

**Mid Shore Regional Council
Executive Board Minutes, Cambridge, Maryland
April 07, 2004**

Present – Mayor Cleveland Rippons, Hope Harrington, Jim Gring, Roger Layton, Hilary Spence, John General, Charles Cawley, R. Andrew Hollis, Kevin Morse

Action Items

Minutes

The January 21, 2004 Executive Board Meeting minutes were approved upon motion by Ms. Harrington, seconded by Mr. Rippons and unanimous consent by all.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Rippons stated that the current balance is \$13,340.07 with \$70,871.11 in reserves. The low checking account balance is a result of a \$40,000 check written for a contract with the MTA. Once the MSRC has received the reimbursement from the MTA, the check will be disbursed. The Treasurer's Report was approved upon motion by Mr. Cawley seconded by Ms. Harrington and unanimous consent by all.

New Business

Discussion – CBRTCE Article in the Chesapeake Business Ledger

Ms. Spence stated that Ms. Jan Willis of the CBRTCE published an article in the Chesapeake Business Ledger in response to the MSRC February 25, 2004 Board Meeting. In the very public article, Ms. Willis criticized the MSRC board members. Ms. Spence called the article a "litney of complaints and whining because of a lack of recognition". Ms. Spence is very concerned because the MSRC and the Talbot County Council have partnered with the TCE on many projects. Ms. Harrington also commented that she has not seen many concrete results from Mr. General's MUST program. For example, during the January 7, 2004 MUST meeting, the group agreed that Mr. General would contact the towns in order to place the bus stop poles in the appropriate positions. However, it is four months later and the poles have not been delivered from Salisbury. Mr. Morse stated that he will ask Mr. General for a follow up meeting to show the results of the projects.

The Executive Board invited Mr. General into the meeting to discuss the article as a group because there are implications because of the MSRC and TCE relationship. Mr. General stated that Ms. Willis is not the Director of the TCE and has an annual contract to perform duties for the TCE. Ms. Spence asked about the issue of accountability because as a consultant for the TCE is she writing as an individual or as a TCE employee. Mr. General stated that Ms. Willis works for Tom Martin of the Chesapeake Business Ledger. Mr. Cawley stated that the article was not well written and the presentation given by Mr. General and Ms. Willis at the meeting was poor. Ms. Spence asked where is the accountability when Ms. Willis publicly attacked the MSRC with comments that were unwarranted, immature and irresponsible as she took shots at a group she is working

with. Mr. Rippons stated that the interim report was not well received. Ms. Spence stated that Dr. Flowers' questions regarding the elderly, Ms. Jackson-Amis regarding African Americans and low income minorities were legitimate questions at the February Board meeting. Mr. General is taking responsibility for the article.

Ms. Harrington would like an update on the Environmental Peninsula, MUST, Economic Adjustment Strategy, tech transfers, Maryland Tech Partnership and define the TCE goals.

Executive Director Performance Evaluation Committee

Ms. Spence, Mr. Cawley and Ms. Elzey will serve on the MSRC Executive Director Performance Evaluation Committee. The Committee will meet by June 1, 2004.

Municipal regional wastewater meeting follow up and next steps

Mr. Morse stated that approximately 20 people attended the Municipal Wastewater Meeting on March 31, 2004. The towns were extremely interested in the findings. The study shows that there can be collaboration between Federalsburg and Hurlock and between Queen Anne and Ridgely. The towns believe that there needs to be broad consensus and real political leadership with the counties and towns. The regional wastewater issue crosses the boundaries of sanitary districts, rural villages, and encourages or discourages development. The towns do feel that the Mid-Shore Regional Council is the appropriate venue to have these discussions. Mr. Morse will get the consultants idea and see what will be discussed.

Director's Report

- a. Eastern Shore Broadband Infrastructure – Mr. Morse stated that TLA Associates has completed the 9 county Broadband study. TLA is waiting for the final approval from the Governor's office before the press release is issued. Mr. Morse stated that the study has provided 2 options, one of which is to create an Eastern Shore Broadband Backbone that would cover the 9 Eastern Shore counties. The backbone would cost \$10M from the Virginia border to the Bay Bridge. The Backbone would provide diverse and affordable carriers for the Shore.
- b. Tri County Virtual Private Network (VPN) – The MSRC has funds left from the Maryland DNR OSDS Septic Mapping Project and plans to create a VPN so all three counties can access the data collected from the project.
- c. Mid-Shore Near Equity Fund – The MSRC plans to receive \$100K from the DBED MAEF grant and \$50K from the USDA to start the Near Equity Loan Fund. The EDA funds will be used for the Fund operational costs.
- d. Legislative Update –
 - i. *Rural Development Initiative* – The RDI had a great start but there was a large fiscal note attached. The MARBIDCO Agricultural Development Authority was created and the rural regional councils left a lasting impression on the legislators.
 - ii. *Regional Council Funding* – The Councils can expect \$140,000 from DBED for FY05.
- e. Office Relocation – The MSRC plans to relocate on April 18, 2004.

Adjourn

Ms. Spence adjourned the meeting at 4:17 pm.