



## Rural Maryland Council Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, March 17, 2023

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Chair Susan O'Neil, Chris Benzing, John Hartline, Greg Padgham, Mike Thielke, Lindsay Thompson, Dan Rider, Roseanna Vogt, Dr. Heidi Anderson, Charlotte Davis, Amanda Clevenger, Megan D'Arcy

Chair Susan O'Neill welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 12:05pm. Chair O'Neill asked for a motion to approve the January 27, 2023, meeting minutes. **Mike Thielke made the motion to approve the January 27, 2023 meeting minutes, Chris Benzing seconded the motion. The January 27, 2023 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

Charlotte Davis provided the FY2023 budget report stating that most of the funds have been expended in grants awards and that there are two outstanding grant awards to be processed. Ms. Davis stated that there have been challenges with getting grant awards out this year due to changes in the fiscal process that are now requiring W-9 forms. Ms. Davis reported that the majority of the RMC operating dollars have been expended and she asked that the Committee reconvene in May to discuss the end of the year close out. **Chris Benzing made the motion to accept the FY2023 budget report, Dr. Heidi Anderson seconded the motion. The FY2023 budget report was unanimously accepted.**

Charlotte Davis provided an update on FY2024 budget, stating that that RMC is in the budget for \$9,046,194. Ms. Davis thanked Governor Moore for his support and said that the budget is on track to pass by April 4. RMC Staff will send letters to the Governor and Committee Chairs thanking them for their support. Ms. Davis provided a review of how the new budget system worked.

Charlotte Davis stated that the RMPIF Committee will be meeting next week on March 21, 2023, to begin discussions on the FY2024 grant cycle that includes review of the FY2024 grant guidelines and criteria, the grant dates, and improvements to the process. Ms. Davis stated that the Grant Review Board will be meeting on March 30, 2023, to discuss the same items and set meeting dates for the FY2024 grant discussion and decision-making process. Ms. Davis stated that letters were sent to Secretaries to reconfirm their representative on the Grant Review Board. The Committee discussed the importance of being proactive in requesting changes to the Grant Review Board members and it was decided to pursue these changes for FY2025 due to the recent changes in the Administration.

Legislative Committee Co-chair Chris Benzing provided an update on the Committee's work during the 2023 session. The Committee discussed the status of the Council's two bills that include HB 695: Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund – Revisions and Sunset Repeal (Rural Communities Improvement Act of 2023) and HB596/SB51: Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023. Charlotte Davis invited Committee Members to attend Maryland Day that will take place on Friday, March 24, 2023 at Lawyer's Mall in downtown Annapolis.

Charlotte Davis provided the Rural Maryland Foundation report and stated that the Board met on March 10, 2023, and they are looking to establish a 1 year Rural Research Grant Program with the cost of \$100,000. Ms. Davis reviewed the targeted and open topic areas. Targeted topic areas include Transfer of Wealth; Analysis of Food Distribution and Production; Impact of Solar Development on Farmland; Economic Development in Rural Maryland; and Volunteerism in Rural Maryland. The open topic areas include rural education and engagement through remote learning; opioid and other addictions; health care in rural Maryland; and rural public transportation issues. The Committee discussed the value of this work and how it will help identify topics that can help guide both RMPIF priorities and the Foundation's Transfer of Wealth work.

Charlotte Davis provided an update on the Health Committee stating that the Non-Emergency Medical

Transportation Roundtable Report is in process of being finalized and will be presented to the Executive Board on March 31, 2023. The Committee will reconvene on May 24, 2023.

Charlotte Davis reported that the Agriculture Committee plans to convene a group after session and agenda items will include updating members on GICA and the directions of the Department of Agriculture under new leadership. John Hartline asked to join the Agriculture Committee and staff will add him to the Committee.

Joint Planning and Development Committee Chair Mike Thielke reported on the APG membership campaign stating that RMC received 32 new members. The campaign entailed 4 activities that included a targeted video, Facebook advertisement, a reveal add, and a targeted email. The Committee discussed focusing a future campaign on those individuals that are more actively engaged in helping to work with the Council. Committee Chair Thielke reported on the rural issues survey and stated that the Council Committee's were tasked to submit questions they would like to be considered for the survey. Ms. Davis stated that the questions will be sent to the IGSR team the week of March 20, 2023.

The Committee discussed the changes to the By Laws and it was decided to add this to the upcoming Executive Board meeting that will be held on March 31, 2023. The changes include 1) adding membership to the nominating committee so it will read 'Nominating and Membership Committee' to expand its function and 2) to move the Health Committee from a Standing Committee to an Ad Hoc Committee section. The Executive Committee discussed the roles of Committees and how some focus on governance and others on topics. Staff sent out the By Laws following the meeting with the Board materials in order to conform with the 10-day notification.

Charlotte Davis provided the Executive Director's report stating that the Program Coordinator position was filled by Molli Cole and that her first day will be March 30, 2024. Ms. Davis further stated that Ezekiel Nosiri will be returning this summer as an intern. Ms. Davis stated that the Council hosted a successful EV Symposium in February that was attended by 55 people and included remarks from Paul Pinsky, Director of the Maryland Energy Administration and Diane Turchetta, Senior Advisor with the U.S. Department of Transportation as the keynote speaker. Ms. Davis stated that staff are focusing on legislative work, the upcoming grant cycle, and planning the Broadband Symposium for June 21, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 12:01pm.