

MSRC Executive Board Meeting
Easton, Maryland

The Mid Shore Regional Council held an Executive Board meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 2009. The meeting was held at the Mid Shore Regional Council office in Easton, Maryland. Board Members present were: Gale Nashold, Allen Nelson, Dirck Bartlett, Addie Eckardt and Jeff Ghrist. MSRC staff present were: Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Executive Session

Chairman Nashold called the meeting to order at 12:22 p.m. and the first order of business was to discuss employee matters. Mr. Nashold asked Mr. Warner and Ms. Deighan to step out of the room and a closed session was held to discuss the Executive Director's annual evaluation. This review process is conducted in compliance with the MSRC bylaws. The results of the assessment were very positive. The closed session ended at 12:49 p.m., at which time Mr. Warner and Ms. Deighan returned to the meeting.

Action Items

The first action item to be addressed was approval of the October 24, 2008 Minutes. Delegate Eckardt made a motion to accept as presented, Mr. Nelson seconded the motion and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Next order of business was ratification of electronic vote "Resolution accepting MTA FY09 MTA Coordination Grant". Mr. Warner reminded the Board that on December 17, 2008 a request for an electronic vote was sent dealing with acceptance of the MTA grant. The MSRC office received five responses from the Executive Board, all were in "Support" of accepting. Delegate Eckardt made a motion to ratify the vote, Mr. Bartlett seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Bylaw updates

Mr. Warner explained the suggested minor changes to our current Bylaws to the Executive Board.

Two proposed changes in Article IX and one in Article XII. All three changes are to clarify and update the Bylaws. Mr. Warner consulted with MSRC legal counsel Curt Booth regarding all three updates with input from certified public account Darian Sump regarding Article XII. After a brief discussion Mr. Nelson made a motion to adopt the recommendations as presented and to present to the full board in June. Delegate Eckardt seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. (A copy of the Bylaws with suggested changes is attached as part of these minutes.)

Discussion/Approval of FY10 Scope of Work

Mr. Warner explained the following proposed changes to the existing Scope of Work:

Objective 1, deliverable 5 – change wording to reflect accuracy in the statement. Board members gave their permission to change.

Objective 2, deliverable 2 – change wording to reflect current situation. Board gave their permission to change.

Objective 2, Deliverable 4 – discuss. After the Board discussed the wording they chose to leave it as written.

Objective 4, Deliverable 1 – Caroline delivered, no other interest at present because of cost and other priorities. Board members had several comments on this. Mr. Warner explained to date Caroline County is the only County who has acted on a regional growth impact assessment. The Board did not feel it needed to be changed or removed but did request Mr. Warner get them a copy of the Impact Assessment completed so they may have a better understanding of what it contains and discuss at the next meeting.

Objective 4, Deliverable 7 – discuss wording. Mr. Warner explained that stating “town officials” was not necessary and it should be a broader definition. The Board agreed and suggested changing the deliverable to “Monthly activity reports to board members and *other appropriate parties*”.

Mr. Warner stated that was all the suggested changes, so Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve changes as stated, Delegate Eckardt seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved. (A copy of the Scope of Work with suggested changes is attached as part of these minutes.)

Approval/Discussion FY10 Budget

Mr. Warner presented the proposed budget for FY10, stating there were no big changes from the previous year. Funding from DBED was to stay at \$98,000, but EDA funding had gone up an additional \$10,198 reducing the amount needed from reserves to \$32,000. After a brief discussion Mr. Bartlett made a motion to accept the budget as submitted, Mr. Nelson seconded the motion and the budget was approved unanimously. Note: Mr. Bartlett suggested that next year a comparison column be added showing actual expenditures from the previous year, so the Board might have a better understanding of increases in each budget category.

Old Business

Endorsement letters

Mr. Warner stated he wanted to remind the Board of the many letters of support they had approved he write since our last meeting.

They included the following:

Children’s Mental Health Initiative

Eastern Shore grant application to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for a Children’s Mental Health Initiative, of which Talbot County is the lead county. A regional application known as RURAL CARES is a partnership between Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties. The Geo Dashboard Initiative can possibly be of assistance. Mr. Warner spoke with Mid-Shore Mental Health System Executive Director Joe Newell regarding this matter.

Chesapeake Culinary Center

Mr. Warner explained the Center was applying for support again this year and that the MSRC had written a similar letter last year.

TEDCO – expansion of Rural Business Innovation Initiative

Mr. Warner pointed out that the MSRC has partnered with TEDCO many times in the past such as ESEC – several times, most recent Shore Venture, the Mid-Shore Business and Technology Incubator and the Eastern Shore Economic Development/Federal Laboratory Consortium partnership. For this initiative letters were prepared to send to Senator Mikulski, Senator Cardin and Congressman Kratovil. Mr. Bartlett made a very good point suggesting that in the future it would be prudent to also cc the person/organization requesting any support letter from the Council.

RMC – National Rural Development Partnership

Mr. Warner explained this appropriation would help fund the RMC and its programs. The RMC has impacted many MSRC programs including staffing the Maryland Rural Broadband Coordination Board, MAERDAF grants to support the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist position and they also support ESEC.

CBRTCE – Environmental Peninsula regional marketing initiative

Mr. Warner stated this initiative supports Mid Shore CEDS goals. Particularly Goal 2 “Establish a regional identity and marketing plan that leverages competitive advantages, protects our natural resources, honors our rural heritage and takes proactive measures to diversify the economy.” As well as Goal 3 “Establish an innovation center that accelerates the development of companies that apply new concepts and technologies in innovative ways.”

The incubator’s major partner is the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science at Horn Point

Agricultural Economic Development Specialist

Mr. Warner explained that the MSRC is in the process of applying for a USDA RBEG to start funding the Shore Gourmet Food Business Center. It is a \$100,000 grant that includes consulting fees that will cover 70% of the ag specialist’s salary.

MAERDAF FY10

Mr. Warner explained that the MSRC will be applying for \$24,000 MAERDAF grant to cover the remaining expenses to fund the ag specialist position for another year. The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) is administered by the Rural Maryland Council. The MSRC has received MAERDAF grants three consecutive grant periods to assist in supporting this position.

Maryland Broadband Cooperative

Mr. Warner alerted Board members that the fiber connection was completed from Wallops Island across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Work is being done on the Bay Bridge to Parole to reach the fiber hotel and should be operational by end of this calendar year. Engineering is underway from Elkton to Chesapeake College with connection to Ridgely Technology Park, construction should be complete by end of calendar year and operational in first quarter of next calendar year.

GeoDASH Initiative

Mr. Warner stated that everything was going extremely well. The initiative has been getting a great response from several state agencies including the Comptroller's office. At present a meeting with DBED Secretary Christian Johannson and Deputy Secretary Dominick Murray, as well as other DBED staff in Baltimore is in the works. Chairman Nashold met with the team on April 2, 2009 and was highly impressed with the operation.

Dorchester County Technology Park EDA grant

Mr. Warner stated that the pre-application has been submitted by Dorchester County to EDA. At present they are working through questions with EDA officials, i.e. engineers, etc. and the grant request was increased from \$2.5 to \$3 million.

Mid-Shore Business and Technology Incubator

Regional Technology School/Programs

Mr. Warner stated that he met with Barbara Viniar and superintendents from four counties (Kent did not make meeting) on May 12, 2009. They are interested in two paths:

- 1) utilizing each others existing votech etc. programs
- 2) partnering with the college to offer other programs i.e. biotechnology, medical courses, etc.

They are interested in reaching out to Joe Ross and the hospital in regards to medical field courses. They are planning to have another meeting and bringing the heads of their career and technology programs, also want to invite DLLR Deputy Secretary Andy Moser.

New Business

Mistletoe Hall Project – Easton/Talbot County:

Mr. Warner has been working with Talbot Economic Development Director Paige Bethke and Easton Economic Development Director Maureen Scott-Taylor regarding the EDA Project Summary. Currently he is waiting for EDA representative Anne Cavalier for clarification regarding the use of the property as a match to the potential EDA funds. This project is a Mid Shore CEDS project.

Infrastructure Related to the Commercialization of Denton

Mr. Warner stated this project is a 4.2 million dollar project and is only a half million dollars short at present. He has been working with Caroline Economic Development Corporation Executive Director JOK Walsh and Denton Development Corporation Project Manager Ellis Davison in regards to the EDA Project Summary. They are approaching EDA for the funding shortage.

IT subcommittee

Caroline County Technologies Director James McCormick has previously discussed regional technology issues with Mr. Warner, including the need for regionally backing up county government databases in case of an emergency. Mr. Warner has recently spoken with all three IT Directors and the County Managers/Administrators to facilitate a dialog between the IT Directors. All were in favor of creating this dialog. Mr. Warner asked permission to establish an IT Subcommittee. The Board gave Mr. Warner permission to pursue.

Other matters

Delegate Eckardt stated that a program is in the works from the TCCLES to create a Rural Residency Training Program. Mr. Ghrist stated that more programs such as this were vital in keeping young adults on the shore as part of our workforce.

Mr. Nashold reminded the Board about the "field trip" the MSRC Board took last year to Pax Naval Air Station and what a success it was. He is now asking the Executive Committee about a possible Wallops Island tour with the TCCLES in September, similar to the Patuxent NAS tour last year. The Board was in favor of Mr. Warner exploring this option.

Member comments/requests

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.