



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
Spring Quarterly Executive Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 9, 2021 – 12 pm to 2 pm
Zoom Teleconference

Participants: John Hartline, Marion Fisher, Melissa Kelly, Dakota Matthews, La Fabian Marshall, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Trisha Kesecker, Bill Valentine, Gregory Padgham, Leslie Hart, Scott Warner, Lisa Challenger, Elizabeth Hill, Don Mulrine, Alice Settle-Raskin, Cherie Krug, Dave Wooten, Jean Holloway, Matthew Tefteau, Noelle Flaherty, Anne Hairton-Strang, Nan Mann, Sam Shoge, Chris Kaselemis, Daniel Rider, Susan Banks, Debbie Bowden, Richard Bolt, Matt Holloway, Jinhee Kim, Carmella Watkins, Cassie Shirk, Scott Nicewarner, Renee Seigley, Ryan Warner, Susan O'Neill, Ryan Snow, Heidi Anderson, Dawn Jacobs, Reza Jafari, Leslie Grunden, The Honorable Rachel Jones, The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, Tina Williams, Christy Morrell, Garry Aime, Laurie - Ann Sayles, Doncella Wilson, Kate Patton, Santo Grande, Bari Klien, Keith Hall, Keith Cornish, Amy Crowding, Jennifer Walsh, Dona Sorce, Holly Porter, Lindsay Thompson, Dean Fisher, Monique Snyder, Mary Buffington, Sara Seitz, Debbie Simpkins, Elizabeth Chung, Elizabeth Carven, Karen Fedor, Regina Clay, Gretchen Hardman, Valerie Connelly, Noel Brathwaite, Ann Hillyer, Steve McHenry, Mike Theilke, Ellen Flowers-Fields, Charlotte Davis, Dakota Mathews, Amanda Clevenger, Megan D'Arcy.

A. Welcome and Introductions

Chair John Hartline called the meeting to order at 12:05pm. Mr. Hartline thanked everyone for coming and for their overall support for RMC.

B. Approval of Minute

Chair John Hartline asked if anyone had any corrections or additions to the minutes. There were none. Dr. Heidi Anderson moved to accept the minutes as written. Matt Tefteau seconded. The minutes for the January 29, 2021 were unanimously approved.

C. Board and Committee Reports

- 1) Financial Report: RMC Executive Director Charlotte Davis review the financial that was included in the meeting packet. She stated that per the Strategic Plan, the Council is doing a Pro Forma budget which is why is the budget for FY2021 and FY2022. Ms. Davis thanked Governor Hogan for fully funding RMPIF. Ms. Davis reported that the Council did receive the approval from the Department of Budget and Management to release the \$400k retainer to FY2021 Grantees and we are in the process of distributing it and that the spending freeze has been slightly lifted so there are less constraints in current spending due to the federal stimulus. Ms. Davis further stated that there is a balance of \$216,000. Ms. Davis asked the Executive Board to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to work on determining spending the remaining funding. Ms. Davis further requested that the Board approve continued support the MPT Farm and Harvest programming. Chair Hartline asked if Ms. Davis would like a separate motion for the MPT programming. She replied yes. Mr. Steve McHenry made the motion to approve continued support for MPT Farm and Harvest programming. Mr. Greg Padgham seconded it. Chair Hartline asked if there were any in favor or opposed. Ms. Lindsay Thompson asked to abstain as Maryland Grain Producers is the primary sponsor for the MPT programming. The motion passed to unanimously to continued support of the MPT programming. Ms. Davis requested a motion to approve the preliminary FY2022 budget as presented. Dr. Heidi Anderson moved to accept the budget. Bill Valentine seconded. Chair Hartline asked if there was any discussion, all that were in favor or opposed. The Board unanimously approved the preliminary FY2022 budget.
- 2) Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
 - a) FY2022 MAERDAF/RMPIF Guidelines & Criteria: Committee Chair Susan O'Neill reported that the RMPIF Committee met twice the previous month to review the RMPIF and MAERDAF guidelines and criteria and their were some recommendation on MAERDAF in order to be more flexible/proactive. Ms. O'Neill reviewed the recommendations which included, agriculture, energy, rural broadband, youth engagement, and

community and economic development. The second recommendation was to further clarify the use of MAERDAF to pay for staff positions. Ms. O’Neill reviewed the funding formula which shows how funds will be distributed. Ms. Davis reviewed the FY2022 important grant dates and asked for a motion to approve the guideline and criteria and important grant dates. Steve McHenry made the motion to approve, and Scott Warner seconded. Chair Hartline asked if there were any discussion. There were none. The modification to the guideline were unanimously approved. Ms. O’Neill made an addition regarding removing healthcare as a priority for MAERDAF. Ms. Davis stated that we will still accept healthcare applications through MAERDAF but we were preferred that they are submitted under RMPHF. Steve McHenry motioned to make this change and Scott Warner seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

- b) FY2022 Press Release: Ms. Davis informed the Board that RMC is holding two information sessions on April 27, 2021 and May 5, 2021 and we will be available for one-on-one teleconference calls the week of May 10, 2021. Ms. Davis further stated that a grant writing workshop will be held on April 30, 2021. Dr. Heidi Anderson asked Ms. Davis if there would be a conflict of interest if someone from a Board Member’s organization applies and she stated it would not since it’s a separate board.
- c) Funding Formula: Chair Hartline provided information on the types of funding formula and because the Council is fully funded this year, the formula from the statute will be used. Ms. Davis reported that a thank you letter was sent to Governor Hogan. Mr. Scott Warner made the motion to accept the funding formula, Steve McHenry seconded. Chair Hartline asked if there was any discussion. There were none. The motion to utilize the funding formula from the statute was unanimously approved.

3) Legislative Committee

- a) Bill Tracker and Position Statements: Committee Co-Chair Ms. Lindsay Thompson invited Board members and attended to a February 19, 2021 legislative committee wrap up call and she thanked the RMC staff on their great work this legislative session. Ms. Thompson thanked everyone for advocating for RMC and the budget during Rural Maryland Day. Ms. Davis that it was big session for broadband expansion with historic funding in the amount of \$300M, plus \$200 in the Kirwan bill for student devices and connectivity. Ms. Thompson further stated that the funding is absolutely a huge win but the work is not done and that we need to continue working on the planning, needs assessment and roll out. Valerie Connelly informed the Board that Choptank Fiber will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony for their first customer on April 15, 2021. Anne Hairton-Strang applauded RMC for the Maryland Day Event that served boxed lunches to legislators at Annapolis Mall.
- 4) Rural Maryland Foundation: Foundation Chair Dan Rider reported that the Foundation will start a strategic plan this summer. Ms. Davis provided a brief background on the strategic plan that RMC went underway in 2020 and the same facilitator will be used for the Foundation’s Plan.
- 5) Agriculture Committee: Committee Chair Matt Teffeau stated that there was nothing to report. He is waiting to learn from MDA when the next Governor’s Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA) will be and will keep the Board informed.

6) Joint Planning and Development Committee

Mike Thielke, Chair

- a) 2020 Strategic Plan Implementation: Committee Chair Mike Thielke reported that the Committee met in March and they plan to take a more action in reviewing the Plan on a regular basis and whether or not the objectives are being met and assessing effectiveness. Mr. Thielke further stated that provided recommendations on priorities for the RMPHF/MAERDAF to have the organization be more responsive to the priorities of the general assembly and satisfy the needs of the members and the organizations that apply for the funding.
The Committee has decided to meet more regularly in order to stay on track with the Plan. Mr. Thielke asked the Board and attendees for anyone interested in joining the Committee to email Charlotte.

- b) 2022 Rural Issues Survey: Ms. Davis informed the Board that the 2022 Rural Issue Surveys will be released this summer.
- 7) Executive Director's Report: Ms. Davis reported that Staff are still on mandatory telework and continue to meet daily at 9:00am on Zoom.
 - a) 2021 Rural Summit Planning: Ms. Davis informed attendees that planning for the 2021 Rural Summit is underway and it will be held on December 1 and 2, 2021 at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Annapolis. She welcomed attendees to participate in the Summit planning committee on May 27, 2021.
 - b) Grants Program Evaluation: Ms. Davis stated that RMC needs to do a better job at analyzing the impacts of the RMPIF and MAERDAF grant programs. Ms. Davis asked for the Board to review the enclosed RFP that seeks to hire a vendor to complete an economic impact analysis for the Council and to approve the Executive Committee to review the responses to the RFP and make a selection. Dr. Heidi Anderson made the motion to approve the Executive Committee to select the appropriate vendor, Susan O'Neill seconded. Chair Hartline asked if there was any discussion. There was none. The Board unanimously approved for the Executive Committee to review the RFP responses and make the best selection for the economic impact analysis.
 - c) Staff Activity Reports: Ms. Davis stated that the activity reports were in the meeting materials.

D. New Business

- 1) Comptroller Roundtable: Ms. Davis stated that the Comptrollers office contacted RMC to host a roundtable in early the spring. The Board showed interest in scheduling the roundtable.
- 2) RMC Service Territory Map: Ms. Davis introduces Mary Buffington from ESRGC. Ms. Buffington provided an overview of the visual science based interactive territory map. The map will be found on the RMC website.
- 3) RMC Event Videos: RMC staff played the three videos that relate to the following events.
 - a) Rural Maryland Day <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiaYrLx8gqk>
 - b) Senate Resolution-Celebrating RMC's 25th Anniversary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Je7iq8VzJQk>
 - c) Maryland Day <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5Liou2UHIE&t=1s>
- 4) Outreach Calendar: Ms. Davis reviewed the event calendar and asked Board Members and participants to join RMC at the events.

E. Guest Speaker

- 1) The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, United States Senator: Delegate Rachel Jones introduced U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen. The Senator talked to the Board and participants about the American Rescue Plan, Infrastructure plan, Broadband, Agriculture Development, Renewable Energy. Q/A period followed the Senators presentation.

F. Grantee Spotlight: Grantee spotlights included Greg Padgham, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore; Carmella Davis Watkins, Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charity highlighted their breast cancer awareness work; Susan Banks, Dorchester County Innovation Center and Expansion on the their wet lab; Alice Settle-Raskin, Inc. include a link in the chat box on Howard County Farm Bureau and the two farm banks the Bureau supports. Mr. Dan Rider thanked Steve McHenry for getting the rapid relief funds allocated toward the agriculture industries.

G. Announcements Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles from the City of Gaithersburg announced an upcoming breakfast club that will focus agribusiness and climate change. Ms. Sayles provided a link in the chat box and invited participants to attend. Ms. Davis informed participants that SB66 passed as the Senate concurred with the house amendment and there will be an official Office of Statewide Broadband.

H. Adjourn: Chair John Hartline asked for a motion for adjournment the meeting at 1:55pm. Dr. Heidi Anderson moved the motion.

Next Meeting: RMC Fall Quarterly Executive Board Meeting
Friday, September 24, 2021, 12pm -2pm, Location TBD