

RMC Executive Committee Meeting
May 29, 2014
Via Conference Call
Minutes

Participants:

RMC Chair, Scott Warner
RMC First Vice Chair, Doris Mason
RMC Immediate Past Chair, Mike Pennington
RMC Executive Director, Charlotte Davis
RMC Administrative and Communications Assistant, Kathy Vernacchio
Mike Thielke, Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center
Craig Schroeder, Center for Entrepreneurship Center

The meeting convened at approximately 3:30 pm.

Ms. Davis gave a brief introduction of the purpose of the meeting. The RMC has been discussing a youth engagement proposal by the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship to discuss youth retention strategies in rural areas.

Mr. Schroeder gave an overview of the project and the agreement. The project would consist of conducting a web-based survey of middle and high school students in a targeted area. After compiling the results, the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship will conduct three focus groups of students to flesh out perceptions and ideas. After the focus groups, the Center will complete an assessment of community assets and needs and compile a report to present to the full Council. The RMC and the Center will then conduct a regional town hall with the students, community leaders and elected officials to discuss the results.

Ms. Mason asked Mr. Schroeder to discuss the survey in more detail. Mr. Schroeder stated that his organization has done 40,000 individual surveys across the country. The Center has compiled 15 baseline questions. The Center monitors the responses across the grade levels. They have seen an 80% participation rate typically. They will provide tabulated results, contrasts and narratives.

Mr. Warner asked about the Center's investment in the project. The Center will complete two trips to rural Maryland; one trip to conduct the asset mapping and focus groups and one for the regional town hall. The Center will conduct an introductory webinar with local community champions and a second webinar to present the results to the full Council. The Center will also compile a full report to present to the Council.

Mr. Thielke asked if the mapping activity could be structured to build internal capacity to help adopt the project statewide. Mr. Schroeder responded that the Center can develop the project using a train-the-trainer model and include the RMC and host region in all activities.

Mr. Warner asked what resources the Center would need to complete the project. Mr. Schroeder indicated that he needs the Council to identify local champions that will help contact local school administrators and identify faculty members to help facilitate the survey.

Mr. Thielke asked if private schools would be included. Mr. Schroeder responded that they absolutely could be included.

Mr. Thielke asked which grades would be surveyed. Mr. Schroeder stated that he would prefer grades under juniors and seniors since they are already preparing to leave the community. If the seniors have not been engaged previously, they tend to have a more negative perspective.

Mr. Thielke asked about a revised timeline. Mr. Schroeder indicated that the project could begin in the Fall. The Center would prefer the Fall since students and administrators are fresh in the beginning of the school year. The Center and Council can also spend the summer on initial planning.

There was a discussion on the asset mapping component. Mr. Schroeder stated there would be three components to the asset mapping: economic opportunities; career development, and youth leadership. Mr. Warner suggested the project include the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative to develop a dash board application.

There was a discussion on which jurisdiction to conduct the study. Consensus was to limit the study to three counties in the Upper Shore region consisting of Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties. All RMC members present on the call agreed to proceed forward with contracting with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship to conduct a youth engagement project in the Upper Shore.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 pm.