

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on December 9, 2020. This meeting was held virtually via web conference due to COVID-19. The meeting was facilitated from the Mid-Shore Regional Council office with three MSRC executive board members (Walter Chase, Chuck Callahan, and James Redman), an additional MSRC member (Burton Wilson), and MSRC staff (Scott Warner and Terry Deighan) present.

MSRC members in attendance included: Carolyn Spicher, Lenny Pfeffer, Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Kurt Fuchs, Kelley Cox, Robert Hanson, Delegate Johnny Mautz, Allen Nelson, Bill Christopher, Dan Rider, Jerome Stanley, Joyce Harrod, Walter Chase, Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Senator Addie Eckardt, James Redman, Burton Wilson, and Andy Hollis. Guests in attendance included: Caroline County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Tracey Snyder; Congressman Andy Harris' Community Liaison Mike Arntz; Lois Dustin for Delegate Jeff Ghrist; Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) President Tony Kern; Shore Gourmet Program Director Roxanne Wolf; Chesapeake Culinary Center Executive Director Beth Brewster; Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) Project Manager Erin Silva; Salisbury University Dean and ESRGC Director Michael Scott; Chesapeake College President Clifford Coppersmith; Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES) representatives Greg Padgham (Executive Director), Brenda Howard (Executive Coordinator), Stephanie Wilkins (Executive Coordinator), and Monique Snyder (Regional Communications Developer); Talbot County Councilmember Pete Leshner; Choptank Electric Cooperative Government Affairs Manager Matt Tefteau; Governor Larry Hogan's Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Ryan Snow; Easton Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Tracy Ward; U.S. Senator Ben Cardin's Field Representative Kim Kratovil; U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director Melissa Kelly; Rural Maryland Council (RMC) Executive Director Charlotte Davis; Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board Executive Director Dan McDermott; USDA Rural Development Business & Cooperative Program Director Letitia Nichols; Caroline County Economic Development Director Debbie Bowden; Dorchester County Economic Development Director Susan Banks; and Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) Executive Director Steve McHenry. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Action Items

Chairman Chase called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m., after Mr. Warner took a roll call of all persons attending the meeting. Chairman Chase was in possession of a proxy from Delegate Chris Adams. Mr. Warner was in possession of electronic votes from Ricky Travers, Dan Franklin, and Anthony Casey who could not attend in person due to other obligations.

Approval of September 10, 2020 Minutes

The first order of business was to obtain approval of the September 10, 2020 minutes. Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Eckardt seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion approved unanimously.

Ratification of Executive Board May 29, 2020 Minutes

The next order of business was to ratify the Executive Board from May 29, 2020 minutes. Jerome Stanley made a motion to ratify the minutes. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. Chairman Chase

stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion approved unanimously.

Ratification of Executive Board October 14, 2020 Minutes

Next, Senator Eckhardt made a motion to ratify the Executive Board October 14, 2020 minutes. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Kurt Fuchs presented three reports to the Board.

MSRC Operating Budget

The first report was the MSRC Operating Budget. He stated that all expenses are on track and receivables are also on track with anticipation of the second payment from the Maryland Department of Commerce for \$45,000 to be deposited into the MSRC account anytime now.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) Budget

Mr. Fuchs then addressed the RMPIF Budget stating that the RMPIF funds were received and all the funds to support the programs have been dispersed as noted on the budget sheet. The only exception is the Regional Marketing program that was supposed to support the Taste of the Eastern Shore (TOTES) legislative event. TOTES has been canceled due to COVID-19.

Mr. Warner added that the MSRC issued the funds to its partners as soon as the RMPIF funds were received. The partners, as they have expressed before, are very appreciative for all the support they receive from the MSRC. He also stated that the Regional Marketing funds may be beneficial in supporting the Regional Marketing Project that the mid-shore counties are beginning to execute. He will communicate with the MSRC Executive Board as the project proceeds.

Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project Budget

Mr. Fuchs asked Mr. Warner to review the Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project Budget funded by the MSRC's EDA Supplemental CARES Act grant.

Mr. Warner stated that to date the MSRC has expended \$6,785.27. This expenditure is for the video conferencing equipment installed in the MSRC conference room. He added that the grant funds are available to begin drawing down; however, there may be an issue with the grant so the MSRC has not drawn down any funds yet. The MSRC and TCCLES are awaiting a response from EDA that will hopefully resolve this concern. If necessary, the MSRC will be able to cover these costs with existing funds. Mr. Warner stated that more information regarding this project will be covered later in the meeting.

Mr. Nelson made a motion to accept all three reports. Senator Eckardt seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion approved unanimously.

Officer Selection

Mr. Warner stated that at their last meeting held on November 18, 2020 the MSRC Executive Board members discussed and are unanimously recommending the proposed slate for the 2021 officers of the MSRC.

- 2021 Proposed Executive Board Members
 - Chairman: Walter Chase
 - First Vice-Chairman: Ricky Travers (Dorchester)
 - Second Vice-Chairman: Chuck Callahan (Talbot)
 - Third Vice-Chairman: Dan Franklin (Caroline)
 - Secretary: James Redman
 - Treasurer: Kurt Fuchs
 - General Assembly: Johnny Mautz
 - Member-at-large: Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
 - Member-at-large: Bill Christopher

Chairman Chase asked if anyone had any suggestions or changes.

Mr. Stanley made a motion to approve the slate as presented. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Updates

EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance to MSRC

- *Eastern Shore Economic Recovery COVID-19 Project*

Mr. Warner started the update by providing an overview of the grant to remind everyone of the participants, dates, etc. Grants to support this project were awarded to the MSRC and TCCLES on July 14, 2020. The grant period is 24-months covering July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022.

The committee is made up of representation from:

- MSRC
- Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (TCCLES)
- Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC)
- Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board
- Lower Shore Workforce Alliance
- Caroline County Economic Development Office
- Dorchester County Economic Development Office
- Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism

The committee has held nine meetings, six meetings since the last MSRC quarterly meeting. The committee meets approximately every two weeks.

Projects currently under construction

- Sales Tax GIS-centric tool
 - ESRGC is exploring sales tax data from the Maryland Comptroller's Office
- Eastern Shore Economic Recovery Central Website
 - Developing a website with helpful tools and information
 - Exploring various data displayed in map form

Project under preliminary exploration

- Survey of mid-shore businesses

- Each county is submitting to the committee a list of survey questions of businesses. This will help develop a survey that will go out to mid-shore businesses. The information received will be used to develop a GIS-centric tool or tools.
- The current idea of the committee is that this survey(s) can be done in certain intervals to update the tool in the future.

The MSRC and TCCLES are communicating with the EDA Philadelphia Regional Office regarding the relationship of the counties and ESRGC (Salisbury University) with the MSRC and TCCLES.

- The MSRC and TCCLES are convinced that the relationship is contractual and not sub-recipient. They have asked for concurrence from EDA.
 - Awaiting a response
- An MOU and Agreement between MSRC, TCCLES, ESRGC, and counties has been created, edited, and reviewed by all parties. The MOU has been agreed upon by all.
 - The MSRC and TCCLES have not asked for it to be executed until they receive a response from EDA regarding the contractual verse sub-recipient relationship.
 - A sub-recipient determination may present challenges moving forward.

At Chairman Chases' request, Mr. Warner gave a brief explanation of the difference between contractual and sub-recipient for the Council's behalf.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC)

ESEC Board President Tony Kern provided the following update.

- F³ Tech Accelerator
 - 5 companies successfully completing 2020 Accelerator program
 - Two investments, customer acquisitions, and revenue streams already achieved
 - Demo Day is Wednesday, December 16, 2020. Best Company in Cohort will receive \$25,000 award.
- Agriculture Innovation Center
 - ESEC was awarded approximately \$500,000 from USDA for program development for an Ag Innovation Center on the Eastern Shore. This was one of only three national awards out of 27 applications.
 - It will be a virtual facility.
 - Focus will be on Value-Added Producers and will work together with the F³ Tech program.
- ESEC Board of Directors
 - Now up to 9 members
 - Undertaking a strategic planning process
 - Strengthening the organization in response to its growing operating budget

Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST)

Mr. Warner provided the following update regarding the FY2022-FY2023 5310 Grant Application process.

The 5310 grant supports enhanced mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Maryland Department of Transportation/Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT/MTA) oversees the funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation /Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for Section 5310-Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. MDOT MTA 5310 Program Manager is Nancy Huggins.

Eligible Section 5310 applicants are private, non-profit entities and faith-based agencies that provide transportation services to disabled and elderly individuals and are exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code are eligible to receive funding.

MUST is the regional review authority for the 5310-grant process for the six counties: Cecil, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot. MUST conducts a Transportation 5310 Selection Review Committee that is charged to endorse or not endorse 5310 grant applications. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the grants and determining if they are consistent with the State Coordination plan. In addition, the committee goes above and beyond its mission by providing feedback to applicants to help strengthen their proposals. MUST is required to send the list of endorsed applications to MDOT MTA no later than Thursday, December 31, 2020.

Six applications were received by the November 30, 2020 submittal deadline. The total federal funds requested by the applicants exceeded \$1.1 million. Local matching funds exceeded \$540,000.

The applications have been distributed to the Transportation 5310 Selection Review Committee and the committee will hold their meeting next week.

Upcoming Events

2021 MSRC Meeting Dates

Mr. Warner stated that the tentative MSRC 2021 meeting dates are on a document that was distributed with the meeting materials. He then announced the dates.

Thursday, March 4, 2021 – Talbot County

Thursday, June 10, 2021 – Caroline County

- This date avoids conflicts with all three counties' high school graduation dates

Thursday, September 9, 2021 – MSRC Meeting & Tour

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 – Dorchester County

- During Winter MACo

Mid-Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting

Mr. Warner stated that the CEDS meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 10:00am. The MSRC Executive Board decided that it will be held virtually.

Announcements/comments

There were no comments.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:41 p.m. by unanimous consent.