

Minutes

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

Friday, September 25, 2015, Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401

Participants:

Glenn Belmore
Chris Benzing
Kevin Brooks
Aneeqa Chowdhury
Tim Dinsmore
Kelly Dudeck
Heather Ersts
Patricia Fenati
Dean Fisher
John Fury
Rodney Glotfelty
Heather Gramm
Philip Hager
Roxanne Hale
Lisa Hall
Audra Harrison
Leslie Hart
John Hartline
John Hickman
Patrick Hogan
Michael Jackson
Chris Kaselemis
Wilbur Levensgood
Denise Lovelady
Steven McAdams

Steve McHenry
Thomas McLoughlin
Craig Metz
Anthony O'Donnell
Mary O'Keeffe
Temi Oshiyoye
Rick Pollitt
Mark Powell
Linda Prochaska
Shannon Reed
Louise Reynnells
Dan Rider
Janice Riley
Sheree Sample-Hughes
Alice Settle-Raskin
Angela Spencer
Matthew Tefteau
Emily Tocknell
Jeff Trice
Don VanHassent
Caroline Varney-Alvarado
Roseanna Vogt
Stephen Wright
John-Andrew Young

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 12:17pm.

Welcome and Introductions

RMC Chair Scott Warner welcomed the attendees and asked that each introduce themselves and give a brief introduction.

Ms. Davis welcomed the new Executive Board members that were selected since the last meeting. She recognized Chris Kaselemis from St. Mary's County, Ms. Caroline Varney-Alvarado from the Department of Housing and Community Development and Mr. Don VanHassent from the Department of Natural Resources. Ms. Davis also recognized the elected officials in attendance, Delegate Anthony O'Donnell and Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes as well as Caroline County Commissioner Wilbur Levengood, both representatives from Senator Andy Harris' office, Denise Lovelady and Mary O'Keeffe, and Mr. Steve McAdams from the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the RMC Quarterly Executive Board Meeting for April 10, 2015 were previously distributed to all Board members. The Chair asked if there were any questions on the content, comments, or corrections. There being none and upon motion made by Steve McHenry and seconded by Thomas McLoughlin, it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes as submitted.

Committee Reports

Financial

Ms. Davis gave the financial report stating the RMC ended FY15 with a carryover of \$42,751.00, which is money from InvestMaryland. The RMC started FY16 with \$167,985.00 in General Funds. Total revenue for the beginning of FY16 is \$210,736.00. Spending as of September 25, 2015 is \$32,871.60. The Chair requested a motion to accept the financial report, upon motion properly made by Kevin Brooks and seconded by Steve McHenry. The financial report was unanimously accepted as submitted.

Youth Engagement Project

Doris Mason provided brief summary of successes to date stating the Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) in collaboration with Washington College with the support of a grant from the Verizon Foundation, had created a website, www.youthdashboard.com. The site displays the data from the Youth Engagement Survey. Since the introduction of the Youth Dashboard, the USRC and Washington College have added a workforce development component with resources for youth to access local jobs.

Ms. Davis said there is another phase currently underway in Allegany County. Seventh and ninth grade students will be surveyed throughout the Allegany public school system. There will be scheduled focus groups near the end of October with a town hall meeting scheduled for November 17, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Allegany College of Maryland.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)

Mike Pennington, Committee Chair, directed members to the FY16 Work Plan to review the list of individuals and organizations who support RMPIF. He provided an overview of a meeting that took place at the Maryland Association of Counties convention where members of the RMC Executive Committee met with members of the Governor's cabinet, including Secretary Gill, Secretary Bartenfelder and Secretary Brinkley, to discuss possible funding during the FY17 budget cycle. There are a series of activities outlined in the FY16 Work Plan to request support for our efforts to get funding in FY17.

The RMC was able to get legislation in the 2015 Legislative Session to extend the sunset from 2020 to 2030.

RMC Chair, Scott Warner, recognized the efforts of Delegate Anthony O'Donnell and the support of Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes in supporting the efforts of the RMC.

Legislative

Legislative Committee Chair, Josh Hastings, gave a synopsis of the recent committee meeting on September 21, 2015. Mr. John Fiastro, Chief of Staff for Senator Stephen Hershey, was the guest speaker. Mr. Fiastro provided the members of the Legislative Committee an overview of topics the Senator expects to be on the agenda for the 2016 Legislative Session. Those topics include renewable energy, health care delivery in rural areas, and the subject of medical marijuana.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the RMC White Paper on Program Open Space, and legislation from the 2015 Legislative Session. Other issues discussed included advocacy activity. Rural Maryland Day will be February 11, 2016. Mr. Hastings gave a brief description of last year's activities and invited members to participate this coming year. He also invited individuals to contact him if they are interested in participating on the Committee, have thoughts on legislative topics they would like the Committee to look at, or if they would like to be involved during Rural Maryland Day.

RMC/RMF Joint Planning and Development Committee

Charlotte Davis asked members to review the recommendation sheet submitted by the Joint Planning and Development Committee. The Joint Planning and Development Committee recommend the RMC's overall priorities should be focused on agriculture, broadband, renewable/biomass energy, health, workforce development and entrepreneurship, and continued youth engagement.

Specific recommendations include continued support for RMPIF, committee structure, a comprehensive strategic plan, economic development through youth engagement, entrepreneurship and broadband, and the RMC should continue its efforts in organizing a coalition of rural community development organizations.

The Joint Planning and Development Committee recommended the Foundation focus its efforts on supporting RMPIF, fund development and support a statewide transfer of wealth study.

RMC Chair, Scott Warner, called for a motion to accept the recommendations of the Joint Planning and Development Committee. Erroll Mattox made a motion to accept the recommendations, Dr. Stephen Wright seconded, the recommendations were unanimously accepted by the Board.

Health Care Committee

Tom McLoughlin, Health Care Committee Chair, gave those assembled a brief outline of the efforts of the Health Care Committee thus far stating the basis for moving forward were the recommendations of the Telemedicine Task Force, which completed its report at the end of 2014. The Committee reviewed ten recommendations from the report. Discussions led them to look at the delivery of telemental health and a guest speaker was invited to present information on the delivery model and the impact of current regulations. It became apparent there should be discussion regarding legislation and in a subsequent meeting Legislative Committee Chair, Josh Hastings, was asked to speak and a White Paper submitted by Charlotte Davis was reviewed.

Upcoming meetings of the Committee will include a discussion with a State senator looking at the issues of regulation from a legislative perspective. The Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will speak at the December 1, 2015 meeting providing an informal discussion of the financial issues surrounding telemedicine.

Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA)

Erroll Mattox, RMC's GICA Representative, told the Board he had no update at this time. He provided members an explanation of the work of the Commission. The next meeting of GICA will be in November. Mr. Mattox invited individuals to contact him through the RMC should they have any items they would like him to present.

Guest Speaker – Patrick Hogan, Chief Legislative Officer, Office of the Governor

Doris Mason, First Vice-Chair for the RMC, introduced guest speaker, Patrick Hogan.

The Honorable Patrick Hogan told the audience he served two terms in the Maryland House of Delegates. He provided the Board with a review of the first nine months of Governor Hogan's term in office.

- January 22, 2015 - Governor Hogan introduced a budget that aligned spending with revenues with no new taxes or fees
- Approximately a week later, he introduced his legislative package. There were some tax relief measure and legislation to push for education reforms. The Governor had some successes.
- February 23, 2015 – rolled out the Phosphorous Management Tool. The Administration is working with the Department of Agriculture and other vested parties to develop plans for manure to energy programs.
- February 24, 2015 – Governor announced Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force. This is a problem in every part of the State.
- April 27, 2015 – Governor Hogan had to declare a state of emergency in Baltimore.

- May 7, 2015 – Governor announced he was cutting tolls across the State. Saving drivers \$54 million dollars a year.
- May 27, 2015 – Trade mission to Asia to Visiting China, Japan and South Korea. The Governor signed some Memoranda of Understanding.
- June 22, 2015 – Governor announced cancer diagnosis.
- About a week later the Governor announced a \$1.97 billion investment in transportation projects across the State.
- July 9, 2015 – Governor announced Regulatory Reform Commission addressing some of the regulations the State imposes on small business.
- July 30, 2015 – the Governor closed the Baltimore Detention Center
- August 7, 2015 – started to work on fixing redistricting to take politics out of the process.
- September 3, 2015 – Fiscal Year 2015 closed with \$2.95 million fund balance.
- September 10, 2015 – announced \$25 million for local road projects.
- September 15, 2015 – the Governor cut fees statewide saving \$51 million over five years.
- Week of September 21, 2015 – the Governor announced improved revenue estimates of \$80.6 million.

As the Commissions established by the Governor do their work, possible legislation on the horizon include:

- Tax relief
- Regulatory reform
- Redistricting

Rural priorities including the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund and Program Open Space are being considered in the ongoing budgetary process for the upcoming session. The Governor does want to cut back on raids of funds from programs like Program Open Space.

Mr. Hogan took questions from the floor then thanked the RMC for inviting him to speak.

Nominating Committee

Mike Pennington informed the Board the election of officers will occur at the annual meeting of the RMC. There are no vacancies on the Board at this time.

The Executive Director will be contacting RMC Executive Board members with a survey in the near future.

Executive Director's Report

Charlotte Davis told the Board the RMC participated in the Maryland Municipal League and Maryland Association of Counties Conventions, and the Maryland State Fair. She traveled to Stanton, Virginia for the Partners for Rural America Conference. Partners for Rural America (PRA) is an organization of state rural government councils. Charlotte has been elected secretary and Steve McHenry sits on PRA's board of directors. PRA hosts its annual conference at various locations around the country; Maryland will be the host in 2017.

Charlotte is a LEAD Maryland fellow in Class IX. She has participated in various seminars as part of that leadership program. The LEAD Maryland Symposium will be November 19, 2016, at the University of Maryland College Park.

Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)

Charlotte Davis said members were e-mail the FY15 MAERDAF Annual Report. Scott Warner, RMC Chair explained the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) grant review process. Charlotte Davis announced FY16 MAERDAF Grant recipients.

During fiscal year 2016, 53 rural-serving organizations submitted applications requesting over \$890,000 in grants. Sixteen grants totaling \$167,000 were distributed:

- Allegany College, \$25,000
- Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, \$8,638
- Asian American Center of Frederick, \$6,500
- Calvert County Farm Bureau, \$7,075
- Chesapeake Leadership Foundation, \$8,000
- Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, \$10,000
- Crossroads Community, Inc., \$4,875
- Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center, \$17,841
- Frederick CTC FFA, \$24,889
- LEAD Maryland, \$10,000
- Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc., \$8,000
- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, \$2,500
- Mid-Shore Regional Council, \$3,500
- Queen Anne's County Library/Allegany County Library, \$9,900
- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, \$11,900
- Western Maryland Area Health Education Center, \$8,350

Mr. Warner told those assembled funding for the grant has been the same over the last three years, \$167,000.00. The average total of all grant requests per year has been \$900,000. He told the group if RMPHF were funded at the \$6,000,000 level, there would be an additional \$500,000 available to MAERDAF.

2015 Rural Summit – December 3, 2015

Charlotte Davis told the group the 2015 Rural Summit would be held December 3, 2015 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. She presented a PowerPoint slide listing our current sponsors:

Platinum Sponsorship

- Maryland Department of Commerce

Gold Sponsorship

- MARBIDCO
- Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
- Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Bronze Sponsorship

- Cecil County Government
- Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc.
- Maryland Agricultural Conflict Resolution Service
- Maryland Department of Agriculture – Marketing Department
- Maryland Department of Agriculture – Resource Conservation Agricultural Certainty & Nutrient Trading Programs
- Maryland Forests Association
- Maryland Insurance Administration
- Maryland Relay 711
- Maryland Rural Health Association
- Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
- Tria Technologies, LLC
- USDA Rural Development

We are still taking sponsors. We will discuss speaker proposals during our planning meeting next week. Ms. Davis said there will be an awards ceremony during the Summit and the RMC is actively seeking nominations for the awards.

Rural Maryland Foundation (RMF)

Dan Rider, President for the Foundation, welcomed Rick Pollitt as a new member of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Rider said there were still vacancies on the Board of Trustees and invited members to contact them with any nominations for those vacancies.

Mr. Rider said the function of the Foundation is to support the Council. Fundraising is an important part of that support and Mr. Rider challenged the members of the RMC Executive Board and the RMF Board of Trustees to contribute to the Foundation. He asked for 100% participation explaining it is important for 100% participation when seeking funding from other institutions.

Mr. Rider spoke of the Foundation's recent activities:

- Funding the production of the video, "What do you aspire for Rural Maryland?"
- The Council and Foundation's participation in the Chesapeake Film Festival. The Foundation sponsored a screening of "Farmland the Movie" during the Festival with a viewing of our video prior to the movie and a reception after. Press should be forthcoming.
- The Foundation has been added to the Maryland Charity Campaign, the Foundation's code for the Campaign is 1361.

Tuesday December 1, 2015, is Giving Tuesday, please remember the Foundation on that day.

The RMC Chair, Mr. Warner, recognized the participation of previous RMC Executive Board members in accepting Mr. Rider's challenge to contribute. He also recognized Kevin Brooks's efforts over the years and the Rural Maryland Foundation's Treasurer.

As a 501(c)(3), the Foundation can seek or accept grants for other organizations. The Foundation is positioning itself to do that for a small administrative fee.

New Business

Charlotte Davis said the Rural Maryland Council Bylaws were previously distributed to the members of the Executive Board. Ms. Davis said the changes to the Bylaws affect voting rights of members of the Executive Committee. The current Bylaws only allow the Chair, the First Vice-Chair, the Second Vice-Chair and the Immediate Past Chair to vote. The Committee has been inviting the Chairs of the working committees to participate in the Executive Committee meetings. This change would allow these individuals to have a voting role. There were additional minor changes; all changes were reviewed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture Attorney General. The Board will vote on these proposed changes during the annual meeting in December. Ms. Davis asked members to provide comments or contact her with any questions.

Steve McHenry motioned that the Bylaws as amended and subject to any changes be approved and presented to the full Executive Board of the RMC at the next meeting. Josh Hastings seconded. There being no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kevin Brooks asked that, as he retires from the Maryland Rural Development Corporation (MRDC), the members of the Board welcome the new Executive Director of the MRDC, Chris Benzing.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Executive Board will occur during the RMC Annual Meeting on December 2, 2015.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:53 p.m. through a motion made by Mike Pennington, seconded by Kevin Brooks.

The Annual Meeting of the Rural Maryland Council is Wednesday, December 2, 2015, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway in Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Vernacchio