

UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL



Cecil County
Kent County
Queen Anne's County

Executive Board

David L. Dunmyer
Chair
Queen Anne's County
Commissioner

Diana Broomell
1st Vice Chair
Cecil County
Councilwoman

Ronald H. Fithian
2nd Vice Chair
Kent County
Commissioner

James J. Moran
Queen Anne's County
Commissioner

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
Cecil County
Councilman

William W. Pickrum
Treasurer
Kent County
Commissioner

Representing the General
Assembly:

Senator Stephen S. Hershey
Delegate Michael D. Smigiel
Delegate Jay A. Jacobs
Delegate Steven J. Arentz
Maryland General Assembly

Doris S. Mason
Executive Director
dmason@kentgov.org
www.linkedin.com/in/dorismason

Full Council Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Thursday, September 18, 2014, 1:30P.M. – 3:30P.M.

Location: Annie's Paramount Steakhouse,
Kent Narrow Way N, Grasonville, MD 21638

Participants: David Dunmyer, Queen Anne's County Commissioner, Chair; Diana Broomell, Cecil County Councilwoman; Vice-Chair; Jim Moran, Queen Anne's County Commissioner; William Short, Kent County Commissioner; Bob Simmons, Queen Anne's County Commissioner; Tim McCluskey, Centreville Town Council Vice President; Ernie Crofoot, Kent County Administrator; Beth Thomas, Allegany County Chief of Information Technology; Kathy Vernacchio, Administrative Assistant, Rural Maryland Council; Jean Fabi, Economic Development Manager, Queen Anne's County; Linda Friday, President, Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce; Scott Boone, Kent County Information Technology Director; Amy Plummer, Kent County Project Manager; Joanne Richart-Young, Cecil County E.D. Agriculture Coordinator; James Massey, Cecil County Council Manager; David R. Black, Cecil County GIS Coordinator; Kimberly Kratovil, Regional Rep., U.S. Senator Ben Cardin; Scott Mesneak, Cecil County Information Technology Director; William McGowan, USDA State Director for Rural Development; Michael Dugan, Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Training, Chesapeake College; Ed Vitalos, Broadband Implementation Coordinator; Aly Valentine, Area Extension Director; Mary O'Keefe, Regional Rep, U.S. Congressman Andy Harris; Faith-Elliot Rossing, Queen Anne's County, Director of Economic Development; William Barnes, Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council; John McQuaid, Broadband Implementation Coordinator; Loretta Lodge, Kent County Chamber Executive Director; Linda Prochaska, Regional Rep., Senator Barbra Mikulski; Joseph E. Morse, MCE, Inc. CEO; Doris S. Mason, Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council; Amanda Nicole Travers, Executive Assistant, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc.; Linda Adams, Representative, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc.

1:30 PM – 1:45 PM Welcome/Review of Meeting Purpose

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 PM by Chair David Dunmyer. There was a unanimous vote to approve the June Full Council meeting minutes. The Bylaws as approved by the Executive committee meeting during the summer MACO conference were approved as introduced.

1:37 PM Budget/Fiscal

Treasurer William Pickrum was not present. Doris Mason, Executive Director, shared that the FY 2015 projected budget is \$221,000 on his behalf.

1:40 PM – 10 Minute Pause

Executive Director, Doris Mason suggested a 10 minute pause as the meeting was ahead schedule. During this time she introduced the two guest speakers: Beth Thomas, Allegany County Chief of IT and William McGowan USDA, State Director for Rural Development.

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1:55 PM – 2:15 PM USDA Partnering Opportunities and Resources Presentation
William McGowan, USDA State Director for Rural Development discussed their End-of-Year Report for Fiscal Year 2013. Mr. McGowan explained via the “3-P’s that the report committed to the future of Rural Communities in the form of “People, Partners and Programs.” The number of people touched in Fiscal Year 2013 was 80,000. The facilities program projects focused on education, health care and centers for children and seniors. The USDA has over 40 programs that improve the wastewater and water infrastructure, create job opportunities and create affordable housing opportunities. USDA’s total assistance to Maryland in FY13 was \$616,848,643. During this quarter, the USRC has continued to coordinate opportunities to seek joint opportunities with its partners.

2:15 PM – 2:50 PM Broadband/ High Speed Internet Possibilities At the Local Level Presentation

Beth Thomas, Chief IT Director of Allegany County presented to the group. Ms. Thomas conducted a powerpoint presentation sharing the history and successes of Allconet, the county-level wireless internet provider which serves government agencies, schools and communities in Allegany County. Allconet was formed by four organizations partnering in 1996---Allegany County, Allegany County Library System, Allegany County Public Schools, and the City of Cumberland. With supportive assistance from Conxx, a Utah based “technology transfer partner,” Allconet was able to expand to 14 towers which connect over 160 buildings. The network provides communications services to 85% of county residents and 95% of businesses within the county. The expanded coverage resulted in faster economic growth, increased revenue, and an estimated \$850,000 worth of savings annually for the systems users, when compared with similar service levels other companies could provide. Two retailers of Allconet; TWR and SkyPacket, serve about 75,000 residents. The PharmaCare Network connects residents to local pharmacies in the area.

2:50 PM – USRC project Updates

- **Youth Engagement Survey**
Exec. Director Mason provided information about the Rural MD Councils’ Youth Engagement Survey. The survey will be targeting 6 – 12 graders, economically, socially and politically. The survey will be administered electronically to schools and during focus groups.
- **Upper Shore Harvest Directory**
Exec. Director Mason discussed the roll out of the Harvest Directory’s’ iPhone and Android App. There are currently 158 businesses listed on the App. She furthered shared that there have been meetings to plan for expanding the businesses included in the tool to include the Lower and Mid-Shore regions.
- **Chesapeake Wine Country**
Exec. Director Mason discussed the new Chesapeake Wine Country/ Vintage Atlantic Wine Region website www.chesapeakewinecountrymd.com. The website

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shows a map of wine trails through the Upper Shore of Maryland and assists with marketing the trail to include other businesses and industries which are related to the viticulture industry.

- **Collaborative Needs – Assessment Survey**

Exec. Director Mason shared the results of the Collaborative Needs Assessment Survey. In July and August 2014, the Council surveyed the following organizations:

26 local, municipal, state and federal agencies across the Eastern Shore region responded to the survey. This included state and federal funders. Many of the organizations to which our responders belong are listed: Queen Anne's County Office of Tourism; Kent County Chamber of Commerce; Mid-Shore Regional Council; Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board; University of Maryland Extension Kent County; Dorchester County Chamber of Commerce; Eastern Shore Higher Education Center; Chesapeake College; Dorchester County Board of Education; Queen Anne's County Government; Washington College Center for Environment & Society; Cecil County Office of Economic Development; County Commissioners of Kent County, Maryland; Washington College; Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce; MD Small Business & Technology Development Center, TEDCO, Caroline County Chamber of Commerce, Caroline County Economic Development Corporation.

The survey was designed to assess how our partner organizations can establish and maintain a close region-wide working relationship through: 1) Becoming aware of what each collaborative organization provides; 2) Highlighting the niche differences to avoid overlap and duplication of services; 3) Determining the common unmet service needs in the field; 4) Collaborating across state and county lines access greater amounts of federal funding to address our needs.

Our findings report that many of our partner organizations desire to collaborate to promote local goals. The most noted counties interested in those types of partnerships were: Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot, Cecil and Kent. 12.5% of our partners would be interested in promoting goals on a multi-state and regional level. Respondents found the most overlap in services among partners in the following services areas: Economic and Workforce Development. 75% of respondents wanted to form collaborations specifically to address an identified significant problem. The survey also found that having clearly defined roles for all group members was most important in regards to forming alliances. One of the main concerns respondents had in regards to the success of partnerships was related to the allocation of resources, and ensuring that all in the group would have equal and fair access to those resources. Additionally, 29% of respondents would like to collaborate jointly to access USDA grants.

Summary of Action Steps/Closing

The meeting was closed by Chair David Dunmyer.

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