



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
Ad Hoc Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2025 – 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Zoom

Participants: Chair Susan O'Neill, John Hartline, Scott Warner, Gregory Padgham, Patty Shreves, Matthew Teffeau, Kurt Fuchs
RMC staff: Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Molli Cole, Leeza DeCheubel

Chair Susan O'Neill welcomed the committee and initiated the meeting at 1:09 pm.

The committee reviewed the meeting minutes from January 10, 2025. John Hartline motioned to approve the minutes; Kurt Fuchs seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Charlotte Davis discussed the FY2026 budget and RMC's cut to \$6 million. Members discussed the best strategy to restore funding to the target level of \$9 million, ensuring the continued support of essential operations and grants for rural areas across the State. Members were asked to review the drafted supplemental budget request, in addition to the grantee advocacy templates provided by RMC staff.

As a result, members emphasized the important role that the RMC plays in rural economic development, that is possible through the budget and believe RMC is being inadvertently undercut. Members believe it would be beneficial to send the supplemental budget request to members of the Department of Commerce – as the RMC and Commerce have shared efforts to rural jurisdictions. Furthermore, members stated that RMC is the voice of rural – which makes it more important that members advocate to legislators on their behalf. John Hartline emphasized the significance of CC'ing the appropriate government officials, in addition to Secretary Kevin Atticks and Secretary Helene Grady. Members also stressed that RMC follow up on the additional pin for staff. This had been previously confirmed with RMC met with Secretary Grady of the Department of Budget and Management in October of 2024.

For the drafted grantee advocacy templates, individuals and/or organizations who have received grants will be asked to supply the templates with the targeted legislators assigned to their districts.

RMC staff separately included a budget cut one-pager. Committee members reviewed the material and emphasized that the wording be adjusted to reflect a second reduction in RMC's budget.

Ms. Davis also informed the committee that RMC has been expanding their marketing tactics. A press release recently circulated amongst multiple news outlets regarding the 'Breakfast for Legislators' on Friday, January 10, 2025. In addition, RMC has been working with iHeartRadio to promote membership and awareness through targeted emails.

The committee then reviewed upcoming events where members can continue to advocate for the RMC, including:

- 1) Southern Maryland Delegation, February 7, 2025 - Zoom Teleconference
- 2) Rural Maryland Day, February 13, 2025 - Maryland Inn, Annapolis
- 3) Senate Budget Hearing, February 13, 2025, at 1:00 pm
- 3) Legislative Luncheon and Executive Board Meeting, February 26, 2025 - Rams Head Tavern, Annapolis
- 4) Maryland Day, March 25, 2025 - Lawyers Mall, Annapolis

Greg Padgham motioned to adjourn the meeting; John Hartline seconded the motion. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 2:29 pm.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: Friday, March 21, 2025, 12 pm – 2 pm Location: TBD