



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)

Winter Quarterly Executive Board Meeting and Legislative Luncheon Minutes

Date: Friday, January 29, 2021

Time: 12pm – 2pm

Type: Zoom Webinar

Participants: Charlotte Davis, Kelly Dudeck, Megan D’Arcy, Lara Wilson, Dakota Matthews, Leanne Mazer, Leanne Mazer, Amanda Clevenger, Anne Hairston, John Hartline, Dean Fisher, Steve McHenry, Susan Banks, Debbie Bowden, Susan Harrison, Chris Benzing, Lisa Challenger, Scott Warner, Robin Summerfield, Matt Holloway, Chris Kaselemis, Kurt Fuchs, Paige Tilghman, Kimberly Kratovil, Anne McGinnis, The Honorable Ben Cardin, Brigitte Peters, Josh Hastings, The Honorable Chris Adams, Tina Williams, Elizabeth Carven, Tony Thakur, Hans Schmidt, Alice Settle-Raskin, Weida Stoecker, John Horner, Roseanna Vogt, Beth Brewster, Heidi Anderson, Mary Buffington, Nan Mann, Ann Jones, Cristy Morrell, Sara Seitz, Melissa Kelly, Carmella Watkins, Jennifer Walsh, Matthew Tefteau, Molly Hilligoss, Lucille Walker, The Honorable Jim Mathias, Heather Tinelli, Reza Jafari, Bill Valentine, Mindie Burgoyne, Susan O’Neill, Polly Binns, Gregory Padgham, Heather Tomlinso, Janice Palmer, The Honorable Steve Arentz, Gretchen Hardman, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Yvonne Golczewski, Reva Lancaster, Jeannie Riccio, Ed Knox, Roxanne Wolf, Susan Stewart, Frank Hodgetts, Rona Kramer, Bon Zimberoff, Julie Oberg Theresa Kuhns, Carol D’Agostino, Megan Milliken, The Honorable Michele Guyton, Ryan Snow, Craig Hartstock, Carrie Cook, Glenn Irwin, Steve Wantz, Erin Silva, Kathy Johnson, Peggy Alpert, Sherwin Wells, Jackie Gregory, Matt Tefteau.

A. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. John Hartline, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:02pm. Mr. Hartline introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized new Board Members-Deborah (Debbie) Bowden, Representing District 5, Caroline, Talbot and Dorchester Counties; Matt Holloway, Representing District 6, Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset Counties; and, Sam Shoge, Representing District 4, Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne’s Counties.

B. Approval of Minutes

- a) Mr. John Hartline asked for approval of the September 25, 2020 minutes. Mr. Steve McHenry moved to approve the minutes; Debbie Bowden seconded. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any discussion or changes to the minutes. There were none. The 9/25/2020 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.
- b) Mr. John Hartline asked for approval of the December 2, 2020 minutes. Mr. Steve McHenry moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Christ Benzing seconded. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any discussion or changes to the minutes. There were none. The 12/2/2020 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

C. Guest Speaker-U.S. Senator Ben Cardin

- 1) Mr. Scott Warner introduced U.S. Senator Ben Cardin. Senator Cardin shared that President’s Biden Administration’s number one priority is COVID-19, which includes effective vaccination distribution and outreach to underserved communities; relief to families and small businesses that have been devastated by COVID-19; and the safe opening of schools. The second priority for the President is to build back better, which will focus on transportation needs. The Senator further commented on the OMNIBUS bill that contains money that will focus on an updated CARES Act that focuses on waterman, the poultry industry, and worker visas; healthcare; broadband expansion; targeted relief to the tourism industry; rental assistance; and, the restaurant industry. Senator Cardin concluded by stating that he will make sure that Maryland’s rural communities have access to all the great

programs that are available to help and that it is an honor to represent Marylanders in the Senate. A short Q&A followed.

D. Legislative Committee

Lindsay Thompson and Chris Benzing, Co-Chairs

- a) 2021 Legislative Priorities: Mr. Chris Benzing presented the 2021 Legislative Priorities and asked for Board approval. Mr. John Hartline called for a motion to approve. Mr. Matt Tefteau move the motion; Dr. Heidi Anderson seconded. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none. The 2021 Legislative Priorities were unanimously approved.
- b) Legislative Tracking: Mr. John Hartline reported that the Committee holds a bimonthly meeting and updates the bill tracker weekly. Mr. Chris Benzing provided some examples of the new protocols put in place in Annapolis due to COVID-10 measures. Mr. Benzing further stated that Committee members and staff are always available to answer any questions.

E. Board and Committee Reports

1) Financial Report

- a) FY2021 Budget: Ms. Charlotte Davis stated the Council received \$6,011,109 in FY2021 and to date they have expended \$4,665,393 and that there are still a handful of outstanding grant agreements that need to be processed. Ms. Davis further stated that the Council was asked to retain \$400,000 from grant awardees to distribute in the 4th quarter in 2021 if approved by the Department of Budget and Management. In regards for operating, the RMC has expended \$182,477 and is operationally in good shape. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any questions. There were none. Mr. Hartline called for approval of the Financial Report. Mr. Chris Benzing moved to accept the Financial Report; Dr. Heidi Anderson seconded. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any other questions. There were none. The Financial Report was unanimously approved.

2) Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

Susan O'Neill, Co-Chair

- a) FY2021 MAERDAF/RMPIF: Ms. Susan O'Neill stated that there were a handful of outstanding grants that staff are currently working with awardees on finalizing and the Committee will meet in March to discuss the FY2022 grant cycle. Ms. Davis stated to date the Council has sent out 80 grant agreements, totalling \$3.1M plus the Regional Councils and three grants were declined.
- b) FY2022 Budget: Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the Governor's budget was introduced on January 20, 2021. Ms. Davis thanked Governor Hogan for the \$5, 071,000 for the RMPIF and \$118,000 for MAERDAF. Ms. Davis further informed participants that this was a cut from last year and this effect the funds distributed in FY2022. Ms. Davis asked for any feedback or suggestions. Mr. Hartline asked if there were any comments. There were none.

3) Rural Maryland Foundation: Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that next scheduled meeting is in March and they are working on a Development Plan as well as a way to move forward with the Transfer of Wealth project.

4) Joint Planning and Development Committee: Mr. Mike Thielke stated that the Committee will meet in March and they will be focusing on policies and working with the Foundation to put together a strategic plan.

5) Executive Director's Report: Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that staff continue to telework and meet daily by Zoom teleconference. Ms. Davis stated that 2021 Rural Summit Planning is underway and the tentative dates are December 1st and 2nd and the next planning meeting is on March 11th and anybody is welcome to join us. Ms. Davis stated that the next event is a virtual Rural Maryland Day that will involve participants to advocate on behalf of Rural Maryland while meeting with legislators on February 11th. Ms. Davis further stated that a proclamation will be presented and that staff have asked for resolutions from both the Senate and the House in honor of the Council's 25th anniversary.

Ms. Davis stated that an updated Board Contact List was sent to Board Members and to send any updating information to RMC staff.

F. New Business

- 1) Mr. John Hartline asked if there was any new business. Ms. Carmella Watkins, with the Ivy & Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities thanked RMC for their grant award funding to support breast cancer awareness. Ms. Lisa Challenger from the Beach to Bay Heritage thanked RMC for their grant and the virtual stories they have been able to develop during COVID 19. Ms. Ann Hillyer with Shore Craft Beer shared their grant story about the Shore Craft App and a research study to determine what craft beer drinkers are doing with respect to tourism and virtual activities can be measured. Ms. Susanne Zilberfarb thanked RMC for the grant fund that helped develop a program to infuse agriculture in the middle school classroom. Additional questions pertained to biofuel and closure of a local grain silo.

G. Announcements: No new announcements.

H. Adjournment: Mr. John Hartline asked for a motion for adjournment. Mr. Steve McHenry moved the motion and Ms. Susan O'Neill seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:08pm.

Upcoming Important Dates

Rural Maryland Day- February 11, 2021

Rural Summit Planning Meeting- March 11, 2021

Joint Planning and Development Committee Meeting- March 18, 2021

Next Meeting: RMC Spring Executive Board Meeting
Friday, April 9, 2021, 12pm - 2pm
Location: TBD