



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)

RMC Fall Quarterly Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: September 23, 2022, 12 pm – 2pm

Location: Harry Browne's Restaurant, 66 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Participants: John Hartline, Wilbur Levengood, Matthew Tefteau, Dan Schneckenburger, Stewart Pittman, Jerry McLaurin, Roseanna Vogt, Joan Pontius, Zia Ashraf, Cindy Stone, Kate Woody, Martin Baker, Karen Malkin, Jackie Gregory, Dan Robinson, Chris Benzing, Scott Warner, Cassie Shirk, Grayson Middleton, Nan Mann, Heather Tinelli, Scott Fulkerson, Chris Abell, Darrin Youker, Julie Woepke, Ted Gallo, Patricia Eleazer, The Honorable Jon Cardin, Kurt Fuchs, Jennifer Purcell, Bunky Luffman, Julie Giordano, Annette Williams, Natalie Ziegler, Crystal Francis, Sara Seitz, Alice Settle-Raskin, Paul Henderson, Bill Valentine, Tyrod Haynes, Mike Thielke, Linda Castrilli, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Zack Tyndall, M.Q Riding, Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Amanda Clevenger

Chair John Hartline welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 12:36pm after participants enjoyed a buffet lunch and were seated. Chair Hartline thanked the meeting sponsors - Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Horizon Farm Credit, Tri County Council for Southern Maryland, Tri County Council for Western Maryland and the Upper Shore Regional Council. Participants went around the room and introduced themselves. **Chair Hartline asked for a motion to approve the April 8, 2022, meeting minutes. Mr. Scott Warner made the motion to approve the 4/8/2022 meeting minutes, Mr. Mike Thielke seconded it. The 4/8/2022 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

RMC Executive Director Charlotte Davis provided the financial report stating that the Council finished out FY2022 on June 30, 2022 with a small balance of \$2,000.00. Ms. Davis reported on the FY2023 budget stating that the Council received just over \$9 million with most of the funds distributed through the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF). Ms. Davis stated that the grant award decisions have been made and that these funds will be expended by the end of the calendar year. **Mr. Mike Thielke made the motion to approve the financial report, Mr. Scott Warner seconded it. The financial report was unanimously accepted.** Ms. Charlotte Davis presented the FY2024 budget letter to the Governor that requested level funding at \$9 million and 1 PIN for an RMC staff position. **Mr. Wilbur Levengood made the motion to approve the FY2024 budget letter to the Governor, Ms. Sara Seitz seconded it. The FY2024 budget letter to the Governor was unanimously approved.**

Ms. Charlotte Davis reported on the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund and provided an update on the FY2023 grant funds. Legislative Committee Co-Chair Chris Benzing reported that the Legislative Committee will be meeting on November 21, 2022 following elections and invited participants to join the meeting. Mr. Benzing reported that the Legislative Committee plans to host Rural Maryland Day on February 9, 2023 and Maryland Day on March 24, 2023. Mr. John Hartline provided an overview on the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund that allocated \$10 million to each Regional Council in order to boost economic revitalization activity, stimulate private sector investment, and grow jobs in the state's rural regions.

Agriculture Committee Chair Matt Tefteau reported that the Committee met in July and that they were working on two issues that include the 1) livestock processing proposal and looking at ways how RMC can be helpful in grant writing and oversight and 2) the agriculture use assessment and interpretation challenges between the local jurisdiction and the State Department of Taxation. Mr. Tefteau shared that the Grow and Fortify Summit will be on December 1, 2022 at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club.

Health Committee Chair Sara Seitz reported that the Committee met in July and talked about the revitalization of the group and what the vision and mission will be moving forward. Ms. Seitz stated that a survey will be sent out to help focus on the Committee's priorities. Ms. Seitz provided an overview on the upcoming health transportation roundtables

that are being staffed and led by the Tri County Council for Southern Maryland and sponsored by the Rural Maryland Council.

Joint Planning and Development Committee Chair Mike Thielke reported that the Committee has been meeting quarterly and they regularly review the Strategic Plan during these meetings to assess progress and outcomes of the organization. Committee Chair Thielke stated that the Bylaws were distributed but there was an error so it cannot be voted on at the meeting. Chair Thielke reported that the Committee recently reviewed the raw data from the 2022 rural issues survey and suggestions were discussed on how to make the survey better. Suggestions included asking RMC Committees to submit questions related to their focus to help guide the priorities. **Committee Chair Thielke reported on the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and asked for a motion to approve the COOP. Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to accept the COOP, Mr. Wilbur Levensgood seconded it. The motion to accept the COOP was unanimously accepted.** Committee Chair Thielke reported on two requests for proposals. The first is the Rural Maryland Foundation's Think Tank initiative that will solicit research on significant issues to the rural parts of Maryland. The second proposal is to solicit grant writing services that would involve writing grants on behalf of RMC and RMF as well as the Council's membership. Chair Thielke reported on the membership campaign that is underway to create more visibility about the RMC and increase interest in joining.

Nominating Committee Chair Chris Benzing reported on the changes to the upcoming Board Slate that will include Ms. Susan O'Neill as the RMC Executive Board Chair and Mr. Scott Warner the RMPIF. The Board slate will be voted on at the December 1, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Charlotte Davis reported on the Rural Maryland Foundation and the development of a rural research Think Tank as well as the Transfer of Wealth (TOW) discussions that have been taking place. The next TOW meeting is being scheduled for later in the fall.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided her Executive Director's report and stated that Mr. Cody Matthews left the organization, and that RMC is hiring a Program Coordinator to replace Mr. Matthews. Ms. Davis requested approval to continue to support the Maryland Public Television's (MPT) Farm and Harvest program for season 10. Ms. Davis reviewed the funding levels. **Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to sponsor MPT at \$35,000, Ms. Roseanna Vogt seconded it. The motion to support MPT at \$35,000 was unanimously approved.** Ms. Charlotte Davis asked for Board Members to review and approve the 2022 MAERDAF and RMPIF annual reports that are due on October 1, 2022. **Mr. Mike Thielke made the motion to preliminary approve the reports pending the Board has time to send emails to Charlotte with corrections and comments if needed, Mr. Wilbur Levensgood seconded the motion. The motion to approve the reports pending comments from the Board if necessary was unanimously approved.** Ms. Davis provided an update on the Tawes Crab and Clam Bake that will take place on Wednesday, September 28, 2022, in Crisfield at the Somers Cove Marina.

Chair John Hartline highlighted the Rural Impact Awards and encouraged participants to recognize someone for the award categories – Outstanding Rural Community Volunteer, Outstanding Rural Economic Development Award, Outstanding Rural Community Development Award, and the Rural Champion Award. Chair Hartline stated that the submissions are due Friday, November 4, 2022. Participants highlighted RMC grant awarded projects that included Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Inc. and Smith Island United.

Chair Hartline asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Scott Warner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 1:58pm.