



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)

RMC Winter Executive Board Meeting and Legislative Luncheon Minutes

Date: January 28, 2022

Type: Zoom teleconference

Participants: Leslie Hart, Gretchen Hardman, Jamie Williams, Susie Proctor, Bill Valentine, Katherine Fox, John Hartline, Dimitri Cavathas, Sara Seitz, Susan O'Neill, Kurt Fuchs, Chris Benzing, The Honorable Eric Luedtke, Elizabeth Chung, Scott Warner, The Honorable Michele Guyton, Jinhee Kim, Dean Fisher, Susan Banks, Bunky Luffman, Melissa Kelly, Alex Chan, Alice Settle-Raskin, Debbie Bowden, Darius Johnson, The Honorable Sheree Sample-Hughes, The Honorable Mike McKay, Zack Tyndall, Carmella Watkins, Cassie Shirk, Cindy Stone, Dave Wooten, Frank Hodgetts, Ida Watts, Jessie Ferrio, Jon Chapman, Julie Woepke, The Honorable Addie Eckardt, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Steve Connelly, Don Mulrine, Steve McHenry, Tina Williams, Dr. Heidi Anderson, Tony Thakur, Roger Venezia, Nancy LaJoice, Kamil Williams, Matthew Teffeu, Linda Castrilli, Craig Hartsock, Lindsay Thompson, Lara Wilson, Lucille Walker, Santo Grande, Mindie Burgoyne, Heather Tinelli, Renee Sheehy, Holly Porter, Jerry McLaurin, Mike Arntz, Daniel Rider, Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Dakota Matthews, Amanda Clevenger.

Chair John Hartline welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 12:03pm. Chair Hartline introduced the new Board Members - Darius Johnson, Dave Baker, Jerry McLaurin, and Mayor Zack Tyndall. Mr. Johnson and Mayor Tyndall gave a brief introduction. Chair Hartline asked for a motion to approve the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Susan O'Neil made the motion to approve the 12/1/2021 minutes, Mr. Bill Valentine seconded the motion. The 12/1/2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Ms. Charlotte Davis introduced Delegate Eric Luedtke from District 14. Delegate Luedtke provided an update on the legislature regarding the State Parks Investment Commission and the Great Maryland Outdoors Act bill. Delegate Luedtke further stated that one of his biggest priorities is to help middle class families and small businesses to grow the economy as Maryland comes out of the pandemic. He further stated that access to childcare; cyber security, create incentives to work opportunity tax, are additional priorities. Ms. Charlotte Davis introduced the second speakers - Jinhee Kim, Professor and Assistant Director, University of Maryland Extension and Alexander E. Chan, Ph.D with the Mental and Behavioral Health Specialist. Ms. Jinhee Kim and Dr. Chan presented on the *Farm Stress Assistance Program*. The presenters provided background information information on addressing the mental health issues as they relate to farm stress and mental health of farmers.

Ms. Charlotte Davis presented the financial report and stated that the Council received a little over \$6 million dollars from the state and most of the grant funds have been dispensed. Refer to the financial report in the meeting materials dated 1/28/2022 for the exact numbers. Chair John Hartline asked for a motion to accept the financial report. Dr. Heidi Anderson moved to approve the financial report, Ms. Susan O'Neill seconded it. The financial report was unanimously approved.

Chair of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Ms. Susan O'Neill announced that RMPIF was put in the FY2023 budget for \$9 million. Ms. O'Neil further stated that the RMPIF committee will meet on March 22, 2022 and possibly beforehand and reviewed the grant dates with the Board. Ms. Charlotte Davis asked everyone to thank Governor Larry Hogan and stated that the additional funding is a great opportunity to help rural Maryland communities.

Legislative Committee Co-chair Chris Benzing reviewed the 2022 Legislative Priorities with the Board members and stated that a postcard containing the priorities infographic will be mailed to the legislature. Mr. Benzing further informed members that the Legislative Committee meets weekly on Mondays from 2:00pm to 3:00pm and encouraged members to join the call. Ms. Charlotte Davis reviewed the upcoming legislative events that included a virtual Rural Maryland Day on February 10, 2022 and an in-person Maryland Day event on March 25, 2022.

Mr. Steve McHenry stated that the Governor included an extra \$1 million dollars to address livestock processing and a half million for MARBIDCO's Maryland Wood Products Industry Equity Investment Fund program to help sawmills and loggers to purchase equipment and update their facilities. Chair John Hartline asked for a motion to accept the 2022 legislative priorities. Dr. Heidi Anderson moved to accept the priorities, Mr. Santo Grande seconded it. The 2022 legislative priorities were unanimously approved.

Chair of the Agricultural Committee Matt Tefteau announced that the Taste of Maryland Ag Dinner is scheduled for March 3, 2022 at the Maryland Live venue. Mr. Tefteau thanked Ms. Jinhee Kim and Dr. Chan for their work on farm stress. Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that the RMC Joint Planning Development Committee continues to review the Strategic Plan and the next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2022 from 10:00am to 12:00pm. President Dan Rider of the Rural Maryland Foundation thanks RMC for their past and continued support of Maryland's forestry industry. Mr. Rider stated that the Foundation is wrapping up their Strategic Plan and looks forward to sharing it with the RMC Board at the April meeting. Ms. Charlotte provided her Executive Director's Report and asked for a motion to approve the 2021 Annual Report. Mr. Santo Grande made the motion to approve the 2021 Annual Report, Speaker Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes seconded it. Chair Hartline asked if there was any discussion. There was none. Chair Hartline asked if there was any opposition. There was none. The 2021 Annual Report was unanimously approved. Ms. Davis further informed the participants that the Council is working with Towson University Regional Economic Studies Institute on an economic impact of the grant programs and there will be a presentation at the next Board meeting. Ms. Davis further stated that as of a result of the Summit there is interest in convening a Rural Housing Committee and a Health Committee. She asked participants to contact staff if they are interested in joining.

Chair John Hartline asked if there was any new business. There was none. Chair Hartline asked members and organizational partners to share what was happening with their organization or organizations that are currently working on RMC funded project. Members and partners that shared their thoughts and stories were the following: Mindie Burgoyne with the Department of Commerce; Linda Castrilli, MPT; Jamie Williams, YMCA; Santo Grande, Delmarva Community Services; Jerry McLaurin, People for Change; Katherine Tuttle, NetGlo Corporation; Peter Boziak, Pocomoke City. Ms. Charlotte Davis asked if the elected officials present would like to say a few words. Elected officials that spoke included Senator Addie Eckardt; Speaker Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes; Nan Mann and Melissa Kelly, Regional Directors for Senator Chris Van Hollen's office; Kimberly Kratovil, Senator Ben Cardin's office; Mike Arntz, Congressman Harris's office; Senator George Edwards.

Chair John Hartline thanked everyone to attend the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Steve McHenry moved to adjourn the meeting, Dr. Heidi Anderson seconded it. The meeting ended at 1:37pm.

Next Meeting Scheduled: Friday, April 8, 2022, 12 pm – 2pm, Location: TBD