

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled Executive Board meeting on April 30, 2026, at the MSRC office. Executive Board members in attendance at the office were Chairman Walter Chase and Kurt Fuchs, Bill Christopher also joined the meeting later after an appointment. Members joining via Zoom were Delegate Chris Adams and Frank Bartz. MSRC staff present were Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Executive Session

Employee Matters

Chairman Chase asked Mr. Warner and Ms. Deighan to step out so they could enter into closed session. Mr. Warner and Ms. Deighan were asked to leave the meeting so the Executive Board could discuss the MSRC staff's performance and the Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation. The staff was asked to return at 2:22 p.m.

Action Items

Approval of November 24, 2025, Minutes

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

Financial Report

Treasurer Kurt Fuchs' presented the financial reports. He stated there are four reports making up the total MSRC financial report.

The first report was the MSRC Treasurer's Report (operating report). Mr. Fuchs stated all expenditure and income are on track and he would entertain any questions.

The second report was the FY2026 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment fund (RMPIF) Report. Mr. Fuchs stated that all funds have been distributed as listed. He noted that the MSRC Capacity Building Coordinator funding is disbursed monthly and the remaining balance of the Entrepreneurship Training Program will be paid at the conclusion of the programs. Mr. Fuchs asked if there were any questions.

The third report was the FY2026 mid-year (4/1/2026 – 3/31/2027) RMPIF Report. Mr. Fuchs reminded the committee that this was the new grant discussed at the last MSRC quarterly meeting. The funds will be used to support the 2026 Summer Career Enrichment Program. No monies have been received yet.

The fourth report was the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Report. Mr. Fuchs stated that the only changes have been under the Project Consultant category, which is billed monthly. Mr. Warner stated that earlier this month the MSRC received funds back from both Talbot County and Dorchester County for unexpended project funds totaling \$9,894.76. The projects that came in under budget were:

- Dorchester County
 - Incumbent Worker Training
 - Edwin Murphy Community Purchase
- Talbot County
 - Building Digital Literacy & Employment Skills at the Talbot County Free Library
 - Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe Phase II Planning & Implementation

Mr. Bartz made a motion to approve all three reports as presented. Delegate Adams seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion. All in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Ratification of electronic vote “Resolution accepting the MTA FY26 MTA Coordination Grant”

Mr. Warner stated that he received 6 responses from the Executive Board and they were all marked “Accept”. The Executive Board members unanimously agreed to ratify the vote.

Discussion

FY27 Scope of Work

Mr. Warner presented the FY27 Scope of Work stating, with the exception of changing the dates, there are no changes, it is the same as FY26. He asked the Board to review it and determine if there should be changes made to the scope of work. This document will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting to be held in May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

FY27 Budget

Mr. Warner stated that there were no major changes to the FY27 operating budget. There are increases in Fringe Benefits under Health and Dental, due to small increases in annual charges, and Life Insurance due to Terry entering into another age bracket. Other line item changes are: Advertising increased \$50 due to rising advertising costs, Memberships increased \$770 so the MSRC can join the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), and Indirect costs increased slightly. The final increase is to Rent since the landlord passed on increased Town of Easton and Talbot County taxes to the MSRC.

The budget will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting to be held in May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

Including Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Funds (RMPIF)

Mr. Warner stated that in FY27 the MSRC will be receiving \$385,000 in RMPIF funding from the Rural Maryland Council (RMC). The RMC was level funded in the state budget meaning RMPIF grants to the regional councils are the same as last year (FY26). He pointed out there are two documents in the meeting packets regarding an initial draft of projects/programs the MSRC could support with RMPIF.

Mr. Warner explained to the Board the proposed FY27 changes compared to FY26. Projects that are suggested to remain at FY26 funding levels are the Delmarva Index, GIS Circuit Rider, MSRC Capacity Building Coordinator, and Regional Marketing. The Entrepreneurship Training Program has been increased by \$7,500 to reflect an increase in costs for services provided by the consultant who runs the programs. At this time a reduction to the Summer Career Enrichment Program (SCEP) is suggested due to the FY2026 mid-year RMPIF grant that has allocated money to the SCEP. A final amount needed to support the SCEP will be determined after a final tally of donations is received.

Annie's Project will not need funding this year as they are partnering with Delaware and will only be holding classes every other year in Maryland.

Mr. Warner presented three new suggestions for funding. Maryland Agricultural Reporting Application (MART), which was built with support of all five regional councils a couple of years ago, needs an additional component. The ESRGC working with University of Maryland Extension informed the MSRC there is a need to add a component to the existing platform allowing farmers working with animal manure to track and report the fields where it is applied and associated details. MSRC website redesign on a new platform. Updates to the Mid-Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) online that is out of the scope of the normal maintenance.

Mr. Warner suggested the remaining amount of RMPIF funds be utilized to support the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center's F3 Tech Biomanufacturing Facility. Currently, this represents a minor decrease from the support provided in FY26.

The Board discussed various projects/programs and thought that this initial investment plan was on target. Mr. Warner asked the members to review the documents and provide additional feedback as they consider the investments. The RMPIF budget will be voted on at the next Executive Board meeting to be held in May and then presented to the full council in June for consideration.

Updates/Discussions

MSRC membership

Mr. Warner presented the following changes to fill available MSRC slots:

Maryland Seafood Industries representative – Aubrey Vincent (President, Lindy's Seafood). Several months ago Ms. Vincent had stated she would step off the council if needed as she was unable to attend most meetings due to

other obligations. After speaking with Mr. Warner last week, the evening she graduated from 2026 B.E.A.M.S. (Business Expansion and Advancement for Minority & Small Businesses), she has reconsidered since her availability has changed.

Dorchester County minority leader Jerome Stanley has retired and become active in other pursuits. A possible replacement was identified. Mr. Warner will work with Mr. Christopher to approach the candidate to see if they have an interest in serving on the council.

Dorchester County private sector/private citizen Allen Nelson could be replaced by Bill Christopher, who recently retired from the Dorchester County Chamber of Commerce.

Dorchester County private business representative position being vacated by Bill Christopher. Several possible replacements have been identified. Mr. Warner will work with the board members to approach the candidates to see if they have an interest in serving on the council.

Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund

Mr. Warner stated the final grant modification included an extension of the grant period to May 31, 2026, with final reporting due to the Maryland Department of Commerce by June 30, 2026.

One project from each county was included in the extension.

- Talbot County
 - Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan was completed under budget, and the remaining funds were reallocated to the implementation of a workforce initiative contained within the strategic plan. The project has been completed.
- Caroline County
 - Choptank Marina Infrastructure Improvements. The project has been completed.
 - Denton Industrial Park Improvement (black top)
 - Maryland Commerce confirmed that it was not necessary for this project to be included in grant modification via a February 6, 2026, email.
 - The county is working to complete on time. Final paving was supposed to happen in mid-April. Mr. Bartz confirmed the paving has been completed.
- Dorchester County
 - Rails to Trails
 - Project approved in April 2024 with funds from the Woods Road project that came in under budget.
 - The county is working to complete this project on time.

In-person support of programs to some elected officials

Chairman Chase led the discussion stating he encourages MSRC members, especially elected officials, to show up in person at events where state and

federal elected officials and their representatives come to learn about MSRC supported programs. He has witnessed that in person support to the visiting elected officials enhances the importance of various projects and initiatives.

Upcoming Meetings

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the next Executive Board meeting will be held on May 27, 2026, at noon at the MSRC office.

The next MSRC full council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 11, at 5:00pm in Caroline County.

Letters of endorsement sent by MSRC

Mr. Warner reminded the Executive Board members of endorsement letters they approved to send. Copies of each letter were included in their meeting packets; the date of each letter is in parenthesis.

- Easton Utilities solar photovoltaic and battery energy storage systems (12-29-25 application to the Resilient Maryland Grant Program AO12 – Microgrid)
- Aaron’s Place Food Hub and Innovation Campus (2-24-26 applications for a Maryland Legislature Bond Initiative through Senator Hershey’s Office and a Community Project Funding Request through US Representative Andy Harris's office)
- Easton Utilities Commission water treatment plant and water tower (2-24-26 Senators Van Hollen and Alsobrooks and Congressman Harris)
- UM Shore Regional Health to support construction of new medical center (3-4-26 Senators Van Hollen and Alsobrooks and Congressman Harris)
- Regional Mushroom Cooperative & Substrate Innovation Initiative (3-23-26 Maryland Department of Agriculture)

Member comments/requests

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41pm and approved by unanimous consent.