



**Rural Maryland Council (RMC)  
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 2021 – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Location: Zoom Teleconference**

**Participants:** John Hartline, Scott Warner, Chris Benzing, Matt Tefteau, Mike Thielke, Greg Padgham, Charlotte Davis, Amanda Clevenger, Dakota Matthews, Megan D'Arcy

- A. Welcome and Agenda Overview: Chair John Hartline called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. and welcomed everyone.
- B. Meeting Minutes: Chair John Hartline asked for approval of the meeting minutes for 9/10/2021. Mr. Chris Benzing moved to accept the 9/10/2021 minutes. Matt Tefteau seconded it. Chair Hartline asked if there was any discussion. There was none. The 9/10/21 minutes were unanimously approved. Chair Hartline asked for approval of the minutes for the 9/24/2021 Executive Board Meeting. Mr. Chris Benzing moved to accept the 9/23/2021 minute. Mr. Scott Warner seconded it. Chair Hartline asked if there was any discussion. There was none. The 9/24/21 minutes were unanimously approved.
- C. Board and Committee Reports
  - 1) Financial: Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that RMC has distributed a majority of the grant funds totaling \$4,748,000 and there are a couple of outstanding grant agreements that are still being worked on. Ms. Davis further reported that in operations the Council has spent \$144,489 leaving RMC with a balance of \$355,510. Mr. Matt Tefteau made a motion to approve the financial report. Mr. Chris Benzing seconded it. Chair Hartline asked if there were any questions. Mr. Scott Warner asked for clarification on the grant disbursements. Ms. Davis reviewed the funds distributed and the seven that are outstanding. Chair Hartline asked if all were in favor in accepting the report. There was no opposition. The financial report was unanimously approved.
  - 2) Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF): Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that we are currently processing grant agreements and the RMPIF Committee will meet in March to discuss FY2023. Mr. Scott Warner asked if the five Regional Councils should be asked to provide guidance or have some type of advisory role to the Grant Review Board. He stated that he feels the Councils know their regions well and could be very helpful. He stated that he learned there were challenges this past grant year with the Grant Review Board looking at grants and not understanding what was happening in certain regions which may have short sighted some organizations. Chair Hartline asked if the Grant Review Board was in State Statute and Ms. Davis replied it was and that it was the Secretaries or their designees that made up the Board. Ms. Davis further stated that she would like to have additional outside review of the grant applications but was concerned with the timeline in getting the grant funds disbursed. Committee members discussed sending letters to the Secretaries to reaffirm or appoint new Grant Review Board Members. Additionally, Committee members discussed setting a date with the Grant Review Board to meet with the Regional Councils. Chair Hartline asked that the Committee revisit the subject at the next Executive Committee meeting in January.
  - 3) Legislative Committee: Mr. Chris Benzing reported that the first meeting was held on November 3, 2021 with over 25 attendees and the purpose of the meeting was to review the draft legislative priorities and session logistics. The Executive Committee reviewed the legislative priorities and and provided input. The Legislative Committee will review it again in January and then the Executive Committee will approve it at the next meeting.
  - 4) Rural Maryland Foundation: Charlotte Davis reported that the Foundation met for Strategic Planning on October 18 and 19 and the draft plan will be presented at the Foundation's meeting on December 16, 2021.

- 5) Agriculture Committee: Mr. Matt Tefteau reported that the University of Maryland Extension and MDA will launch a farm stress program and asked if there was a way that RMC could include a program at the next Board meeting. Mr. Tefteau further reported that there is no meeting for GICA yet and he is planning to attend Farm Bureau. Mr. Tefteau further stated that Taste of Agriculture will be held on February 3, 2021 at Maryland LIVE venue.
- 6) Joint Planning and Development Committee: Mr. Mike Thielke reported that the Committee will be meeting quarterly versus twice a year, and they have been reviewing and assessing the Strategic Plan. Mr. Thielke reported that the plan is to have the Committee review the Foundation's new plan that is currently in development and that some goals in the Council's plan should be moved to the Foundation's plan. Mr. Thielke further stated that staff will reach out to each Committee and ask for one or two objectives they plan to achieve in the next year. Ms. Davis stated that staff will continue to update the outcomes and priorities will be added to the Committee List.
- 7) Nominating Committee: Mr. Chris Benzing reported that the nominating committee met and there were two Board Members that were no longer able to serve. Darius Johnson with Kent Attainable Housing will replace Sam Shoge to represent District 4 (Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties) and Jerry McLaurin, President of the People for Change Coalition will serve as a Special Appointment. Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that the Committee reviewed the membership recruitment advertisement, and it was included in the meeting materials for the Executive Committee to review and they provided input.
- 8) Executive Director's Report: Ms. Charlotte Davis provided an update on the Economic Analysis report that is being completed by Regional Economic Studies Institute at Towson University stating that staff held a preliminary meeting with RESI and the plan is to have a presentation on their findings at the January Executive Board meeting. Additional items reviewed are the draft Fy21 Annual Report; staff's hybrid teleworking schedule; RMC's representation on the Governor's Broadband Advisory group; and letters to the editor that will include one on rural health and one on rural broadband as it relates to seniors and adoptability.

#### D. New Business

- 1) 2021 Rural Summit Planning: Ms. Charlotte Davis provided an update on the summit planning and requested input on the COVID guidelines that RMC adopted from the MACo conference and if the Executive Committee is comfortable meeting in person. Mr. Mike Thielke stated that he encourages RMC move forward with the event and that a line of text in the registration that they read the hold harmless agreement. Chair Hartline asked for a motion to move forward to hold the Summit in person. Matt Tefteau made the motion to move forward with the Summit. Chris Benzing seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Davis reviewed the agenda, sponsors, and AV equipment rental with the Executive Committee. Ms. Davis asked for approval to work with Chesapeake and Potomac Audio Visual company for approximately \$12,000. Mr. Chris Benzing moved the motion to accept the approval. Mr. Mike Thielke seconded it. There was no discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- 2) Impact Awards: Ms. Davis provided a background on the Impact award and reviewed the list of Impact Award nominees with Committee members. Awardees were chose with the exception of the Rural Volunteer. The awardees are as follow:
  - Rural Volunteer: Mr. Matt Tefteau made the motion to table it. Mr. Greg Padghm seconded it. Rural volunteer suggestions will be sent out on Monday, November 13, 2021.
  - Rural Community Development: Town of Rising Sun. Mr. Matt Tefteau moved the motion to award the Town of Rising Sun with the Rural Community Development award. Mr. Mike Thielke Seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved.
  - Rural Economic Development: Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc (FITCI). Mr. Scott Warner made the motion to award FITCI the Rural Economic Development Award. Mr. Mike Thielke seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved.
  - Rural Champion: Senator George Edwards and Senator Guy Guzzone. Mr. Matt Tefteau made the motion to award Senator Edwards and Senator Guzzone with the Rural Champion award. Mr. Chris Benzing seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved.
- 3) Draft agenda for December 1, 2021 RMC Annual Meeting: Ms. Charlotte Davis reviewed the agenda with the Committee. Committee discussed the location at the Calvert House as the regular meeting space is not available at the Miller Senate Building due to DLS renovations. Mr. Matt Tefteau suggested we hold the

meeting at the MDA headquarters. The Committee decided to wait to make a decision until closer to the date.

- 4) Annual Calendar: Ms. Charlotte Davis reviewed the 2021-2022 calendar asked Committee members to share any conflicts, additions, or changes with her.
  - 5) Encourage people to register: Ms. Charlotte Davis asked Committee Members to review the list of current registrants and encourage people to register who are not on the list but should be.
- E. Adjourn: Chair John Hartline called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris Benzing made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott Warner seconded it. The meeting adjourned at 1:38pm.

**Next Executive Committee Meeting:** Friday, January 14, 2022, 12 pm – 2 pm  
**Location:** TBD