



RMC Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner

Date & Time: November 13, 2023, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel, 173 Jennifer Road, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Participants: Susan O'Neill, Gregory Padgham, Chris Benzing, John Hartline, Sara Seitz, Cassie Shirk, Beth Brewster, Madison Bryce, Matthew Teffeau, Nan Mann, Scott Warner, Santo Grande, Mel Litter, Beth Hill, Donald Mulrine, Delegate Ken Kerr, Duane Yoder, Daniel Rider, Roseanna Vogt, Claudia Cunningham, Lucille Walker, Francis Gray, Kara Panowitz, Grayson Middleton, Allen Watson, Patricia Watson, Darren Jarboe, Anne Hairston-Strang, Chris Abell, Ron Gaydos, Cindy Stone, Steve McHenry, Keith Cornish, Bill Valentine, Cynthia Black, Patricia Eleazer, Annette Williams, Matthew Hurd, Melissa Welsh, A.C. Alrey, Ruth Toomey, Mary Handlehy, Robert Doyle, Walter Chase, Carmella Watkins, Megan Hewitt, Terry Deighan, Kevin Deighan, Chris Kaselemis, Edna Primrose, Nancy LaJoice, Jamie Williams, Jianing Zeng, Keasha Haythe, Emily Tunis, Ryan Wendell, George Tunis, Lisa Derx, Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Molli Cole, Amanda Clevenger

Chair Susan O'Neill welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 6:42pm. Chair O'Neill introduced the Rural Business Spotlight. Ms. Lisa Derx with the Chesapeake Flower Exchange shared an overview of the business. She shared that the Chesapeake Flower Exchange received a grant from the RMC to open for business and have had a great first year. The business uses rooted farmers to serve florists in the Maryland, Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia areas. She mentioned that the centerpieces on the tables at the meeting were provided by the Chesapeake Flower Exchange.

Chair O'Neill started the awards ceremony at 7:00 pm. Mr. Chris Benzing presented the Rural Community Development Award to Ms. Beth Brewster for the Shore Gourmet Curbside Market. Mr. Gregory Padgham presented the Outstanding Rural Economic Development Award to Hardwire, LLC. Mr. Scott Warner presented the Outstanding Rural Community Volunteer Award to Walter Chase. Chair Susan O'Neill presented the Rural Champion Award to Delegate Ken Kerr. Mr. Steve McHenry presented the Rural Legacy Award to Duane Yoder.

Chair O'Neill started the business meeting at 7:40 pm. Chair O'Neill asked for approval of the September 22, 2023, meeting minutes. **Mr. Steve McHenry moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded the motion. The September 22, 2023, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the financial report and stated the RMC received a little over \$9.4 million for FY2024 thanks to Governor Moore and the Maryland General Assembly. FY24 grant agreements should be received by the awardees and funds should be distributed by the end of the calendar year. **Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to accept the financial report, Mr. John Hartline seconded the motion. The FY24 financial report was unanimously approved.**

Mr. Chris Benzing, RMC Legislative Committee Co-Chair provided the RMC Legislative Committee report. He stated that a letter to the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation will be sent out asking to reconvene the State Coordinating Committee for Health and Human Services Transportation. Mr. Benzing asked the board to review the 2024 Legislative Priorities. He mentioned that the RMC Legislative Committee will meet every other Monday during session and that details will be shared soon on upcoming legislative session events.

Mr. Matthew Teffeau, RMC Agriculture Committee Chair shared the RMC Agriculture Committee report. He stated that a letter will be sent to the Governor requesting assistance in organizing a meeting of the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture (GICA) as well as seating members of the Maryland Agriculture Commission.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee report. She stated that the current RMC strategic plan ends in 2024 and that a proposal from LaCharla Figgs was included in the meeting materials packet to develop the next strategic plan. Ms. Davis asked the board to let RMC staff know if they would like to be a part of the planning process.

Mr. Daniel Rider, Rural Maryland Foundation President provided the Rural Maryland Foundation report. He stated that the foundation is working on a Think Tank Rural Research project. An RFP was sent out in search of Rural Research Grants, but the responses of interest did not go as planned. The board will regroup and continue the Think Tank Rural Research Project in 2024. Mr. Rider mentioned that the board will meet at the rural summit to discuss Transfer of Wealth.

Ms. Sara Seitz, RMC Health Committee Chair provided the RMC Health Committee report. She stated that the committee is going strong and has finalized its mission and goals. Ms. Seitz mentioned that National Rural Health Day will be held on November 16, 2023, and to review the letter to the editor that was included in the meeting materials. The Next Health Committee meeting will be held at the end of November.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the Executive Directors report. She asked the board to review the draft RMC Annual Report provided in the meeting materials for any comments or edits. RMC staff plan to submit the report by the end of the year. She thanked the RMC staff for their hard work.

Mr. Chris Benzing, RMC Nominating Committee Chair provided the RMC Nominating Committee report. He stated that the RMC Board Slate has been updated to include Dr. Anderson as 2 nd Vice Chair, adding Machel Dwyer, Dan Schneckenberger, D'Shawn Doughty, Chris Abell and Grayson Middleton to fill vacant spots on the board list. Letters are to be sent to fill DNR and Maryland General Assembly vacant spots. Mike Thielke was removed from the list. Mr. Santo Grande made a motion to approve the RMC Board Slate ? seconded motion. The motion to approve the RMC Board Slate was unanimously approved.

Ms. Charlotte Davis discussed new business. She mentioned that a Solar Summit will be held at the Maryland Department of Agriculture on November 29, 2023.

Chair O'Neill asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to adjourn the meeting, The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.