

UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL



Cecil County
Kent County
Queen Anne's County

Executive Board

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
Chair
Cecil County Council
Commissioner

Ronald H. Fithian
1st Vice Chair
Kent County
Commissioner

Robert C. Buckey
2nd Vice Chair
Queen Anne's County
Commissioner

Joyce Bowsbey
Cecil County
Councilwoman

James J. Moran
Queen Anne's County
Commissioner

William W. Pickrum
Treasurer
Kent County
Commissioner

Representing the General
Assembly:

Senator Stephen S. Hershey
Delegate Jay A. Jacobs
Delegate Steven J. Arentz
Delegate Jeff Ghrist

Maryland General Assembly

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: November 10, 2014, 5:36 PM – 6:55PM

Location: Upper Shore Regional Council, 122 N. Cross Street, 2d Floor
Chestertown, Maryland, 21620

Participants:

Delegate Steve J. Arentz; Senator Steve Hershey; Commissioner James Moran; Dr. Alan McCarthy, Councilman; Commissioner William W. Pickrum, Treasurer; Councilwoman Diana Broomell, 2nd Vice-Chair (by telephone); Doris S. Mason, MSW, Executive Director, and Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc.

Welcome/Purpose of Meeting:

Executive Director Doris S. Mason welcomed all participants and presented the draft of the September 2014 Executive Board Minutes for approval. Councilwoman Diana Broomell stated that she wanted to correct the minutes to reflect that the vote was unanimous to approve the travel budget.

Executive Director Mason stated that the category for marketing was also reflected. Councilwoman Broomell suggested hiring a person for full-time office coverage. Executive Director Mason stated that the Office Support Services contract with Freddie Bell Jones, Inc. is working out very well and that she would like to continue with the service. Executive Director Mason stated that a line by line summary for all items done on the contract is available. Jim Moran suggested sending a copy of the line by line items of the contract. All participants requested an e-version copy of the line-by-line contract items report regarding the work performed by Freddie Bell Jones, Inc. Executive Director Mason indicated that the office coverage has been amended to 2 days a week and that the Washington College intern is also covering 2 days and that she is in the office as well. Executive Director Mason mentioned that the SOPPs, new Board Orientation, the writing of the Verizon Grant, which was just approved and the Collaborative Needs Assessment are examples of some of the work produced by Freddie Bell Jones, Inc

Senator Hershey inquired about the grant amounts listed in the budget as received to date and Executive Director Mason stated the "received to date portion is updated at least quarterly and that some of the grant amounts are guaranteed. However, USRC anticipates receiving USDA money in the Spring, but explained that the delay in the funding is because the RBEG and RBOGs grant guidelines are now being rewritten and combined into one program. The USRC is anticipating it and has budgeted for it, but since we have not received it, we have not committed any of the funds.

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Progress Report on Strategic Planning Goals:

The Upper Shore Regional Council completed an extensive work project, which took place over a number of months, with Dr. David Kolzow, Econ. Dev. expert and trainer for the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). The work resulted in a 2-3 year strategic plan for the Council. The USRC 2013-2015 Strategic Plan encompasses seven overarching goals for the future. Interested stakeholders can contact the USRC for details regarding performance measures, timelines, measurement frequencies and accountable staff or partners. A PDF copy of the complete strategic plan can be downloaded from the USRC website at www.uppershoreregionalcouncil.org. *Director Mason passes on strategies for Econ. Development gleaned from the IEDC training which fed the planning process.)*

Commissioner James Moran requested a detailed expanded spreadsheet for FY 2014. Executive Director Mason stated that the expanded spreadsheet is available and that she would email it to the Executive Board. Commissioner William Pickrum moved to approve the minutes with Councilwoman Broomell's suggestion regarding the \$2,000 travel and marketing budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moran and was passed unanimously.

Budget/Fiscal:

Executive Director Doris Mason directed the Executive Board to review the Revenue Statement, Balance Sheet, and Statement of Activities in their packets. Executive Director Mason explained the differences in the statement indicating that the Revenue Statement was a snapshot in time of activities on June 14, 2014 and it included all invoices received and processed at that time. The FY 2015 Budget was submitted for adoption from the Executive Board by Treasurer Pickrum. Executive Director Mason stated that the USRC had received an extra \$5,000 from MAERDAF from what was received to be used.

Commissioner Moran requested a list of all contracts as a subcategory line. Commissioner Moran moved to approve the FY 2015 Budget. Dr. McCarthy seconded it. The budget in the amount of \$222,000.00 was approved unanimously. Senator Hershey inquired about whether the DBED dollars were guaranteed. Executive Director Mason stated that the DBED funds were guaranteed and that the Verizon grant has not yet been reflected as the check has just been received.

Dr. McCarthy requested clarification regarding the amounts listed under "Outreach and Partnerships". Executive Director Mason stated that the amounts under businesses conferences, such as partnering to bring Economist Anirban Basu, hosting the social

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media trainings to the agri-businesses, Kent Forward, co-sponsoring of other outreach for the Waterman Training with MARBIDCO and the Department of Ag.

Dr. McCarthy inquired as to whether the amount can be trimmed. Treasurer Pickrum stated that doing that would be counter-productive to what the USRC is seeking to achieve.

Treasurer Pickrum inquired about the increase in the budget for postage. Executive Director Mason stated that the postage increase was primarily a result of the shipments of the Harvest Directory, mailings of surveys, mailings to the wineries and vineyards. Treasurer Pickrum advised that the cost of the postage can be minimized by bulk mail or pre-sort.

Dr. McCarthy inquired about the costs of conferences and trainings which moved from \$6,000.00 to \$10,000.00. Executive Director Mason said that she would like to continue with her trainings through MACO and MEDA, etc. She further stated that travel includes her mileage.

Delegate Arentz inquired about the fairness in asking the Executive Director Mason to do CPA work and was interested to know how to make her job easier. Executive Director Mason inquired how the previous Executive Director did it. Treasurer Pickrum stated that he utilized a CPA for 1 audit. Executive Director Mason stated that there was no record of that audit in the files. Senator Hershey stated that he would be fine with an audit report. Councilwoman Broomell inquired as to how the information was being entered into the system. Executive Director Mason stated that she is considering Quicken or QuickBooks. Treasurer Pickrum stated that Excel and all other programs can be done and accessed on-line by the Cloud.

Delegate Arentz inquired as to whether or not the extra cash in the budget can be rebated back to the counties. Executive Director Mason stated that she had to be penalized for expanding the budget. Commissioner Moran stated that just because you have to spend the money doesn't mean that you have to spend it. Executive Director Mason further stated that she would like to search through the MDA for funding as many that the USRC serves are agri-businesses. She would like to expand options not reduce them. Treasurer Pickrum stated that counties are looking for infrastructure. Treasurer Pickrum stated that Executive Director Mason headed up a group of IT Directors and that he would like to see more work continued in search of the last mile.

Executive Director Mason stated that she has worked with some on a regional basis and would like to reconvene the IT Directors to revisit the co-op model for the last mile. Commissioner McCarthy stated that he is uncertain that some of the info that has been shared on the regional basis is also being shared with the counties.

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Executive Director Mason directed the Executive Board to view the sheet in their packets listing the three auditing firms that issued bid proposals. The lowest bid was received by L Turner and Associates at \$3,500.00 and the highest bid was received from Toal and Griffith in the double digits. Dr. McCarthy requested that Executive Director Mason contact Greenberg and Associates in Elkton at (410) 398-1961. Treasurer Pickrum also suggested that the Executive Director contact Michael Connelly of Centreville.

Commissioner Moran suggested developing an RFI or RFP. Senator Hershey suggested using the two recommendations from the Board Members as they are also local businesses to the Eastern Shore. The Executive Board concluded that they would like the audit resolved by December 2014 and would like to see the proposals back from the two companies by next Friday, November 20, 2014. Dr. McCarthy suggested listing in the RFP that the USRC processes roughly 100 checks per year, the budget amount, and that it has four funding sources.

County USRC Leadership Slate

Executive Director Mason announced that she would like to put together a slate which will be voted on at the December 11th meeting by all voting members. The new chair will be decided between Dr. McCarthy and Councilwoman Bowsbey. The 1st Vice Chair will be held by Kent County and 2nd Vice Chair will be held by Queen Anne's County. The Treasurer can be held by any county and the final Member seat will be held by Cecil County. Recommendations for the other Queen Anne's County member will be decided amongst the 4 new Commissioner members. There will be small presentations to outgoing Executive Board Members Broomell and Dunmyer.

Scope of the Work

The Scope of the Work has been presented and approved by DBED without input. Executive Director Mason stated that DBED typically approves what is approved locally.

Youth Engagement Survey

The Youth Engagement Surveys have concluded. Hundreds of students from Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties were surveyed on questions surrounding the economy, education, training and political involvement. The final results will be sent to Executive Board Members.

Chesapeake Wine County

Executive Director Mason presented the Chesapeake Wine Rack Cards prepared by Loblolly. Loblolly has visited wineries and vineyards. Executive Director Mason mentioned that the USRC keeps the vineyard and winery businesses aware of

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resources available such as the tax credit applications that were sent to the vineyards and wineries as a part of USRC's initiatives with the Chesapeake Wine Country.

Dr. McCarthy suggested that the USRC should require the businesses to invest in the projects that market their businesses and products.

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM