



RMC Quarterly Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: September 22, 2023, 12 pm – 2 pm

Location: Hybrid- Zoom and at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Pkwy, Annapolis, MD 21401

**Participants:** Susan O’Neill, Don Mulrine, Nancy Fields, Bill Murphy, Tim Wells, Tami Watkins, Scott Warner, Greg Padgham, John Hartline, Bill Valentine, Senator Mike McKay, Terry Ferrins, Mary Handley, Ryan Snow, Gail Yeiser, Chris Benzing, John Czajkowski, Chris Kaselemis, David Baker, Jane Theory, Lindsay Thompson, Chris Abell, Cassie Shirk, Grayson Middleton, Kim Kratovil, Steve McHenry, Cindy Stone, Jessica Klaitman, Beth Hill, Daniel Rider, Jerry McLaurin, Debbie Bowden, Sara Seitz, Claudia Cunningham, Elizabeth Chung, Santo Grande, Fatimah Hasan, Matthew Teffeau, Karama Neal, Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Molli Cole, and Amanda Clevenger

Participants were asked to get their lunch and find their seats before the program began. Once participants were seated, Chair Susan O’Neill welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 12:13pm. Individual introductions were made among participants that attended in person and virtually. Chair Susan O’Neill introduced guest speaker Karama Neal, Administrator with the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development to address the audience.

Chair Susan O’Neill asked participants to review the March 31, 2023, Executive Board meeting minutes, and asked for a motion to approve the March 31, 2023, meeting minutes. **Ms. Lindsay Thompson made the motion to accept the meeting minutes, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded the motion. The March 31, 2023, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

Charlotte Davis provided the FY2024 budget report stating that the RMC received \$9.4 million dollars thanks to the governor and the legislature. Ms. Davis stated that the funds for FY24 grant awardees have not yet been distributed but plan to be by the end of the calendar year. **Mr. Scott Warner made the motion to accept the FY2024 budget report, Mr. Gregory Padgham seconded the motion. The FY2024 budget report was unanimously accepted.** Ms. Davis shared a draft letter to be sent to the governor for the RMC FY2025 budget request. Ms. Davis stated that the letter also includes a PIN request for RMC staff. **Mr. John Hartine made the motion for the RMC to send the FY2025 budget request letter to the governor, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.** The board discussed drafting a separate letter addressing the funding for a rural transportation committee to be formed to the Maryland Department of Transportation. **Mr. John Hartline made the motion for the RMC to send the rural transportation committee funding request letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation, Mr. Chris Kaselemis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Mr. Scott Warner, RMPIF Committee Chair provided the RMPIF Committee report. Mr. Warner shared that One Hundred and Ninety-Two applications were received for the FY2024 grant cycle for both MAERDAF and RMPIF. He thanked the RMC Staff and the Grant Review Board for their effort in reviewing the grant applications and for making the final decisions on awardees. Ninety-eight applications were awarded between MAERDAF and RMPIF totaling \$8.7 million dollars. Mr. Warner asked for the board to review the MAERDAF and RMPIF FY2023 draft reports for any feedback by the close of business on Wednesday, September 27, 2023. He also stated that the reports are due to the Maryland Department of Legislative Services by October 1, 2023. Ms. Davis shared the Managing for Results document that was sent to the Maryland Department of Budget and Management with the board for review.

Ms. Lindsay Thompson, RMC Legislative Committee Co-Chair provided the RMC Legislative Committee report. She stated that the RMC sunset extension would be established as more stable funding by 2030. She also mentioned that Rural Maryland Day, Maryland Day, and the Welcome Breakfast for Legislators events were successfully held during the 2023 Legislative Session. These events plan to be held again in 2024. The committee was asked to review the 2023 Legislative Review document that was included with the meeting materials packet. Ms. Thompson mentioned that the next RMC Legislative Committee will be held on October 4, 2023, on zoom.

RMC Agriculture Committee Chair, Matt Tefteau provided the RMC Agriculture Committee report. He stated that the committee met in June and discussed potential breakout session agriculture tracks for the 2023 Rural Summit. Mr. Tefteau mentioned that the next committee meeting will be held on October 16, 2023, on zoom.

RMC Health Committee Chair, Sara Seitz reported that the Health Committee's next meeting will be held on Monday, September 25, 2023, on zoom. She stated that the meeting would focus on upcoming rural health events, RMC Rural Summit health breakout session tracks and what is happening in rural health across the state.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee report. She stated that the committee met over the summer to discuss the 2023 Rural Issues Survey and that the committee decided to postpone creating a survey until 2024 due to not agreeing on questions that were created for the survey. She mentioned that the committee is planning to create the next strategic plan and plans to have a proposal ready to be presented at the RMC Annual meeting in November for the plan.

Ms. Charlotte Davis reported on the Rural Maryland Foundation stating that the Board has been discussing the Transfer of Wealth project. She shared a draft of the Rural Innovation Fund with the board. She stated that the fund will help to keep wealth in Maryland's rural areas. She also stated that there will be a reissue on the RFP on rural research projects and that the next committee meeting will be held in two weeks.

Mr. Chris Benzing, RMC Nominating Committee Chair provided the RMC Nominating Committee report. He stated that most vacancies on the RMC Executive Board have been filled but a few spots are still left vacant. Mr. Benzing mentioned that the committee plans to have all vacancies filled by the RMC annual meeting in November.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the RMC Rural Housing Working Committee report. She stated that the Community Development Network and RMC Regional meetings we recently held and received positive feedback. The next committee meeting will be held on October 6, 2023.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the Executive Director's report. She stated that the RMC is hiring an Outreach Coordinator to help with event planning and that the RMC office has recently moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of MDA. The board reviewed the RMC staff activity reports. Ms. Davis mentioned that the 2023 Rural Summit "Pathway to Prosperity" will be held on November 14, 2023, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. The board reviewed the draft summit agenda that was included in the meeting materials. She stated that Becky McCray was the confirmed guest speaker, and that registration would open soon. An optional bus tour from 1 pm – 5pm will be included on the registration for November 13, 2023, to tour the Whole Innovation Research Lab in Upper Marlboro and the Garman Brothers, Inc.

Ms. Charlotte Davis discussed new business. She mentioned that nominations for the 2023 Rural Impact Awards were being accepted for the award ceremony on November 13, 2023, at the RMC annual meeting. She also mentioned that Tawes Crab and Clam Bake will be held on September 27, 2023, and that RMC will provide bus transportation to and from Crisfield, Maryland. RMC staff have tickets if anyone is interested in attending.

Chair Susan O'Neill asked the board to share any updates. Participants shared the following:

- Ms. Jane They from Green Horse Enterprises the shared that two composting workshops were to be held on October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at the to focus on horse farms. Printed flyers for the workshops were shared with participants at the meeting.
- Ms. Lindsay Thompson shared that the Maryland Grain Producers are requesting proposals for Farmer Rancher Grants that provide opportunities for farmers to solve problems on the farm using innovative sustainable agriculture practices.
- Mr. Steve McHenry shared that MARBIDCO has an Oyster Shucking Loan Program that will launch the last week of September.
- Chris Kaselemis mentioned that he is looking for partners in rural counties that will help with developing the cybersecurity in agriculture program.
- Cindy Stone shared that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has community block grant funds available for rural areas in Maryland.

Chair Susan O'Neill thanked everyone for attending the meeting. **Mr. Steve McHenry made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded it. The meeting adjourned at 1:34 pm.**