



RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee Meeting Notes

Date: March 18, 2021

Time: 10:00 am – 11:00 am

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Mike Thielke (Chair), Scott Warner, John Hartline, Lisa Purnell, Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Amanda Clevenger, Dakota Matthews.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Mike Thielke called the meeting to order at 10:02am.

II. FY2022 Planning Priorities

Participants reviewed updated planning priorities. Mr. Mike Thielke asked participants if the planning priorities as set out for the grant programs were still relevant or did changes need to be made. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that they are relevant but broad and that staff receive questions about defining these priorities from grant applicants as they drive the MAERDAF grant programs. Ms. Davis further stated that RMC accepts all applications but those focused on the priorities receive a higher ranking. Mr. Thielke made a suggestion to change energy to clean energy or efficient energy. Mr. Scott Warner agreed with Mr. Thielke to leave the remaining priorities as there were presented.

III. 2020 Strategic Plan Implementation

Goal 1: Develop a plan for long-term financial sustainability.

- *Objective 1.1: Draft a 3 year pro forma budget.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this has been currently implemented and it will be helpful as the Council increases their ask from \$6M to \$9M.
- *Objective 1.2: Cultivation of Two New Champions.* Ms. Charlotte Davis state that this has been implemented and that it worked very well this past year when Senators Hershey and Peters were honored. Ms. Davis further stated that the call for nominations will take place in July and then they will be chosen at the September Board Meeting. Mr. Thielke asked what the Council does to maintain the relationship with Rural Champions so that we are building a bigger portfolio of Champions. Participants suggested that the Council hold a special event at the Rural Summit to recognize the Champions and further strengthen their relationships.
- *Objective 1.3: Analyze alignment with potential partners and identify 5 contacts.* Ms. Davis stated that RMC has not completed this task, but it is not due until 2025 and it will be discussed by the Executive Committee. Suggestions have been made, such as USDA Rural Development Area.

Goal 2: Encourage and facilitate active participation by RMC members to (1) extend RMC’s reach and influence and (2) groom potential new board members.

- *Objective 2.1: Identify rural and urban leadership programs from which to recruit potential new members and leaders.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the current nominating committee consists of Chris Benzing, Josh Hastings, Greg Padgham, Scott Warner and herself. Ms. Davis further stated that they will meet in September and Mr. Thielke recommended that the committee meet sooner to focus on goals 2.1 and 2.2.

Goal 3: Make RMC more valuable to legislators & key stakeholders.

- *Objective 3.1: RMC grants should focus on problems identified by legislators and stakeholders; grantees must propose solutions to those problems.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the Council's current grant programs are reactive, instead of proactive and providing solutions to problems. Participants discussed providing more specific priorities and working with local communities to help develop and encourage projects that fall within the RMC priorities. Ms. Davis stated that the Council will continue to accept all applications but those applicants that focus on the priority areas will be ranked higher.

Goal 4: Develop protocols for responding to new opportunities and address issues as they arise to ensure relevancy.

- *Objective 4.1: Conduct a membership survey each year so that the results can be evaluated for inclusion in the organization's priorities.* Participants discussed the membership survey will be sent out this summer, reviewed by Executive Committee in August and approved by the Board in September. Ms. Charlotte Davis further stated that the purpose of the survey is for policy development for the general assembly, but it should be fed into the planning priorities. Participants discussed the importance of messaging the survey so that participants know the information they are giving will impact both legislative and funding priorities which may increase motivation and thoughtful responses.

Goal 5: Gather & Analyze data on rural issues to identify trends and needs.

- REMI Proposal - Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this stems from the Department of Legislative Services who would like to see the Council better evaluate the impact and publicizing the grant results. Participants discussed the recommendation from the Foundation to contract an entity with the necessary platform to help the Council analyze the outcome from the grant funding cycle. Committee members suggested that staff reach out Towson University to complete the analysis as purchasing the REMI software is cost prohibitive.

Goal 6: Create transition and emergency plans for the board and the staff.

- 6.1 - Participants discussed the Executive Director Succession Plan that states what needs to be done in event a replacement is being needed and addressing the ability of current staff to transition into the role as the Deputy Director to build the continuity. Ms. Davis stated that the plan will be to reclassify a current staff person's position into the Deputy Director this fall.
- Personnel Policy Statement - Participants discussed the updated personnel policy statement and Ms. Davis suggested that we send the statement out to members at the next meeting to review before moving it to the Executive Committee for approval.

IV. Other

Joint Planning and Development Committee Membership – Mr. Mike Thielke asked staff to send out a recruitment email to the RMC membership asking people to join the Planning and Development Committee.

V. Adjourn

Meeting ended at 11:02 and the next meeting was moved up from September 2, 2021 to May 14, 2021 as participants felt that additional meetings were necessary to accomplish the set work and goals.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 14, 2021, 11 am – 12:30 pm via zoom