



## RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 1, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Chris Benzing, Lindsay Thompson, Janice Palmer, Greg Padgham, Tyler Patton, Kurt Fuchs, John Hartline, Gabrielle Leach, Kelly Dudeck, Bill Christopher, Mike Thielke, Colin Denis, Josh Hastings, Scott Warner, Matt Tefteau, Colin Dennis, Steve McHenry, Ryan Snow, Alice Settle-Raskin, Don Mulrine, Susan O'Neal, Charlotte Davis, Amanda Clevenger, Dakota Matthews, Megan D'Arcy.

### Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Lindsay Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2:02pm and conducted the roll call.

### Review of February 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Lindsay Thompson asked participants to review the minutes and asked if there were any corrections that had to be made prior to acceptance. There were none. Mr. Chris Benzing moved to accept the minutes as presented and Mr. Tyler Patton seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

### Bill Tracking

*SB872 – Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Volunteer Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services, Hearing 3/03.* Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that this bill pays the volunteers by increasing the amount of subtraction modification allowed for taxable year 2021 from \$6,500 to \$7,000. Ms. Thompson asked for a motion. Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion and Mr. Scott Warner seconded. Ms. Thompson asked if anyone abstained. Mr. Sherwin Wells abstained and started a discussion with the Committee on the importance for paid fire and rescue. The Committee decided to incorporate such language in the testimony and next year the Committee will present a bill addressing this need.

*SB133/HB319 – Local Tax Relief for Working Families Act of 2021.* Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that the Senate Hearing was last week, and the third reading passed in the House. Ms. Thompson further stated that the bill authorizes local governments to use a bracket basis to impose their county income taxes and those that choose to tax on a bracket basis are authorized to impose a 3.5% County income tax or 2.25% at the minimum. The Committee suggested to pass on the bill.

*SB770/HB717 – Education – Technology Resources – Funding (Ending the Digital Divide Act), Senate Hearing 3/9 and House Hearing 3/11.* Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that this bill is an unfunded mandated will require each county board of education in FY22 to use no less than 7% of the target per pupil to provide the technology resources for students. Committee members did not know if the counties would be supportive of the mandate. Mr. Tyler Patton stated that some counties are already doing this and its unclear what would be required of them if they did reach the 7%. Mr. Steve McHenry suggested to hold it for now and the Committee decided to pass on it.

*SB824/HB1328 – Economic Development – Broadband Providers – Joint Trenching and Fee (Building Out Broadband Act of 2021), Senate Hearing 3/16 and House Hearing 3/4.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this is a MACo priority, and this bill has local governments work with SHA and DoIT by making them apply to the Fund when they want to build assets. The purpose of the Fund is to assist in the establishment and expansion of affordable broadband communication services in the State. Mr. Tyler made the motion to support the bill with the sponsor amendment as reflected in SB66, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded. The Committee recommended that the fee be eliminated this year and include a summer study of the fee component. Ms. Lindsay asked if there was any further discussion or opposition. There was none. The Committee approved to support the bill with amendment.

*SB857/HB1280 – Health- Maryland Community Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence – Establishment, Senate Hearing 3/11, House Hearing, 3/2.* Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that this bill establishes the Maryland Community Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence within the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. The purpose of the bill is to help divert individuals before they are charged into behavioral health. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that there are amendments coming that include a rural component because the challenge in rural areas is that there is a lack of beds for behavioral health. Part of the plan is to do a strategic plan and assess capacity. Ms. Davis suggested support with amendment to include looking at the regional piece, include the local health coalition as a collaborator and a study and report on behavioral health in rural communities. Mr. Tyler Patton made the motion to support favorable with amendment, Mr. Don Mulrine seconded. Mr. Chris Benzing asked if anyone opposed, abstaining. There were none. The motion to support with amendments passed.

#### Other

Partners for Open Space (POS): RMC is supporting the Governor’s request to delay the repayment plan for 1 year. POS asked Ms. Charlotte Davis to testify for the Governor’s BFRA. Mr. Don Mulrine made the motion to support, Mr. Sherwin Wells seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed Ms. Davis testifying and abstaining. There were none. The motion for Ms. Davis to testify passed.

*HB1210 - Corporate Diversity – Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission.* Ms. Charlotte stated that this is the Speaker’s bill and that any entity receiving \$1 million in state funds will have to report on it and may potentially impact RMC and the corporate Board. Mr. Steve McHenry read it to focus on a private sector only, so it does not apply to RMC or MARBIDCO.

SB502/HB841: Labor and Employment – Maryland Wage and Hour Law – Agricultural Stands, Retail Farms, and Farmer’s Markets. Mr. Matt Tefteau stated that he is seeking support for this bill that establishes an exemption from the Maryland Wage and Hour Law for an individual employed at an agricultural stand, a retail farm, or a farmer’s market that primarily sells agricultural products that the employer has produced. Mr. Kurt Fuchs made a motion to support, Mr. Steve McHenry seconded. Mr. Sherwin Wells asked what they are being asked to exempt. Mr. Chris Benzing stated it would exempt them from completing the paperwork on small farms, which is under 500 employees. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed or is abstaining. There were none. The motion passed to support the bill.

Reconvene the broadband group. Mr. Tyler Patton asked if RMC was going to reconvene the broadband group. Ms. Charlotte Davis replied that Council is planning to reconvene and will contact stakeholders shortly.

Maryland Day- Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that she is working on distributing lunches to Legislators on March 25<sup>th</sup> for Maryland Day. Ms. Davis stated that staff are working on designing a rack card to attach to the lunches and that they are seeking sponsorships for the lunches.

#### Adjourn

Mr. Chris Benzing asked if there were any other items. There were none. Mr. Tyler Patton made the motion to adjourn, Ms. Alice Settle-Raskin seconded. The Legislative Committee adjourned at 2:54pm.

**Next Meeting: Monday, March 15, 2021, 2pm-3pm, Zoom Teleconference**