

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on May 29, 2020. The meeting was held in person and virtually via web conference due to COVID-19. The meeting was facilitated from the Talbot County Community Center in the Wye Oak Room which is set up to meet social distancing guidelines. Members attending in person were Delegate Chris Adams, James Redman, Chuck Callahan, and Walter Chase. Members attending via web conference were Dan Franklin, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Kurt Fuchs, and Ricky Travers. MSRC staff Scott Warner and Terry Deighan attended in person. Additionally, Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) Executive Director Mike Thielke was present as he managed the web platform during the meeting.

Allen Nelson submitted an electronic voting form since he was unable to attend due to another obligation.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

#### Action Items

##### *Approval of November 18, 2019 Minutes*

Delegate Adams made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

##### *Approval of MSRC FY19 independent financial statements*

Mr. Warner presented the FY19 financial statements stating that it was prepared by Sump and Associates and it is similar to past statements. The board reviewed the statement. Mr. Fuchs made a motion to accept the financial statements dated June 30, 2019. Delegate Adams seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

##### *Financial Report*

MSRC Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented the financial report dated May 29, 2020. Mr. Franklin made a motion to approve the report. Mr. Redman seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

##### *Approval of Special GIS Project – RMPFI FY20*

Next, Mr. Warner presented a proposed GIS project that could utilize funding from the MSRC's FY20 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPFI).

Mr. Warner reminded the executive board members that included in the RMPF FY20 budget was a category funded at \$20,500 for special GIS projects that might arise during the year. They had agreed that such funds could be utilized to fully fund projects or used as matching funds. Such project investments would be approved by the MSRC.

Example projects mentioned during last year's 5-18-19 MSRC Executive Board meeting were:

- Building foot print update for Caroline County
- Ditch enhancements in Talbot County
- Erosion study in Talbot County

Mr. Warner explained that two projects were under discussion with the ESRGC before the coronavirus pandemic.

- Caroline County Building Footprints
  - Building footprint data is a critical base data layer for a County GIS. Caroline County has significantly outdated building footprint data. Under the Circuit Rider funding, ESRGC has been able to update building footprints in the municipalities; however, the County is in need of the same update using 2019 aerial imagery. This will allow the County to have a seamless dataset.
  - It is a 5 week project.
  - The cost is \$16,000.
- Another possible project is working with Dorchester County Climate Action Committee. The County established this committee to address the challenges its citizens are facing due to the changes in shore lines, sea level rise, flooding, and erosion. The MSRC brought representation from the ESRGC to the committee's first meeting. Since then the county reached out to the MSRC and ESRGC for possible technical assistance. The ESRGC was communicating with the County as to what project(s) the County would like to execute, but because of the pandemic the assessment has been delayed.

Therefore, Mr. Warner stated that there is only one project at this time that could utilize the funds set aside for Special GIS Projects. He is asking the Board if they would like to cover the \$16,000 cost. If so, the project will be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Chairman Chase asked if there is a motion to support the Caroline County Building Footprints project. Delegate Adams made a motion to approve funding the project. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

### *Discussion/Approval FY21 Scope of Work*

Mr. Warner stated with the exception of changing the dates there are no other changes to the Scope of Work for FY21; it is the same as FY20. Mr. Franklin made a motion to approve the Scope of Work as presented. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. The FY21 Scope of Work will be presented at the MSRC June 11, 2020 meeting for the full Council's consideration.

### *Discussion/Approval FY21 Budget*

Mr. Warner stated there are no changes to the FY21 operating budget; it is the same as the FY20 budget. However, regarding the EDA grant application to secure funding for FY21, the MSRC had to send a funding letter different than normal. Last year's letter and this year's letter are in the members' packets. Although funding for all the regional councils was passed in the State of Maryland FY 21 budget as the Governor allocated them, due to the current economic issues because of COVID-19, the MSRC was not able to obtain a matching funds letter from the Maryland Department of Commerce. Additionally, the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore sent an email to the Maryland Department of Commerce on May 21, 2020 regarding the FY21 grant funding; no response has been received. The good news, Senator Van Hollen's office emailed the EDA Notice of Investment Award yesterday, May 28, to the MSRC.

Ms. Haddaway-Riccio suggested sending a letter to the Secretaries of the Maryland Department Commerce and Maryland Department of Budget and Management to inform them of the situation. The Executive Board agreed. Mr. Franklin suggested getting letters from the county governments if it would be helpful. Delegate Adams suggested sending the same to the Delegation. Mr. Warner thanked everyone and said he would start working on the communication.

Delegate Adams made a motion to approve the FY21 operating budget. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. The MSRC operating FY21 budget will be presented at the MSRC June 11, 2020 meeting for the full Council's consideration.

### *Including Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF)*

Mr. Warner shared a brief slide presentation created by ESRGC Project Manager Erin Silva. He briefly highlighted each slide that demonstrated various projects completed by the ESRGC over the past year. All but one project, a ventilator dashboard, was funded in some part by the MSRC's RMPIF investments. The slide show included: Delmarva Index, COVID-19 dashboard, ventilator dashboard, Agricultural Census info graphics – county pages, Economic dashboard, and Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative (Chicken farming on Delmarva and Delmarva chicken houses).

Mr. Warner then stated the proposed projects to be supported with MSRC's RMPIF grant for FY21 are in your packets (zip file). The document is entitled Mid-Shore Regional Council's request for funding support in FY2021 from the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). This information is in the same form as the actual grant that is being prepared. Usually this is written after the MSRC's June meeting, but Mr. Warner thought it would be helpful for the MSRC Executive Board and then the full council to see them during their respective meetings. The RMPIF grant submission date is earlier than normal this year. The grant is to be submitted by June 24, 2020. Mr. Warner added that the State of Maryland budget included full funding of the RMPIF.

Mr. Warner then reviewed each project and its funding amount.

DelMarVa Index: \$30,000

This is a continued partnership with the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES).

GIS Circuit Rider: \$30,000

This funding amount was able to be reduced because projects headed by the GIS Circuit Rider are assisted with other ESRGC staff that is supported by other funding. The amount of work and effort will be the same as last year; just the RMPIF funding amount is reduced.

Online CEDS: \$35,000

This is the beginning work to take the Mid Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) online. The plan is to have the CEDS online in two years, but this project will allow for the first two parts to be completed.

CEDS Part 1: Visualizations

CEDS Part 2: StoryMap

Special GIS/COVID-related projects: \$27,135

Similar to last year's Special GIS projects, this funding allows the MSRC to assist with partial or full funding projects that arise during the year.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) - \$125,000

This is continued support and partnership with the MSRC created ESEC.

Shore Gourmet (SG)/Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC): \$108,500

The SG Board of Directors held a board meeting on May 20, 2020 via web conference. They reviewed this past year's reports and discussed the CCC request for continued partnership and funding support. The SG Board voted to continue the SG partnership with CCC to assist with financial support and guidance. The vote included SG's desire to financially support the partnership with level funding of \$108,500 with the understanding that if the RMPIF monies provided the MSRC are reduced by a certain percentage that the funding to this partnership will be reduced by the same percentage.

Annie's Project: \$9,000

This is the continued partnership with Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Regional Marketing: \$5,000

This is the continued partnership with the TCCLES to support the Taste of the Eastern Shore legislative event.

Regarding the funding levels of all these projects, Mr. Warner stated that if the RMPIF monies provided the MSRC are reduced by a certain percentage, the funding to each these projects will be reduced by the same percentage. All the partner organizations are aware of this stipulation.

Chairman Chase asked for a motion to approve the proposed RMPIF budget. Mr. Redman made a motion to approve the RMPIF budget as presented. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously. The RMPIF FY21 budget will be presented at the MSRC June 11, 2020 meeting for the full Council's consideration.

#### EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance

Mr. Warner stated the MSRC started communications with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) on March 31, 2020 regarding the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act). The Philadelphia Regional Office officials facilitated a conference call with the three EDA Economic Development Districts (MSRC, TCCLES, and Tri-County Council for Western Maryland) and Baltimore City. The MSRC has also been in communication with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) concerning the CARES Act.

Mr. Warner reminded the members that the EDA Notice of Federal Opportunity (NOFO) was emailed to the MSRC Executive Board on May 8, 2020.

#### *EDA competitive grants*

The MSRC has been in communications with many partners, especially the county economic development offices, since early April in anticipation of the release of the NOFO. MSRC provided a list of 19 potential projects to EDA on April 28, 2020.

Mr. Warner then highlighted some key points in the EDA NOFO regarding the CARES Act.

- Match is expected to be 80% federal and 20% applicant. Cash match is best.
- Projects must address resiliency and preparedness and retain jobs or grow jobs.
- Applications must address the underlying pandemic.
- The grant is open and a grantee is encouraged to submit as soon as possible.
- There is no EDA Abstract requirement.

- Applicants should go directly to the application package link on Grants.gov. It is found on page 4 of Addendum to the NOFO pertaining to the CARES Act.
- EDA funds must be exhausted by the end of FY2022 (September 2022).
- Grantees have until the end of FY2027 to fully complete projects.

*EDA non-competitive funding offer to MSRC*

The MSRC received a letter invite for CARES Act Supplemental EDA Award on May 8, 2020. The MSRC received this invite because it is an EDA Economic Development District with a longstanding partnership with EDA. The letter is in your meeting packets (zip file). Total grant award could be up to \$400,000. There is no match requirement. Period of performance is 24 months. An application must be submitted within 30 days of invitation. The absolute last day for submittal is June 7. This information was included in the email sent to the executive board on May 8, 2020.

Mr. Warner briefed the board members on the process that developed the proposed project. He has had numerous conversations with several of the MSRC's partnering organizations, including: the ESRGC, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (USWIB), the three county economic development offices (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot), and the TCCLES. He also had discussions with Chairman Chase and other MSRC members. These discussions culminated into a project that will help the region respond to this unprecedented challenge by developing economic recovery tools and technologies to address the wide-ranging impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The MSRC will partner with Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot counties, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance, and Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to execute this project. Working from the resiliency plan in the Mid Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, critical information will be gathered and analyzed from local businesses to better understand the recent economic impact. Several spatial data exploration tools will be created and distributed to all stakeholders to characterize the economic and cultural upheaval caused by the pandemic. Businesses, non-profits, and governments will use these tools to create data-driven strategies to help the region recover from the economic shock and build additional resiliency against future events.

The executive board members discussed the project and agreed that the MSRC should request the full \$400,000 allowable amount.

Mr. Franklin made a motion to have the MSRC apply for this CARES Act Supplemental EDA Award for the project and funding discussed. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All in favor signify by stating aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

## Future Meetings

### *Establish time for an Executive Session*

Chairman Chase stated that the Board needs to agree to establish a time for an Executive Session when at least three members can preform the Executive Director's annual evaluation. It was agreed that Friday, June 5, 2020 at 10 a.m. would be the best time. The MSRC staff will send an email to all the Executive Board members to confirm attendance and establish a location for the meeting.

### *MSRC full council meeting on Thursday, June 11*

Chairman Chase and Mr. Warner discussed the format and time of the upcoming MSRC meeting scheduled for June 11. They stated that they were planning to hold the meeting via web conference. They have checked with Talbot County representatives and they can facilitate the meeting from the same room they are utilizing for this meeting, the Talbot County Community Center's Wye Oak Room. MSRC Executive Board members will be invited to attend in person; all others will attend via web conference. In addition, the normal start time is 5:00pm; however, the executive board may want to change the time. After a brief discussion the decision was to hold the meeting as suggested and to start the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

## Letters of endorsement and Testimonies sent by MSRC

Mr. Warner reminded the Executive Board members of endorsements and testimonies they approved to send. Copies of each letter were included in their meeting packets. The dates of each letter are in parenthesis.

- Testimony supporting SB397 Sales and Use Tax and Property Tax – Exemptions – Data Centers (2/12/20)
- Testimony supporting broadband expansion Member-Regulated Cooperatives – Establishment (Senate Bill 2/25/20; House Bill 3/5/20)
- DCS/DCT application to renovate & expand bus maintenance facility (3/10/20)
- Support for sufficient funding for EDA and EDA RLF program in forthcoming COVID-19 supplemental emergency funding legislation (4/7/20)
  - Sent to Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen, and Congressman Harris

## Member comments/requests

There were no comments/requests.

## Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:24 a.m.