



Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Monday, August 28, 2023, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Charlotte Davis, Molli Cole, Amanda Clevenger, Chris Benzing, Heidi Anderson, Lindsay Thompson, Gregory Padgham, Susan O'Neill, John Hartline, Ezekiel Nosiri, Matthew Teffeau, Scott Warner, Daniel Rider, Mike Thielke

Executive Committee Chair Susan O'Neill welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 2:03pm. Chair O'Neill asked for a motion to accept the May 31, 2023, meeting minutes. Chris Benzing moved to approve the minutes, Heidi Anderson seconded the motion to accept the May 31, 2023, meeting minutes. The May 31, 2023, meeting minutes were unanimously approved. Chair O'Neill asked members to review the March 31, 2023, Executive Board meeting minutes. Heidi Anderson moved to approve the minutes with the exception that her name be added to the attendee list, John Hartline seconded the motion to accept the March 31, 2023 meeting minutes. The March 31, 2023, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Charlotte Davis provided the updated financial report for FY2024, stating that RMC did not spend a whole lot of the funds, but the Council did receive a little bit under \$9.5 million dollars and that there was \$76,730.00 expended mainly for staff salary benefits. She also stated that the funds for the FY2024 grant recipients have not been distributed yet. Chris Benzing made a motion to approve the current FY2024 budget amount, Heidi Anderson seconded the motion. The motion to accept the current FY2024 budget amount was unanimously approved. The Committee discussed the FY2025 budget. Ms. Davis stated that the FY2025 budget letter request included \$300,000.00 for the Health and Human Services Transportation needed to be submitted to the Maryland Department of Agriculture by the end of August 2023. The Committee discussed meeting with Secretary Kevin Atticks to discuss Council's budget. Ms. Davis stated she would reach out to schedule a meeting with the Secretary for early October. Ms. Davis asked for a motion to approve the draft FY2025 budget request letter. Heidi Anderson moved the motion; Lindsay Thompson seconded the motion. The motion to submit the FY2025 budget request letter including the \$300,000.00 was unanimously approved.

Charlotte Davis reported that the grant review board met throughout the month of August to review FY2024 MAERDAF and RMPIF grant applications. 192 applications were received requesting 20.7 million dollars. Overall, 98 grants were awarded totaling 8.7 million dollars, including the regional councils. Ms. Davis stated that the grant awardees had not yet been notified and that the FY2024 grant awardee press release would be posted onto the RMC website on Tuesday, August 29, 2023 at noon. RMC staff would start contacting grant awardees after the post of the press release. Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to accept the Grant Review Board decisions on the FY2024 MAERDAF and RMPIF grant applications, Heidi Anderson seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Grant Review Board decisions on the FY2024 MAERDAF and RMPIF grant applications was unanimously approved. Ms. Davis shared the FY2023 MFR statement that was sent to the Maryland Department of Budget and Management with the Committee. The Committee decided to announce that they met to review the MFR report and accepted the report to be released for information purposes.

Lindsay Thompson, RMC Legislative Committee Co-Chair reported that the RMC Legislative Committee plans to meet in the fall to review changes in the legislature since the last legislative session. Discussion on plans for 2024 Legislative Session events will be discussed at the RMC September Executive Board meeting.

Charlotte Davis reported that the Rural Maryland Foundation and the Transfer of Wealth Advisory Committee has been meeting to discuss the Transfer of Wealth study. She shared the draft Rural Innovation Fund document with the committee. Ms. Davis stated that the fund would help to keep wealth in rural areas. The Transfer of Wealth Advisory Committee and the Rural Maryland Foundation board will continue to meet regarding the Transfer of Wealth study. Ms. Davis reported that the Think Tank project received two Request for Proposals. She stated that the Foundation decided not to fund either one and that they decided to form an advisory group to discuss rural challenges. The RFP will be

reissued next year based on the findings of the group.

Charlotte Davis reported that the RMC Health Committee will meet on September 25, 2023, at 12 pm.

Matthew Teffeau, RMC Agriculture Committee Chair reported that a doodle poll was sent out to schedule the next committee meeting for early October. Follow up from the last Committee meeting will be discussed. Ms. Davis stated that Mike Thielke would be willing to present in front of the Committee at that meeting on what Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center is doing in regards to F3 Tech.

Charlotte Davis reported that the RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee met to discuss the 2023 Rural Issues Survey planning and decided they were not happy with the questions that were provided by the University of Maryland Institute for Governmental Service and Research. The Committee decided to pause on the survey planning until next year and reach out to the University of Maryland Schafer Center in Baltimore to discuss survey planning in the meantime. Ms. Davis reported that the Committee is beginning to plan the next Strategic Plan and RMC staff will provide a proposal from Lacharla Figgs on creating a strategic plan at the next committee meeting on Thursday, August 31, 2023.

Charlotte Davis reported that the Rural Housing Working Committee recently conducted three regional meetings in Southern Maryland, Western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore in partnership with the Community Development Network of Maryland. She stated that the engagement and attendance was good at all the meetings. The Committee's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 30, 2023.

Chris Benzing, RMC Nominating Committee Chair reported that the Committee recently decided on recommendations to send to the Senate President and House Speaker to fill vacant Maryland General Assembly positions on the RMC Executive Board. Decisions will be made on the invitations to fill these positions at the next Committee meeting before the RMC Annual meeting.

Charlotte Davis provided the Executive Director's report and discussed the 2023 Rural Summit. She reported that the Rural Summit Planning Committee would meet on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, to review speaker proposals and to discuss the breakout sessions for the rural summit agenda. An Eblast would be sent out regarding summit sponsorships before September 2023 and RMC staff will draft a rack card invitation to send out to the RMC Constant Contact list. Ms. Davis shared RMC staff reports with the Committee and shared that staff have been working on reviewing FY2024 MAERDAF/RMPIF grant applications and moving the RMC office to the second floor of MDA.

Ms. Davis reported on new business. She shared the draft RMC Executive Board meeting agenda for September 22, 2023, with the Committee. The Committee decided to invite the Under Secretary of Agriculture, Roger Glendenning, to be a guest speaker at the meeting. Ms. Davis mentioned she would reach out to invite him to speak at the meeting. Ms. Davis stated that the 2023 Maryland Rural Impact Awards submission dates need to be moved up since the Summit is in November. The Committee decided to change the award submission due date to September 29th. A doodle pool will be sent out with the submissions for the Executive Committee members to choose awardees. Awardees will be notified during the month of October. Ms. Davis stated that the RMC is currently accepting ticket requests for Tawe's Crab and Clam Bake on September 27, 2023 and that RMC will provide bus transportation to and from Crisfield for the event.

Chair Susan O'Neill asked the committee for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Heidi Anderson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:18 pm.