minutes be approved, Mr. Pennington seconded and the motion was unanimously passed by the Committee.

Mr. Warner brought up the January 24, 2014 minutes of the Executive Board Meeting for review and offered that members of the Executive Committee did not have the responsibility approve these minutes, but suggested the Executive Committee members should review the minutes and let Ms. Davis know if there are any corrections.

Financial Reports

Mr. Warner and Ms. Davis reviewed the financial report with the members of the Executive Committee. Ms. Davis reported the RMC has \$100,000.00 to use or lose. Mr. Warner recommended a portion of these funds be considered to fund a youth assessment study; the approximate cost would be \$45,000.00. Ms. Mason suggested we might use these funds for additional MAERDAF grant awards. Ms. Davis advised the RMC would need a budget amendment to spend these funds in that manner and would require approval from the Executive Committee. Using the funds for MAERDAF was not seen as plausible since we would have to justify how we distributed these additional funds.

Mr. Warner moved to accept the financials as presented. Mike Pennington seconded the motion and the Committee unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

Mr. Warner introduced the next agenda item Committee Reports. He asked Charlotte Davis to present the Financial Report to the Executive Committee. Ms. Davis advised the Committee the RMC for FY14 has \$303,357.22 in revenue available and has spent \$131,767.60. The figures quoted are for the period July 1, 2013 through March 12, 2014, which is fiscal year 2014.

The revenue reflects a special carryover of approximately \$100,000.00 from the InvestMaryland Funding. Ms. Davis suggested the Executive Committee has to think about what the RMC should do with these funds. The funds were included in the DLS report to the budget committees advising them we have this money to spend. Ms. Davis suggested these funds may be used for the Youth Assessment Proposal. She advised the Committee that she did include these funds in the FY15 budget, however, she recommended we not carryover the full amount. Mr. Warner commented if the RMC were to sponsor the Youth Assessment Proposal, a large amount, approximately 45 percent, of these carried over funds would be spent.

Ms. Doris Mason asked if the \$100,000 carryover could be used to augment some of the MAERDAF grants that we did not fund in the past. Ms. Davis stated we could use these funds for Rural Prosperity and suggested that either option would have to be passed by the full Board. Ms. Mason asked if there had been MAERDAF projects that the committee wanted to fund, but could not. The Executive Committee members decided there would not be enough time left in this fiscal year to have another round of MAERDAF applicants for fiscal year 2014.

Mr. Warner then asked for a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented by Ms. Davis. Mr. McLoughlin made the motion, the motion was seconded by Mr. Pennington, and the Financials were unanimously accepted by the Executive Committee.

Youth Proposal

Mr. Warner asked Ms. Davis to present a brief synopsis of the Youth Proposal. Ms. Davis provided background saying members of the RMC had attended a presentation by Craig Schroeder from the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship (CRE) while at the Rural Action Assembly. Mr. Schroeder had talked

about some of the community outreach the Center had done to identify facilities and services that youth would want that would keep them in rural areas.

Mr. Schroeder originally gave the RMC a proposal for a three county area. Ms. Davis asked for detailed information regarding the process: how many communities, what is the goal, what would our targets be, how many students, etc. She received an updated, statewide proposal. Ms. Davis recommended a pilot in a particular area; pilot it in one fiscal year and spread it out over another fiscal year.

Doris Mason mentioned a while back through various forums the economic development commissions (EDC) had conducted studies. There were three different studies done: in Kent County Anirban Basu did a brief study for the Chamber; in Cecil County he did a full blown workforce study, and in Queen Anne's County Memo Diriker did a community based survey for the EDC. The common thread to all these studies was the fact that each county has some youth retention issues. The populations are aging out which impact the workforce and affect the ability to provide some basic services such as emergency services, especially in Kent, which was the most drastic. Cecil was also having an issue and Anirban Basu was talking about future gaps in the workforce if the outflow of young people from the region is not addressed.

In response to these studies, Ms. Mason and the Upper Shore Regional Council formulated a proposal and approached the Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) to fund a youth survey. DBED did not want to fund it. The Upper Shore approached Washington College; there was further discussion about funding and the end result was the Upper Shore was referred to Craig Schroeder and the RMC. Ms. Mason offered the Upper Shore to be the subject of the pilot program because this subject was already an issue for the Upper Shore. Mr. Warner said he would have no problem using the Upper Shore as the pilot.

Tom McLoughlin questioned what is the role of the RMC in this process. He said he sees this will work with and benefit youth, and engages the school administration. Are we are giving another grant? Are we promoting this youth study? If we are promoting it, then what does that mean to the RMC? What is the outcome the RMC expecting from this study?

Ms. Mason said the Upper Shore was hoping to come out of the study with some concrete insights as to what young people would like to see in a livable community, what kind of spaces are they interested in, what kind of other types of social outlets and resources, their workforce needs and desires. Additionally, the Upper Shore was hoping to provide a listening forum so that the young people in the region know that someone is hearing what they are saying and that there are going to be opportunities for them to get involved with that planning over time. The Upper Shore is also hoping that whoever does this study would recommend strategies for engaging youth in planning and development for the future. We would provide those outcomes to people who would be able to make use of them like economic development directors, county directors and nonprofits; share this information with all those who are going to be engaged.

Mr. McLoughlin suggested that makes the RMC the advocate for the study, which means the RMC has the responsibility for assembling the study. We become the focal point for this movement.

Mr. Warner suggested we would take the results of this study and hand it over to the counties. In this scenario, the RMC is able to take resources not available to the counties individually and provide the support to make this happen. We are providing a resource that does not have any connections to the area and, therefore, does not have any preconceived ideas. If we find this has merit, then we can replicated the study in other areas of the State. The RMC and the USRC will act as a conduit between the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and the schools. People in our counties and region can use this information in their strategic plans.

Ms. Davis stated RMC's role in this is providing the youth champions and introductions to Craig Schroeder and the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. We have to identify the people who will be youth champions and help facilitate the youth assessment, then CRE will do the webinars, the survey, the focus group, the town halls. They will then issue the report. We will then promote the results of the survey.

Mr. Warner suggested Ms. Davis ask Mr. Schroeder to provide a sample, a final plan/report that the Center completed for another group. Mr. McLoughlin is interested in finding out the role of the sponsor other than funding. Ms. Davis advised the RMC would be the entity to contact and identify the people who could make that ask of the school administrators, the superintendents, to facilitate the Center's work.

Based on all these considerations, Mr. Warner would like to have additional questions answered:

- How will the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship use the schools? What is he looking for?
- What does CRE need from the RMC?
- What do they need from the region that will be acting as the pilot?
- Can the Center provide some references?
- Are they engaging students across the board: high achievers as well as the tech schools?
- Are they doing anything else more community based, not just the schools?
- When would the Center want to start?

Mr. Warner also asked Ms. Davis to check with Charlie Cawley about encumbering funds for next school year. Ms. Davis said she had already discussed this with Mr. Cawley. Mr. Cawley would like to encumber funds for no more than 60 days and would like a payment schedule from the vendor.

Mr. McLoughlin would like a scope of work and a payment schedule. He asked if this project would require approval from the Executive Board. Ms. Davis said that would be ratification would be required. Mr. Warner suggested we add it to the agenda for the next Executive Board Meeting scheduled for March 28, 2014.

Event Sponsorships

Ms. Davis advised when the Foundation met last week they agreed to co-sponsor both Maryland Association of Counties Summer Conference (MACo) and Maryland Municipal League Summer

Conference (MML). Last year we co-sponsored a booth at both MACo and MML. MACo is August 13 through 16, 2014, and MML is June 8 through 11, 2014. The Foundation agreed to split the cost this year; the booth fee is \$600 for each. For this fee, MACo provides us with five badges; with MML we only receive two or three badges.

Ms. Davis said we have the summer for grassroots outreach. RMC has already signed up to participate in the Chicken Festival, which was a \$300.00 fee. She asked the Committee if there are other grassroots events we should be participating in, for example county fairs.

Josh Hastings suggested the Tawes Clam Bake. Mike Pennington asked if the RMC would just participate or we wanted to be a sponsor. Ms. Davis suggested this would be a perfect item for a Planning and Development Committee handle. Ms. Mason suggested the Chestertown Tea Party Festival.

Ms. Davis advised she has done some nonprofit outreach with Volunteer Maryland and wanted to be sure we were not missing opportunities for grassroots outreach.

Scott Warner and Mike Pennington mentioned Salisbury University sent out a notice they received a grant to do entrepreneurship activities. They have a contest coming up where they are going to award prizes to students for entrepreneurship. They are looking for sponsors to offset the cost; sponsorships start at \$250.00. The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center is already acting as a sponsor. Mike Thielke did a combination of in kind and cash sponsorship. Mr. Pennington suggested it might be a good sponsorship activity for the RMC.

Legislative Committee

Mr. Warner introduced the status of Senate Bill 137 and House Bill 1024; both bills extend of the sundown date for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). They were unanimous coming out of the House. The sponsors of the Senate Bill were Senator Conway and Senator Mac Middleton. We went to Maggie McIntosh and asked her to sponsor the bill as well; both bills crossed over. Senate Bill 137 has a hearing on Wednesday.

Ms. Davis asked if we want to try to attach a mandatory appropriation amendment to the House Bill while in Committee. Mr. Warner suggested it might be best to get the Bill passed and work to get funds later. Ms. Davis suggested there might be supplemental appropriations.

House Bill 1492, Telecommunications Tax Bill – Ms. Davis advised it got out of Rules and has a hearing scheduled for the 25th. The RMC was asked to support it, although it is not expected to pass. We can express our support for the Bill through our interest in supporting rural broadband. The Bill will cover a broader spectrum of services: cable, satellite, VoIP. Some of the resulting revenue would go to the General Fund, but a portion would go to the Rural Broadband Assistance Fund.

Health Care Committee

Mr. McLoughlin reported the status of activities of the Health Care Committee. The RMC had initially considered sponsoring a Telemedicine Roundtable. However, with the Governor reinvigorating the Telemedicine Task Force, the Health Care Committee decided to shelve the idea of a Telemedicine Roundtable.

Mr. McLoughlin suggested it is important for the Health Care Committee and the RMC to be informed to what is going on in the health community. He and Ms. Davis have talked about reconvening the Health Care Committee, but to do that we need to be in a situation where we have worthwhile topics to discuss. Mr. McLoughlin invited the members of the Executive Committee to provide their thoughts. The underlying economic engine cannot be ignored. There are two points to consider, the needs of health care and the vital economic component that deals with community survival.

Mr. Warner said he felt the RMC needs to have a health care component, but wondered what outcome is the RMC is hoping to achieve. Mr. McLoughlin said right now no one is keeping health care in the limelight. One of the components of our mission is keeping a focus on health care. He hopes that with that RMC would be looked at as a resource for information and as an agency that should have a place at the table when issues arise.

Mr. Warner asked what would be the next step. Mr. McLoughlin suggested it might be worthwhile to have speakers address the subject at our Executive Board meetings, or a forum on the status of health care as it relates to Maryland residents, especially with regard to the health care exchanges.

Ms. Davis suggested we might want to wait until RMPIF bill passes. It would have a health care component. Possible partners to engage include nonprofits, government entities, local health coalitions, the Maryland Area Health Education Centers. We might convene the Health Care Committee around the RMPIF.

Mike Pennington suggested the RMC Health Care Committee would have to have a broad coalition as health care affects both rural and urban areas. Mr. McLoughlin agreed and suggested we should look for an economic development component to bring to the table.

Mr. Warner directed the members of the Executive Committee reach out to urban components that would have an interest in health care issues.

MAERDAF

Ms. Davis suggested it might be appropriate to provide the Committee with the report on the FY14 MAERDAF grants since that was the topic of the current discussion.

The interim reports from the nine FY14 MAERDAF recipients were due on February 17. The RMC received everyone's report. The RMC did send out an additional \$10,000.00 to one project. The RMC has an additional \$10,000.00 to distribute, but cannot do so until there is a budget amendment. Ms. Davis asked the Maryland Department of Agriculture Fiscal Services to process that budget amendment. When this is completed, the RMC will have spent \$187,000.00 on MAERDAF grants.

Ms. Mason asked if the RMC was satisfied with the interim reports received. Ms. Davis said some reports demonstrated measurable results while others were still in the implementation stage due to the timing of the project.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Warner has received Ms. Davis' input to the Executive Director's Annual Review. Mr. Warner will review the document then provide it to the Executive Committee. He will provide Ms. Davis with a final product in April. He offered that everyone seems very happy with Ms. Davis' in accomplishing.

March 28, 2014 Executive Board Meeting Agenda

Ms. Davis reviewed the draft agenda with the Executive Committee.

Rural Maryland Foundation

Scott Warner gave an update on the activities of the Rural Maryland Foundation (RMF). The RMF had a meeting on March 5; it was the first meeting in approximately four or five years. Ms. Davis told the Committee that the Foundation elected Dan Rider as the acting president and the Board is in the process of repopulating the Board of Trustees as they have a number of vacancies. They are looking at their Bylaws and processes, and hope to have a new Board in place in time for the RMC's annual meeting.

The Foundation received a financial report from the Treasurer. Ms. Davis was happy to report the Treasurer is active and engaged.

Ms. Davis introduced the concept of a Transfer of Wealth Study. There is a perception that as people pass on, because their heirs are often living in suburban or urban areas, their wealth is leaving rural communities. If we can map out where the wealth is, we can document whether this perception is accurate and reach out to local community foundations to keep those assets in rural areas, but first we need the data to support. To further this concept Ms. Davis obtained a consultant proposal to do this work. She also wrote a technical assistance grant and submitted it to the Department of Housing and Community Development. We have made a \$50,000.00 request. The Foundation offered to put up \$10,000.00; the RMC would be asked to put up money if necessary. The list of grant recipients will be announced in May.

Committee Development

Ms. Davis told the members of the Executive Committee that our Bylaws allow for a Planning and Development Committee. A number of the topics currently being discussed in the Executive Committee

meetings should be discussed and vetted in a Planning and Development Committee. Ms. Davis asked the members to suggest a chair for this committee.

Mr. Warner suggested maybe past chairs and others might chair or populate this committee.

Ms. Mason suggested we go out to the Executive Board membership at large and ask if anyone is interested in participating in any of our committees. Ms. Davis said she would add that to the upcoming Executive Board Meeting agenda.

Volunteer Maryland

Mr. Warner asked Ms. Davis to give brief synopsis on Volunteer Maryland/RMC information sessions. Ms. Davis explained Volunteer Maryland is in the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. Volunteer Maryland runs the Americorp program. If you are a nonprofit with a volunteer requirement, they will provide you with a volunteer coordinator. Therefore, if you have a service delivery program that relies on volunteers, they will put in place a paid person that recruits, retains, and trains volunteers. Volunteer Maryland came to her and said it seems we are trying to reach out to the same population. They suggested we collaborate with them so we did six or seven information sessions around the state. Ms. Davis did a 20-minute presentation on the RMC and MAERDAF, and Volunteer Maryland did a 20 to 30-minute presentation on what they had to offer. We had six or seven nonprofits per session; the attendance was actually better in the rural areas. We made some good connections for MAERDAF. They went well and were not much of a time commitment. Volunteer Maryland felt it went well for them as well and they hope to partner again.

Annual Conference

Mr. Warner asked what plans are being considered for our annual meeting. The consensus was the RMC should plan a small annual meeting this year. We could look to next year to consider partnering with MRHA again.

New Business

Scott Warner suggested we consider updating our Rural Maryland Council display and directed Ms. Davis to look into the cost.

Mr. Warner said the next Executive Board meeting is not scheduled until August. He said we have to have a Board meeting to approve the budget. Mr. McLoughlin suggested we get the Executive Board to give the Executive Committee authority to approve the budget. He also suggested the possibility of submitting the budget to the Executive Board for an electronic vote. Mr. Warner moved to have this presented to the Executive Board at our next meeting. Mr. Pennington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

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Adjournment and Scheduling of Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned approximately 2:31 p.m.