

**Rural Maryland Council (RMC)**  
**Fall Quarterly Executive Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Date: Friday, September 25, 2020**  
**Time: 12pm – 2pm**  
**Location: Teleconference-Zoom Webinar**

Participants: John Hartline, Chris Benzing, Chris Kaselemis, Bill Valentine, Susan O’Neill, George Hawley, Sarah Sweeney, The Honorable Douglas Peters, Cassie Shirk, Dr. Heidi Anderson, Scott Warner, Denise Lovelady, Daniel Rider, Steve Wantz, Jean Miller, Elizabeth Chung, Lindsay Thompson, Leslie Hart, The Honorable Mike McKay, Melissa Kelly, Santo Grande, The Honorable George Edwards, Josh Hastings, The Honorable Addie Eckardt, Greg Padgham, Scott Randall, Susan Banks, Roseanna Vogt, Lara Wilson, Mike Thielke, Richard Blair, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Matthew Tefteau, Lucille Walker, Ryan Snow, Rick Blair, Holly Porter, Gretchen Hardman, Amy Crowding, Kimberly Kratovil, Lesley Quattlebaum, Wendolyn McKenzie, Sara Seitz, The Honorable Katie Fry Hester, Tina Williams, Steven McHenry, Speaker Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes, Charlotte Davis, Amanda Clevenger, Megan D’Arcy.

Welcome and Introductions

John Hartline, Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting at 12:04pm. The meeting was held via teleconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meeting handouts were sent to participants by email. Mr. Hartline introduced himself and Charlotte Davis, RMC Executive Director.

Approval of Minutes

John Hartline asked members to approve the minutes from the July 9, 2020 Executive Board Meeting. Steve McHenry motioned to approve the minutes; Scott Warner seconded. Motion was passed unanimously to adopt the minutes.

Guest Speaker

Greg Padgham introduced the guest speaker, Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes. Pro-Tem Sample Hughes presented on a myriad of topics that included budget concerns; Broadband; COVID Related Topics-pandemic response, unemployment, job creation, evictions; Law Enforcement Reform; Kirwan Commission; and the upcoming legislative session.

Board and Committee Reports

- Financial Report: Charlotte Davis informed Board Members that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) contacted her to state that they approved the FY2021 grant awards but asked that the Council retain \$400,000 until the last quarter of FY2021 in case additional cuts need to be made. DBM suggested that the retainer be taken from Regional Councils as it would be easier administratively. The Executive Committee recommended that the 7% cut occur across the board in two disbursements and if the \$400,000 is not fully funded, then the Regional Councils have priority and are made whole first, then grantees. Chris Benzing and Lindsay Thompson offered more insight on the decision stating that the Executive Committee did not support the Regional Councils taking the full cut and it was decided to distribute evenly throughout RMC’s programming to not only show support for the Regional Councils but that everyone is equally important. Holly Porter motioned to approve the recommendation to distribute cuts across all programs equally; Scott Warner seconded. The motion was passed unanimously to distribute cuts across all programs equally.
- FY2021/FY2022 Budget: 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 at the end of September. 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) 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. Charlotte Davis shared that certain items will be eliminated from the budget due to COVID-19. Items include but may not be limited to the Transfer of Wealth study, the Board Retreat, and Rural Maryland Day (alternative plan underway). The FY2022 budget shows a 10% reduction from FY2021. John Hartline motioned to approve the budget; Dr. Heidi Anderson moved to accept, and Santo Grande seconded. The motion was passed unanimously to approve the budget.

- Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund: Charlotte Davis presented a FY2021 MAERDAF/RMPIF Cycle Update which entailed the announcement of the grant awards on September 28<sup>th</sup> and the start to process grant related paperwork. Dan Rider asked if the second disbursement would happen and John Hartline stated that there is a high probability that there might not be one.
- FY2020 Managing For Results (MFR): Ms. Davis stated that the Council annually reports on the Managing For Results to DBM and the Department of Legislative Services in order to track the grant program's impact. The MFR's were submitted on August 21<sup>st</sup> and updated and resubmitted on October 5<sup>th</sup> to reflect additional metrics from grantees with extensions. John Hartline highlighted the new grant software allows the Council to collect the information more readily.
- Legislative Committee: Chris Benzing stated that there was nothing new to report and that the Committee will have its first call after elections in November.
- Joint Planning and Development Committee: Mike Thielke stated the Board needed a vote to approve the Strategic Plan that was distributed at the last meeting. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to provide a roadmap for RMC over the next three years. Goal 4 of the Plan states that RMC will conduct a membership survey each year so that the results can be evaluated for possible inclusion in the organization's priorities. The most recent membership survey was included in the Board materials for review and showed that Broadband was the number one priority. Chris Benzing made a motion to accept the Strategic Plan; Elizabeth Chung seconded. Motion passed to adopt the Strategic Plan.
- Rural Maryland Foundation: Dan Rider, President provided a Foundation update, stating that the Board will meet on October 8, 2020 to discuss a digital ad campaign. Additionally, an RFP is planned to hire a consultant to conduct an analysis of the Council's grant program; a LEAD scholarship was approved to target young producers; and the Board is currently working on Development plan for the Foundation.
- Agriculture Committee: Matt Tefteau, Chair stated that the Council has a seat at the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture.

#### Executive Director's Report

- FY2021 Work Plan: Charlotte Davis reported that there are two potential additions to the FY2021 work plan as RMC recently submitted an application for the USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge grant program to focus on rural broadband deployment. Additionally, Ms. Davis stated that the Sustainable Growth Commission is sunsetting at the end of 2020 and the Council has been asked to take over the Rural Economies workgroup with subgroups.
- RMC staff continue to telework and travel to the office on an as needed basis.

### New Business

- RMC Annual Meeting and Rural Impact Awards: Charlotte Davis asked the Board if they had creative ideas on how to hold December's meeting for approximately 75 participants. Senator Hester recommended a drive-in option at a fairground. Elizabeth Chung suggested time slots. Several Board members recommended a hybrid version. Ms. Davis stated that the Rural Impact Awards guidelines and criteria were released and to let the Council know if they have a nominee.
- Nominating Committee: Ms. Davis state that the election for officers and the Board Slate is approaching and she will affirm with current members who plan to stay on or move off of the Board. The Council currently has two vacancy-Vice Chair and District 7.

### Announcements

Attendee Share: John Hartline asked participants if they would like to highlight happenings at their organization or share information on an RMC funded project. He provided a grant funded project highlight with TCCSMD recent virtual Job Fair that attracted 950 job seekers, 64 hiring businesses, and resulted in 1,511 job applications. No additional organizations provided updates. Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director, Melissa Kelly stated that Jay Lemoine joined their team and will be serving in Southern Maryland. Senator Hester and John Hartline thanked Steve McHenry for his help on the local foods and aggregation initiative and the Farmers Market money market program. Senator Edwards, Senator Eckhardt, and Delegate McKay thanked the Board for all their hard work.

### Adjournment

John Hartline thanked everyone for attending the meeting and motioned to adjourn at 1:37pm. Chris Benzing moved to accept; Steve McHenry seconded. The motion was passed to adjourn the meeting.

**Next Meeting:** RMC Annual Board Meeting, Wednesday, December 2, 2020  
Location: TBD