



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
Quarterly Executive Board Meeting
Friday, September 19, 2025 – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc (FITCI)
321 Ballenger Center Drive, Frederick, Maryland 21703
Minutes

Participants: Chair Susan O’Neill, Dr Heidi Anderson, Mel Litter, Bill Valentine, Rick Hemphill, Dr. William Reid, Scott Warner, Gregory Padgham, Cassie Shirk, Robin Summerfield, Delanie Blubaugh, Sara Seitz, Keasha Haythe, Leona Charles, Patrick Wynn, Jennifer White, Tanya Wright, Cristy Morrell, Amy Keller, Elizabeth Stahlman, Kelsey Keadle, Paul Ellington, Bill Murphy, Tim, Stacy Kubofcik, Elizabeth Hulett, Grayson Middleton, Tamar Osterman, Brandon Rosario, Nancy Jean Fields, Rachel Netski, Carmella Watkins, Jianning Zeng, Alice Settle-Raskin, Delegate Ken Kerr, Kathie Callahan Brady, Emily Snyder

RMC Staff: Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Molli Cole, Leeza DeCheubel

Chair Susan O’Neill called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m., welcoming guests and providing an overview of the agenda as attendees enjoyed lunch. Following her introduction, Kathie Callahan Brady, CEO of the Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc. (FITCI), greeted participants and shared insights into FITCI’s mission to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. She highlighted the organization’s growth since its founding, emphasizing how grant funding from the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) has supported the expansion of FITCI’s facilities and programs that empower startups and small businesses, many of which have direct ties to rural communities.

The Honorable Ken Kerr, Delegate for District 3B, also addressed the attendees, underscoring the vital role of collaboration between local government, innovation hubs like FITCI, and the RMC in driving economic opportunity across both urban and rural parts of Maryland.

At 12:40 p.m., Chair Susan O’Neill officially began the business meeting. The first order of business was the approval of the April 4, 2025, meeting minutes. Dr. William Reid motioned to approve the minutes, and Rick Hemphill seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Next, Executive Director Charlotte Davis requested approval of the FY2026 Budget. John Hartline motioned to approve, and Sara Seitz seconded. The FY2026 Budget was unanimously approved. Ms. Davis then reviewed the FY2027 Budget Letter and Postcard/Action Alert, followed by a discussion of the Towson University Regional Economic Impact Study. Rick Hemphill motioned to approve the study; Bill Valentine seconded the motion. The study was unanimously approved to move forward.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPiF) Chair Scott Warner provided updates on several items, including the FY2026 Grant Awards Press Release, the FY2027 RMC MFRs, the FY2021–2026 RMC Nonprofit Awardees, and Extensions and Outstanding Grant Awards.

Legislative Committee Co-Chair Kurt Fuchs reported that the last committee meeting was held on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, and provided an overview of the 2026 Legislative Session and the Rural Capacity Enhancement Act of 2026. The next Legislative Committee meeting date is to be determined.

The Rural Maryland Foundation reported that its last meeting was held on Friday, April 25, 2025, with the next scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2025, via Zoom teleconference.

The Health Committee Chair Sara Seitz reported that members last met on Wednesday, August 27, 2025, and reviewed the Updated Maryland Rural Health Strategic Plan Draft. The next Health Committee meeting is to be determined.

The Rural Housing Working Committee last met on Thursday, May 29, 2025, and will meet next on Thursday, December 4, 2025, via Zoom teleconference.

The Agriculture Committee provided a brief update as they continue to search for a GICA member, with its next meeting also to be determined.

Joint Planning and Development Committee Chair John Hartline discussed the Rural Maryland Resident Needs Survey Draft. Rick Hemphill motioned to approve the draft; Richard Blair seconded the motion. The draft was unanimously approved to move forward with distribution. Mr. Hartline then presented the Strategic Plan Draft. Bill Valentine motioned to accept the draft; Kurt Fuchs seconded the motion. RMC will finalize the draft. The next meeting of this committee will be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, via Zoom teleconference.

The Nominating Committee is in the process of reviewing 2026 Board Slate and Officers, with the next meeting to be determined.

Executive Director Charlotte Davis presented the Staff Activity Reports.

Under New Business, members discussed several upcoming events and initiatives. These included the J. Millard Tawes Crab & Clambake on September 24, 2025; MEA Funding Opportunities Workshops; the 2025 Rural Summit: “Elevating Maryland through Stronger Rural Communities”; and the Rural Impact Awards, with nominations due by October 17, 2025.

The next Executive Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Annapolis.

During the Business Spotlight, Emily Snyder of Rocky Point Creamery shared insights into the creamery’s impact on the local rural business community. She highlighted the company’s commitment to agricultural sustainability and community engagement, and invited attendees to enjoy samples of their locally made ice cream following the meeting.

Scott Warner motioned to adjourn, and Rick Hemphill seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.