



## **RMC Legislative Luncheon & Quarterly Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 12:00pm – 2:00pm**

**Rams Head On Stage - 33 West Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**Participants:** Chair Susan O'Neill, Secretary Kevin Atticks, Barry Pritchard, Cindy Pritchard, Bill Valentine, Dean Fisher, Danny Thompson, Elizabeth Hulett, Jaelon T. Moaney, Keith Cornish, Melissa Kelly, Amy Keller, Jeanine Nutter, Cassie Shirk, Abby McNinch, E. Fatimah Hasan, Letitia Nichols, Beth Hill, Cristy Morrell, Liz Connelly, Scott Warner, Gregory Padgham, Dan Schneckenberger, Stephan Abel, Charlene Sharpe, Alyssa Hastings, Josh Hastings, Mike Detmer, Bob Agee, Leona Charles, Roseanne Vogt, Susanne Richards, Lucille Walker, Chris Abell, Patrica Watson, Chris Mullett, Brandon Rosario, Kurt Fuchs, Lara DiPaola, Tim Hayes, John Hartline, Lisa Challenger, Cindy Stone, Kristin Kirkwood, Anne Hairston-Strang, Dan Rider, Megan Speake, Susan Banks, Nicole Evans, Alice Settle-Raskin, David Sloan, Molly Donald, Jaylin Hankerson-Strappy, Kelsey Keadle, Shannah Minderlein, Kira Bender, Tony Nicholas, Kaylee Check, Darrell Carrington, The Honorable Jamila Woods, The Honorable Charles Otto, The Honorable Mike Griffith, The Honorable Jesse Pippy, The Honorable Edith Patterson, The Honorable Barry Beauchamp, The Honorable Karen Simpson, The Honorable Kevin Hornberger, The Honorable April Miller, The Honorable Chris Tomlinson, The Honorable Jim Hinebaugh  
RMC Staff: Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Molli Cole, Leeza DeCheubel

Participants enjoyed a buffet lunch from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm.

Chair Susan O'Neill welcomed attendees at 12:40 pm and initiated the meeting.

The meeting highlighted the event sponsor, Forever Maryland. Kristin Kirkwood, Chair of Forever Maryland, spoke to Board members and attendees regarding Forever Maryland's goal, which is to promote and advance land conversation across the State. This is a critical task that is unfortunately at risk due to potential budget cuts.

The meeting also featured a business spotlight, highlighting SunX Analytical of Cambridge, Maryland. Barry Pritchard and his wife, Cindy Pritchard, founded SunX Analytical. SunX Analytical is an independent, Maryland-based hemp processing and testing laboratory. Mr. Prichard provided samples to Board members and spoke about the business' growth over the past few years.

Secretary Kevin Atticks of Maryland Department of Agriculture spoke to attendees regarding the State's recent budget cuts. He emphasized the importance of remaining calm in these difficult times and continuing to build relationships and advocating for programs that you care about.

Kurt Fuchs, Co-Chair of the RMC Legislative Committee, thanked Legislators who were able to attend, and reviewed the RMC 2025 Legislative Priorities. Mr. Fuchs then briefly discussed the RMC's recent Breakfast for Legislators on January 10, 2025. While the event was successful, many have faced difficulties this session due to proforma. The RMC Legislative Committee has remained intentional about what is being supported in this session. Mr. Fuchs encouraged attendees to join the RMC to celebrate Maryland Day on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis. From 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, the event will feature sponsors and local vendors in recognition of Maryland farmers, watermen, and rural communities.

Board members reviewed minutes from the RMC Annual Meeting on December 4, 2024. Danny Thompson motioned to approve the minutes; William Reid seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Charlotte Davis provided a financial report to the Board. For the FY2025 budget, all grants have been distributed to awardees. Kurt Fuchs motioned to approve the FY2025 budget; Dan Rider seconded the motion. The FY2025 budget was unanimously approved.

Scott Warner, Chair of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) spoke to attendees regarding the FY2026 budget. RMC was previously level funded at \$9 million; however, they have faced two consequent cuts. The Council, along with its grant programs, are directly impacted. Board members reviewed the Supplemental Budget request letter, along with advocacy templates, to restore RMC and make it whole again. The RMPIF Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

Dan Rider, President of the Rural Maryland Foundation Informed Board members that RMF has no updates to report currently. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 6, 2025.

Ms. Davis provided an update on the RMC Health Committee. Members met on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, and reviewed the guidelines and criteria for FY2026 RMPIF Grant Opportunities – Rural Health. The committee is next scheduled to meet on Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

The RMC Rural Housing Working Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, February 27, 2025. Committee members are expected to review legislation that touches on rural housing jurisdictions. The Committee met last on Thursday, November 21, 2024. The meeting featured guest speakers: Glen Lyons, Knoxville, Iowa - Community Development Director and Michael Pokorny, Chief Executive Officer, Maryland Community Investment Corporation (MCIC), and allowed members to review the Community Development Network Rural Housing Guide.

Matthew Teffeau, Chair of the RMC Agricultural Committee informed Board members that the Committee currently has no updates to provide; however, the Committee is open to ideas to focus on. The next meeting is TBD.

John Hartline, Chair of the RMC Joint Planning and Development Committee announced that members will meet on March 13, 2025, where they will focus on Strategic Planning.

Ms. Davis encouraged attendees to pick up a copy of the RMC FY2024 Annual Report. Moreover, she discussed moving forward with the RESI Proposal. Chris Abell motioned to proceed with the RESI Proposal; Chris Mullett seconded the motion. The motion to proceed with the RESI Proposal was unanimously approved.

Ms. Davis requested that the Board review the remaining materials, including staff activity reports. She then discussed the Youth Engagement Committee, which will reconvene on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. Attendees were encouraged to sign up. The Council has also begun the 2025 Rural Summit planning process. The Rural Summit will take place on November 19 or 20, 2025.

Ms. Davis gave special thanks to Forever Maryland for their sponsorship. In addition, she opened the floor to attendees for any upcoming events and/ or news to share. This included:

- Forestry Day in Annapolis, March 12, 2025 – Maryland Forests Association
- Community Directed Spending – Open – Portal closes March 7, 2025
- 2025 Spark! Fair – Thursday, March 13, 2025 - Patuxent Partnership
- Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated
  - Saturday, April 12, 2025 – Community Resources Fair
  - Wednesday, April 16, 2025 – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
  - Saturday, April 19, 2025 – 45 Years of Community Service Scholarship and Stewardship
  - Alice Settle-Raskin informed participants of the success of the 2024 Lisbon Christmas Parade. The event is intended to feed the hungry and had groundbreaking numbers.

Chris Abell motioned to adjourn the meeting; Kurt Fuchs seconded the motion. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 1:57 pm.