

**Rural Maryland Council
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Date: September 10, 2020
Time: 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
Location: Videoconference Call**

Participants: John Hartline, Scott Warner, Susan O’Neill, Matt Teffeau, Chris Benzing, Greg Padgham, Mike Thielke, Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Amanda Clevenger

Welcome and Agenda Overview

John Hartline, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:33pm. He welcomed committee members and asked if members would like to add any additional items to the agenda. No new items were added.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Hartline asked for approval of the minutes for the 5/22/2020 RMC Executive Committee Meeting. Matt Teffeau made the motion to approve, Chris Benzing seconded. Motion was passed unanimously to adopt the 5/22/2020 minutes. Mr. Hartline then requested approval of the minutes for the 7/9/2020 RMC Executive Board Meeting. Chris Benzing motioned to approve; Matt Teffeau seconded. Motion was passed unanimously to adopt the 7/9/2020 minutes.

Financial

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director presented a three-year pro forma budget per the Strategic Plan. She stated that the FY2022 budget request will be submitted on 9/25/2020. For FY21, the Council took a 5% cut across the board. She stated that routine expenditures are being approved by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) because of the State spending freeze and to date the Council has spent \$37,347. She reported that the Council did end up with a balance of \$147,884 in FY2020 and that RMC has asked for an encumbrance of \$100,000. Currently, the Regional Councils and FY2021 Grant Awardees are being reviewed by Marc Nicole, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Council expects to hear shortly on whether funding is approved. Ms. Davis reviewed the FY2022 budget and the Committee approved the request for full funding at \$6,160,575. Mr. Hartline stated that he would like to set up a meeting for Council Staff and Executive Committee members to meet with David Brinkley, Maryland Secretary, DBM to discuss the FY2022 budget. Matt Teffeau motioned to approve the FY22 budget and Mr. Benzing seconded. Motion was passed unanimously to accept the budget.

Board and Committee Reports

- MAERDAF/RMPIF Committee: Ms. Davis reported that the Grant Review Board met on August 4th, 5th, 6th, and the 17th to review and make decisions on the Phase II grant applicants. The Council has not released the list of awardees as the requested funds are currently being reviewed by DBM. The Council is hopeful that DBM will contact them shortly with their decision. The Executive Committee members asked to see the list of awardees with the understanding that it’s currently embargoed. Council staff will send list to members. Ms. Davis reported that the Council reported the FY2021 Managing For Results to DBM on August 21, 2020. These metrics will appear in the FY2022 budget books. She commented that the grant software has been helpful in calculating and generating the numbers to complete the MFRs efficiently. The Council’s interactive dashboard, Rural Maryland Outlook was also used to collect information. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any questions or discussion and the Committee reported none.

- Legislative Committee: Chris Benzing, Co-Chair stated that there was nothing to report and that the Committee plans to meet after the election in November 2020.
- Agriculture Committee: Matt Teffeu volunteered to be chair of the agricultural committee. Chris Benzing motioned to approve; Mike Thielke seconded. Motion was passed unanimously to approve Mr. Teffeu as agricultural committee chair.
- Joint Planning and Development Committee: Ms. Davis reported that the Strategic Plan will be approved during the September 25th Board Meeting. She presented the results from the recent membership survey on rural issues that received 250 responses. Mr. Thielke asked how staff will incorporate the information into RMC's work and Charlotte responded that the survey helps to identify legislative issues and MAERDAF priorities. She asked for input from the members on how to convey the information and it was decided that a one pager was the best format.
- Rural Maryland Foundation: Ms. Davis reported that she has been working on a media proposal with Effectv to help promote RMC and the Foundation through showcasing a 30 second segment of the Rural Aspirations 2.0 video. The proposed campaign would be a combination digital/tv add campaign for the Northern Maryland media market. The total cost will be \$8,000 for 250,000 impressions. There will be a total of 1,647 total commercials of TV and 64,516 streaming commercials on digital devices. The goal of the campaign is to create new contacts/memberships and interest in the RMC and Foundation. The Foundation will pay for it and it can start streaming in October. It was suggested that a popup Foundation meeting be called since they would not normally meet until mid-October. Susan O'Neill inquired if there were funds to pay for it and Mr. Thielke replied yes. The consensus of the committee members is to make it a 'Friends of Rural Maryland' campaign. Chris Benzing motioned that the Executive Committee supports the Foundation funding the campaign, Ms. O'Neill seconded. Motion passed unanimously to recommend the Foundation to fund the campaign. Ms. Davis informed the Committee that the MOU for the Foundation needs to be updated and expect to see it in the future.

Executive Director's Report

- Western Maryland Regional Council: Ms. Davis reported that Western Maryland Regional Council asked to use RMPIF funding to purchase property for the organization's office. Their attorney stated that the purchase is allowable and the Council's Executive Board agrees. Ms. Davis will confirm this usage of funds with Assistant Attorney General, Tom Filbert.
- Grant Funds Request: Ms. Davis informed the Executive Committee on the FY2021 MAERDAF grant request from a state agency requesting funds to pay for a contractual position. She has reached out to Assistant Attorney General, Tom Filbert to learn if this is permissible.
- Main Streets: Ms. Davis reported that she attended the Community Development Network Eastern Shore Meeting on July 21st and learned of several Main Street challenges, for example DHCD did not renew the National Main Street Center membership fees. Chris Benzing informed the committee that he will contact DHCD about the concerns as small towns support and economic development is part of MRDCs work. Charlotte stated that RMC is happy to work with Chris-MRDC will advocate with RMC background support.
- Grow and Fortify Conference: Ms. Davis informed the committee that the Grow and Fortify conference will be a half-day virtual event this year on December 3rd. RMC will not be a sponsoring partner this year but will cross market. Mr. Teffeu asked if RMC was being cautious with funds and

Ms. Davis informed the Committee that DBM has turned down similar requests and that this is not the year to support.

- FY2021 Workplan-Sustainable Growth Commission: Ms. Davis reported that the Commission is sunsetting at the end of 2020. The Maryland Department of Planning would like to know if RMC would like to take over the Rural Economies Workgroup with subgroups. RMC staff are supportive as it is a material change in the workplan and will not require much bandwidth as the subgroups will continue to do the majority of the work- generate meeting setup, agenda, minutes, etc. Mr. Benzing moved to accept the change to the workplan. Mr. Thielke seconded. John Hartline asked if there was any discussion. Motion was passed unanimously to accept changes to the workplan.
- FY2021 Workplan-Rural Broadband Planning and Technical Assistance: Ms. Davis requested support for the Foundation to submit an application for the USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge grant program. The grant requests funds to support an RMC 'pop-up' shop in Denton, Caroline County and Havre De Grace, Harford County focusing on rural broadband concerns. Ms. Davis informed the Committee that these two towns were chosen because they applied for MAERDAF funding but did not meet the criteria. Mr. Thielke motioned to support the grant; Mr. Benzing seconded. Matt Tefteau abstained. Motion passed 7-0-1.

New Business

RMC Annual Meeting and Rural Impact Awards: Ms. Davis stated asked the Committee if there were any changes/updates they would like to see for the nomination criteria and guidelines. She stated that the only change for FY2021 is two rural champion awards will be presented this year. The announcement will be made available at the September 25, 2020 Board Meeting. Ms. Davis requested input regarding the annual dinner that includes the awards ceremony. Mr. Thielke recommended that the event be shortened and earlier in the day. Mr. Hartline stated that the event might need to be held virtually. Staff will discuss logistics of virtual event and the topic will be included on the agenda for the September 25, 2020 Board Meeting.

Nominating Committee: Ms. Davis informed the Committee that RMC will announce they are accepting nominations at the September 25, 2020 Board Meeting. There is an opening for Vice Chair and District 6 (Wicomico, Worcester & Somerset Counties). Ms. O'Neill stated that Jean Fabi left Kent County and that the representative for District 4 may be opened. Mr. Benzing stated that this will be discussed at the next Nominating Committee meeting.

September 25, 2020 Draft Board Agenda: Ms. Davis informed the Committee that Speaker Pro Tem, Sheree Sample-Hughes was in the process of asking the Speaker of the House, Adrienne Jones to be the guest speaker. If Delegate Jones is not available, then Delegate Hughes is available to speak. Mr. Hartline asked the Committee if changes should be made at the beginning of the meeting to ask participants to highlight their RMC projects-5 to 8 people. Staff will discuss logistics. Ms. Davis asked if a business should be highlighted as in past meetings and Mr. Thielke recommended not to do it since it will be held virtually.

Adjourn

Chris Benzing moved to adjourn the meeting; Scott Warner seconded. The motion was passed to adjourn the meeting. John Hartline thanked everyone for coming. The meeting ended at 3:11pm.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 Location: TBD