



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
Executive Committee Meeting
January 16, 2026 – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Zoom Teleconference

Minutes

Participants: Chair Susan O'Neill, Scott Warner, John Hartline, Kurt Fuchs, Jamie Williams, Dr. Heidi Anderson, Matthew Tefteau, Gregory Padgham

RMC Staff: Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Leeza DeCheubel

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. by Chair Susan O'Neill, who welcomed attendees.

The committee then reviewed the meeting minutes from November 7, 2025, Executive Committee meeting. After brief discussion and confirmation that no revisions were needed, the minutes were approved following a motion by Dr. Heidi Anderson and a second by John Hartline. The November 7, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved.

The minutes from November 19, 2025, Executive Board meeting were also reviewed. Kurt Fuchs motioned to approve the minutes and present them to the full Board, with a second by John Hartline. With no further discussion, the November 19, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved to move forward for final Board approval.

During Board and Committee Reports, Charlotte Davis presented the FY2026 budget as part of the financial report, providing an overview of key adjustments and highlighting major funding priorities. After discussion and clarification of several line items, the FY2026 budget was approved as amended following a motion by Scott Warner and a second by Kurt Fuchs. The motion carried unanimously.

Under the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF), a funding recommendation was discussed. Jamie Williams made a motion, seconded by Dr. Heidi Anderson, to recommend that the Board divide \$250,000 equally among the five regional councils through a mid-year grant application process. It was noted that the funding period would extend for 12 months from the date of approval. The motion was supported without opposition.

In the Legislative Committee report, updates were provided on the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Committee members discussed proposed edits to the draft document, including replacing the word "believes" with "understands," removing select language, and adding references to regional councils to better reflect the scope of impact. It was noted that the final priorities would be released following the state budget announcement on Wednesday, January 21, 2026. A funding request was also discussed, with consensus that while \$9 million represents the

appropriate level to meet statewide demand, a request for \$6 million will be submitted in the FY2027 budget in recognition of current fiscal constraints. The revised proposal will be advanced to the Executive Board with suggested updates from Scott Warner and Dr. Heidi Anderson. Additional updates included progress on the Budget Postcard and initiatives related to the Rural Readiness Program and the Rural Maryland Capacity Building Fund. The next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2026.

Reports were also provided regarding several other committees. The Rural Maryland Foundation shared updates on the Rural Maryland Preservation and Advancement Trust, with its next meeting scheduled for March 5, 2026. The Health Committee reported on the Rural Health Transformation Program and announced its next meeting on February 18, 2026. The Rural Housing Working Committee will meet on February 26, 2026, while the Agriculture Committee noted that its next meeting date is to be determined. The Joint Planning and Development Committee discussed progress on the Rural Maryland Resident Issues Survey and will convene again on March 12, 2026. Charlotte Davis also delivered the Executive Director's Report, which included updates on staff activities and progress on the FY2025 Annual Report.

Under New Business, the draft agenda for the upcoming Executive Board meeting on January 27, 2026, was presented for review and feedback. Members had an opportunity to provide input on agenda items and priorities for that meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m. following a motion by Scott Warner and a second by Jamie Williams. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 20, 2026, and will be held via Zoom teleconference.