



**Rural Maryland Council  
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date: January 15, 2021**

**Time: 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm**

**Type: Zoom Teleconference**

Participants: John Hartline, Mike Thielke, Chris Benzing, Dan Rider, Matt Tefteau, Susan O'Neill, Lindsay Thompson, Charlotte Davis, Dr. Heidi Anderson, Dakota Matthews, Amanda Clevenger

Welcome and Agenda Overview

Mr. John Hartline, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:03pm. Mr. Hartline welcomed committee members and asked if anyone would like to add any additional items to the agenda. There were none.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. John Hartline asked participants for approval of the November 13, 2020 minutes. Mike Thielke moved to accept the minutes, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded. Motion was passed to unanimously adopt the 11/13/2020 minutes. Mr. Hartline stated that the 12/2/2020 annual Board meeting minutes were included for review and to let RMC staff know if there are any corrections needed. The Board will approve these minutes at the upcoming meeting.

Financial

- FY2021 Budget- Ms. Charlotte Davis referred to the updated budget materials included in the meeting packet. She informed Committee Members that RMC has spent \$182,477 on operating expenses, leaving a balance of \$305,227 for available revenue. The Council has expended \$4.4M out of the grant fund and there are currently ten outstanding grant agreements to disburse and three declines. The Council is still on track to expend the second disbursement in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management. Mr. Scott Warner stated that there are a lot of expenditures remaining and asked if the Council could spend it. Ms. Davis stated that the State is still experiencing a budget freeze and that there is an approval process that all State employees must follow if they plan to expend anything over \$250. Ms. Davis stated that we still have \$100k from FY2020 and is not sure if it is available. Mr. Warner would like clarification on remaining funds as he does not want it to reflect poorly on the Council on any unused funds for future funding requests. Ms. Davis stated she plans to submit denied expenditures once the freeze is lifted. Ms. Lindsay Thompson suggested that we request an automated invoice from MPT and submit it and see if it's received. Committee members felt this was a good approach.
- FY2022 Budget- Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that we will learn about the budget on January 20, 2021.
- Foundant Contract- Ms. Charlotte Davis requested approval to pay \$10,000 for renewal of the grant software, Foundant Technologies. Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to keep the software, Ms. Susan O' Neill seconded. All were in favor. Motion was passed to unanimously approve the purchase of the renewal grant software.

## Board and Committee Reports

- 1) Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund- Ms. Susan O'Neill, Chair stated that Ms. Charlotte Davis went over the basics under the budget conversation. Ms. Davis stated that staff will continue to process grant agreements as issues are resolved. Ms. Davis stated that Grantees are currently submitting interim reports. Ms. Davis stated that any declined grant funds will be discussed at the MAERDAF Grant Review Board meeting in March. Ms. Davis further stated that it is at this time that they will look to see if they can redistribute funds to make grantees whole. Ms. O'Neill will coordinate the RMPIF Committee meeting in March to review the cycle and discuss strategic planning for the grant program.
- 2) Legislative Committee- Ms. Lindsay Thompson, Co-Chair stated that the Committee met on January 11, 2021 to review logistics of Legislation this year. Ms. Thompson stated for example testimony will need to be submitted two days prior to the Hearing by 3:00pm and that oral testimony is randomly selected with the exception of two of the opponents to represent interests that are expressly involved in the issue and the sponsors can choose the proponents. Ms. Thompson further stated that the Committee adopted a blanket policy that if a bill was supported in the past, no action is needed by the Committee and RMC can submit testimony. Ms. Thompson informed the committee that Rural Maryland Day will take place virtually on February 11, 2021. Ms. Thompson highlighted the legislative priorities that are being updated and will be approved by the Board. Ms. Davis informed the Committee that they have been asked to convene the rural stakeholders regarding the broadband bills and the first meeting will be on Thursday, July 21, 2021 at 11:00am.
- 3) Agriculture Committee- Mr. Matt Tefteau, Chair stated that he did not learn if the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA) will be meeting this year. Mr. Tefteau thanked Ms. Thompson for being proactive with federal delegation members if some of the funding from the CARES II Act to get resources in the State to help with farmer suicide prevention. Mr. Tefteau feels that this is a good way for the Committee to have an achievable and measurable goal and will continue to have these conversations. Mr. Tefteau asked Mr. Mike Thielke if he had any issues with F3 Tech that he would like to the Agriculture Committee to take up. Mr. Thielke stated that he would like to know what role Value Added Agriculture will have in the Committee and Mr. Tefteau stated that it will be a main focus of GICA. Mr. Thielke is interested because of the Agriculture Innovation Center. Ms. Charlotte Davis felt that agribusiness would be a good focus for the Committee and Ms. Thompson suggested processing and addressing gaps in the supply chain.
- 4) Joint Planning and Development Committee- Mr. Mike Thielke, Chair stated he felt the Executive Committee had already covered everything he needed.
- 5) Rural Maryland Foundation- Mr. Dan Rider, President state that the Foundation is currently discussing the main role of the Foundation and they are planning to go through a modified strategic planning exercise.

## Executive Director's Report

Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the Council has started on the 2021 Rural Summit Planning and held their first meeting on January 7, 2021. Ms. Davis informed the Committee that the target date is December 2, 2021 and that they are currently looking a venue to potentially host it in person.

Ms. Davis stated that staff are continuing to telework and laptops were purchased for staff to be able to work comfortably from home.

### New Business

- January 29, 2021 RMC Winter Quarterly and Executive Board Meeting Agenda- Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that there is a draft agenda in the meeting materials packet and Senator Cardin will be the featured guest speaker and the legislative priorities will be rolled out. Committee members discussed whether or not they should include a broadband on the agenda.
- Ms. Davis introduced Dr. Heidi Anderson as the Committee's newest member.

### Adjourn

Mr. John Hartline asked a motion for adjournment. Mr. Scott Warner moved to accept the motion, Mr. Dan Rider seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:12pm.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: March 26, 2021, Location TBD