

Minutes

Rural Maryland Council Executive Committee Meeting
Friday, March 22, 2019 12:00pm to 2:00pm
Harry Browne's Restaurant, 66 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401

Participants:

Scott Warner, Chair	Matt Teffeau, RMPIF Committee Co-Chair
John Hartline, First Vice Chair	Josh Hastings, Past Chair
Dan Rider, President, Rural Maryland Foundation	
Erroll Mattox, Agriculture Committee Chair and Second Vice-Chair	
Gregory Padgham, Nominating Committee Chair	RMC Staff:
Lindsay Thompson, Legislative Committee Co-Chair	Charlotte Davis, Executive Director
Susan O'Neill, RMPIF Co-Chair	Meredith Donaho, Program Administrator
	Amanda Clevenger, Administrative Assistant

Chair Warner called the meeting to order at approximately 12:13pm.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the Rural Maryland Council Executive Committee meetings on November 13, 2018, and January 8, 2019, and the Rural Maryland Council Executive Board meeting minutes for November 29, 2018 and January 25, 2019 were presented. Chair Warner requested any changes, no changes were submitted. A motion was made by Erroll Mattox to approve all four meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Lindsay Thompson. All were in favor, and the motion to approve the Rural Maryland Council Executive Committee meeting minutes on November 13, 2018, and January 8, 2019, and the Rural Maryland Council Executive Board meeting minutes for November 29, 2018 and January 25, 2019 was unanimously accepted.

Financials – FY19 Budget

Charlotte Davis presented the FY2019 Budget as of March 21, 2019. The Rural Maryland Council has total operating available revenue of \$273,928.94, and a total of \$5,809,090.55 in grant expenditures. All of the grant awards for FY2019 grants have been expended. The Council has received \$119,034.41 in returned grant funds from FY2017 to FY2018 from Cecil County Office of Economic Development, West Cecil Health Center, and the Maryland Forestry Association. These returned funds will be added to the available pool of funds for FY2020 grants. Charlotte Davis requested a motion to approve the financials report. A motion was made by Lindsay Thompson to approve the FY19 Budget as of March 21, 2019; the motion was seconded by Susan O'Neill. All were in favor, and the FY2019 Budget report was unanimously accepted.

A copy of a proposal received by Maryland Farm and Harvest was shared; the proposal requested a \$25,000.00 sponsorship for the upcoming season. A motion was requested by Chair Warner to approve the sponsorship. A motion was made by Matt Teffeau; the motion was seconded by Susan O'Neill.

Lindsay Thompson abstained from the vote. The remainder of the Committee approved, and the Farm and Harvest sponsorship for \$25,000 was approved.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) Committee

Co-chairs Susan O'Neill and Matt Tefteau provided the Committee update. The RMPIF Committee met on March 21, 2019 in-person and approved the allocation of funds for the FY2020 grant cycle. RMPIF has received \$6,167,000 for FY2020. The Committee agreed to follow the same funding formula allocation as last year, which will provide \$2,055,667 to each Regional Council; \$4,111,333 to each of the three RMPIF categories (Infrastructure, Entrepreneurship and Health Care); \$513,917 to Rural Maryland Council; and, \$513,917 to the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF). An additional \$167,000 separate budget line-item for MAERDAF will also be included, for a total of \$680,917 provided to the MAERDAF fund. A motion was made by Lindsay Thompson to approve the FY2020 MAERDAF/RMPIF budget allocation; the motion was seconded by Greg Padgham. All were in favor, and the FY2020 MAERDAF/RMPIF budget allocation was accepted unanimously.

Copies of the updated FY2020 guidelines and criteria were also provided to the Committee. It was suggested that the word "Preference" in the match requirement paragraph for each RMPIF category be eliminated due to some confusion incurred by applicants last year. A motion was made by Erroll Mattox to approve the elimination of the word "Preference" and to emphasize that a match is required for the RMPIF category guidelines; the motion was seconded by Greg Padgham. All were in favor, and the motion to approve the elimination the word "Preference" and to emphasize that a match is required for the RMPIF category guidelines, was unanimously accepted.

Copies of a price comparison of grants management software systems were provided to the Committee. Rural Maryland Council staff recommended the purchase of Foundant for grants management due to its cost-effectiveness, ability to integrate within other software platforms, and data migration capabilities. A motion was made by Lindsay Thompson to approve the purchase of Foundant for grants management; the motion was seconded by Greg Padgham. All were in favor, and the purchase of Foundant for grant management was unanimously accepted.

Copies of a draft program evaluation sheet were also shared with the Committee. A RMPIF program evaluation report will be due September 1, 2019. The report has measured data received from interim and final reports from FY2017 to the present.

Legislative Committee

Legislative Committee Co-Chair Lindsay Thompson provided the update; Co-Chair Odette Ramos was not available. The next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2019 via conference call. Copies of the legislative tracking and written submitted support testimony for bills were made available.

Rural Maryland Foundation

President Dan Rider provided the update. President Rider shared copies of the Rural Maryland Foundation membership and donor forms. These forms will be made available on the Rural Maryland Foundation website, email and print. The Rural Maryland Foundation is still continuing work on the Rural Aspirations 2.0 film. The Foundation is also exploring the possibility of entering into a partnership with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) to serve as a fiscal agent and to collect an administrative fee. The Foundation will next meet on April 4, 2019 via conference call.

Agriculture Committee

Chair Erroll Mattox provided that there were no new updates.

Joint Planning and Development Committee

Chair Mike Thielke was unavailable to provide an update. Charlotte Davis shared that a Board Retreat for strategic planning has been scheduled for Friday, May 24, 2019 at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 9am – 3pm. Copies of a draft evaluation survey were provided; the survey will be distributed online, and at the April 5th Executive Board meeting. A consultant will be hired to help facilitate the May 24th Board Retreat. It was briefly discussed that the Rural Maryland Council Executive Board may consider adding two appointments to the board for representatives of agricultural producers or value-added agriculture producers. It was suggested that these representatives could include Grow and Fortify or Delmarva Poultry Industry. The Executive Committee agreed to table the discussion, and the suggestions will be taken into consideration for the next Executive Committee meeting.

Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) Executive Board Request

Copies of a letter received by the Rural Maryland Council staff and members of the Executive Committee were presented; the letter was a formal request by the Executive Director of MRHA to be reinstated as a member on the Rural Maryland Council Executive Board. There were concerns regarding ethical violations committed by the Executive Director, which resulted in her termination from the Executive Board in 2018. A motion was made by Josh Hastings to deny the request with a formal letter. The motion was seconded by Lindsay Thompson. Rural Maryland Council staff will draft a letter denying the request for the Executive Director to be reinstated to the Rural Maryland Executive Board citing the ethical violations, a copy of the draft will be reviewed by the Attorney General of the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Rural Maryland Council Executive Committee prior to being sent. A motion was made by Susan O’Neill to send the formal letter to the Chairs and Officers of both MRHA and the Rural Maryland Council; the motion was seconded by John Hartline. All were in favor, and the motion to draft a letter denying the request for the Executive Director of MRHA to be reinstated to the Rural Maryland Executive Board citing ethical violations, reviewed by the Attorney General of the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Rural Maryland Council Executive Committee prior to being sent, and sent to the Chairs and Officers of both MRHA and the Rural Maryland Council was unanimously approved.

Executive Director’s Report

Copies of the Executive Director’s report and staff activity logs were shared with the Committee. The Rural Maryland Council will be co-hosting a Distance and Telemedicine Grant Application Info Session on March 28, 2019 with USDA Rural Development at the Maryland Department of Agriculture in Annapolis. The Rural Maryland Council will also be scheduling in-person grant information session meetings regionally for RMPiF and MAERDAF, and a webinar session, in May 2019.

New Business

April 5, 2019 Rural Maryland Council Executive Board Meeting Agenda

A copy of the April 5, 2019 Rural Maryland Council Executive Board Meeting draft agenda was shared. Maryland Department of Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz will be the featured guest speaker. No requests for changes or additions were made to the agenda. The meeting will take place at the House Office Building, Conference Room 170, 6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, from 12pm-2pm.

2019 Rural Summit

The Rural Maryland Council staff has secured event space at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel in Annapolis for the December 12, 2019 Rural Summit. Copies of the draft agenda, budget, and sponsorship levels were shared with the Committee. The Rural Summit Planning Committee will next meet via conference call on March 29, 2019.

Adjournment

With no other business to discuss, Chair Warner requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:21 pm.

The next RMC Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, 2019, Location TBD.