



# UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Cecil County  
Kent County  
Queen Anne's County

## Executive Board

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Commissioner  
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Delegate Steve Arentz  
Delegate Jay Jacobs  
Delegate Jeff Ghrist  
Maryland General Assembly

Doris S. Mason  
Executive Director  
dmason@kentgov.org  
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## Full Council Meeting Minutes

### Date and Time:

March 19, 2015, 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

### Location:

The Kitchen at the Imperial Hotel  
Chestertown, Maryland, 21620

### Participants:

Alan McCarthy, MD, Councilman, Cecil County Council , Stewart Bruce, GIS Director, Washington College, Robert Buckley, Queen Anne's County Commissioner, Mindie Burgoyne, DBED, Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council (RMC) , Michael Dugan, Dean for Workforce and Cont. Ed., Chesapeake College, Jamie Gilbert, Director for Queen Anne's County Economic Development, Nichole Gillis, GIS Project Manager, Washington College, Ron Hawkins, MD TEDCO, Kimberly Kratovil, Field Representative, Senator Ben Cardin, Denise Lovelady, Field Representative, Congressman Andy Harris, Dr. William McGowan, USDA State Director, Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc., Loretta Lodge, Director, Kent County Chamber of Commerce, Doris S. Mason, Executive Director for USRC, Jim Moran, Queen Anne's County Commissioner, Joseph Morse, CEO, Maryland Capital Enterprise, Mary O'Keeffe, Field Representative, Congressman Andy Harris, Linda Prochaska, Field Representative, Office of Senator Barbara Mikulski, Joanne Richart-Young, Cecil County, William Short, Commissioner, Kent County, Jamie Williams, Representing Kent County Commissioner William Pickrum.

### **Welcome/Purpose of Meeting**

Chairman McCarthy called the Full Council Meeting to order at 1:30 PM welcoming those in attendance and requesting that all present make introductions.

Chairman McCarthy introduced the December 11, 2014 Full Council Meeting Minutes for a vote. Dr. McCarthy approved the motion for the December 11, 2014 meeting minutes to be accepted as introduced.

### **Budget/Fiscal**

Executive Director Mason announced that she would review the budget as Treasurer Pickrum was not present. Executive Director Mason announced that the projected budget for FY-2015 is \$222,000.00 and that \$112,000.00 has been received to date with \$75,000.00 received from DBED; \$12,000.00 from Kent County; \$12,000.00 from Cecil County; \$12,000.00 from Queen Anne's County; and \$1,000.00 for a specific project from a Verizon grant.

The budget report concluded at 1:38 PM.

*122 N. Cross Street, Chestertown, MD 21620*

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## *Youth Engagement Project Dashboard Update- Washington College*

Youth Engagement Survey (w/ Center for Rural Entrepreneurship & Rural MD Council) and County Boards of Education (USRC Strategic Plan goal # 6)

Stewart Bruce, GIS Coordinator, Washington College presented a PowerPoint detailing the Youth Survey Findings of Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties as captured on the GEO Dash Board (an interactive display/dashboard of the data findings).

High school students constituted 26% of total respondents with 11% being juniors and seniors and 74% of survey respondents were middle school students. The youth focus groups included over 140 representative middle and high school students from Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties involved in student leadership roles, or enrolled in technology or vocational programs.

The Upper Shore Regional Council and Rural Maryland Council partnered in the fall 2014 semester and surveyed 2,512, 6th through 12 grade students to measure their perceptions of their community, future education and career plans, and desire to live in the local area in the future. The survey was administered on-line in classroom environments with teacher supervision.

Mr. Bruce stated that the information displayed on the dashboard can be inserted into a local grant or any other documents related to youth for which statistics are needed.

Joseph Morse, Maryland Capital Enterprise inquired as to whether the survey was a part of a larger study. Executive Director Mason stated that the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship developed these types of studies around the country. She further explained that the process included youth focus groups and town hall meetings and that the Upper Shore rolled it out as a pilot and was the first in Maryland to do so. Both Western and Southern Maryland are now interested in duplicating the process.

Mr. Bruce indicated that the software is at no additional cost, so it can be used by the other areas free of costs. Executive Director Mason indicated that she was excited about the \$1,000.00 received from Verizon, which was used towards the cost of the Geo- Dashboard ([www.youthdashboard.com](http://www.youthdashboard.com)).

Chairman McCarthy inquired whether the trial results were available and Mr. Bruce indicated that the Consultant, Craig Schroeder provided a detailed report and gave the College the data set. Executive Director Mason indicated that the final report has been provided in each of the packets.

Chairman McCarthy announced that the floor was available for Open Discussion.

## *Open Discussion*

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Linda Prochaska, Field Representative, Senator Ben Cardin's Office, shared her discussion with the Lower Shore surrounding Workforce Development and upcoming plans. She thought the survey results might be useful there.

Executive Director Mason stated a summary of the results were in the packet and that on page #3 of the report, a chart lists how Upper Shore children compare to the National averages. The full data set is being used in the Geo-Dashboard work.

Joseph Morse, CEO, Maryland Capital Enterprise, stated that the Youth Retention study was of special interest because of the number of students interested in entrepreneurship.

Stewart Bruce discussed that the Upper Shore Regional Council's Executive Director and he have had meetings regarding a Youth Tech Incubator in the region. Executive Director Mason knew that starting an incubator in the region is in Washington College's Strategic Plan, as she had met with Dr. Andrea Lange, the staff person formerly charged with overseeing that portion of the College's strategic plan.

Commissioner William Short inquired about whether the percentage of children that participated in the study was mostly public schools.

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council (RMC), indicated that Kent County had the largest sampling percentages and that the RMC, USRC, and Center for Rural Entrepreneurship agreed with the School Superintendents regarding what the sampling would be well in advance of the survey. Executive Director Mason added that the samplings for each school district were statistically valid.

The open discussion ended at 2:01 PM for lunch to be served.

## **Other USRC Project Updates (per Strategic Plan Goals)**

Executive Director Mason shared a power point presentation regarding strategic goals 7, 6, 5, and 3.

### *Youth Engagement Survey (USRC Strategic Plan goal # 6)*

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship issued its *Final Upper Shore Youth Assessment Report* on February 26, 2015. The final report documents the activities and outcomes of the youth assessment project conducted in Upper Shore, Maryland. (Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties). The assessment gathered quantitative data and qualitative input from young people in the three counties. Community and regional assets for supporting youth engagement were also identified during the town hall meetings. The outcomes and themes that emerged from the assessment and town hall dialog were evaluated by the project leaders to determine next steps for youth engagement in the Upper Shore Region and in the policy work of the Rural Maryland Council. Once the

Geo-Dashboard is completed, further planning will be conducted with community partners evaluating some of the strategies identified for youth engagement.

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*ShoreVines.com (USRC Strategic Plan goal #5)*

ShoreVines.com is a website with resources to assist farmers with diversifying and adding grapes/vineyards to farms. The website has every resource that a potential grape grower/winery owner would need to start a vineyard or winery. The website includes updated informational videos on viticulture, farming and winemaking. Linkages and resources on the site are kept current.

*Chesapeake Wine Country (USRC Strategic Plan goal #5)*

The Chesapeake Wine Country ([www.chesapeakewinecountrymd.com](http://www.chesapeakewinecountrymd.com)) is a website which supports the wine trail in the region. The project also supports growth and development to subsidiary businesses along the trail. The purpose of the Chesapeake Wine Country USRC Project is to assist with outreach efforts for the entire trail and tourism. The USRC met with the tourism directors and Regional Council counterparts for all nine of the Eastern Shore Counties of (Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester) to share marketing efforts that will link our trail with the Vintage Atlantic Wine Region, which is comprised of 6 trails in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Virginia. In addition, the meetings were to plan and brainstorm strategies with tourism directors and cooperative extensions to support the trail and local economy.

Executive Director Mason stated that there are far more vineyards and wineries on the Upper Shore and that she would like to offer support to the Mid and Lower Shore to expand the amount of farm diversification by adding more vineyards and wineries in those regions.

Joseph Morse inquired as to whether any linkages were made between wineries and breweries. Executive Director Mason indicated that in some areas, breweries are being marketed with the wine trails ("Ales to Trails"). She added that distilleries are also springing up in the region.

Mindie Burgoyne, DBED, inquired as to whether the Maryland Winery Association (MWA) was working with the USRC regarding the Chesapeake Wine Country. Executive Director Mason indicated that the USRC partners closely with the MWA and their Executive Director Kevin Atticks. The USRC shares weblinks to the MWA and both promote the Vintage Atlantic Wine region together. Additionally, they do regular tele-conferences. Ms. Burgoyne further inquired as to whether or not Chesapeake Wine Country had a Smartphone APP. Executive Director Mason indicated that the USRC currently has a Smartphone APP for its Upper Shore Harvest Directory, but that there is not yet an APP for Chesapeake Wine Country.

Executive Director Mason announced that a new winery Chateau Bu De is now operating and that 2 more vineyards in the region are in the process of obtaining licenses. Executive Director Mason indicated that she believed that the ShoreVines project has positively impacted this growth.

*Upper Shore Harvest Directory (USRC Strategic Plan goal#5)*

Executive Director Mason indicated that the Upper Shore Harvest Directory is a tool used to market and support agribusinesses in our region and that the online directory now lists over 200 agri-businesses. The Directory can also be accessed via Upper Shore Harvest Directory's Android and IOS Apps.

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Loretta Lodge, Executive Director, Kent County Chamber of Commerce, inquired about the criteria for being included in the directory. Executive Director Mason explained that some of the criteria can be found out on the

[www.uppershoreregionalcouncil.com](http://www.uppershoreregionalcouncil.com). Surveys were sent out to the various businesses by category and encompassed all that we could locate in each specific category. Inclusion in the brochure is voluntary. 50% of the agri-businesses in the brochure had no on-line marketing presence prior to being included in the Directory. Executive Director Mason further indicated that Mindie Burgoyne offered workshops last year to teach the agri-businesses to market themselves using social media.

The USRC met during the summer of 2014 with the Mid-Shore Economic Development Offices, Cooperative Extensions and Washington College's GIS Department to create a strategy for adding them to the Directory. All Mid-Shore counties have signed on. The project will morph into the *Eastern Shore Harvest Directory* once those counties are added. Executive Director Mason concluded her report on USRC Project Updates at 2:36 PM.

## **Newer Technologies for Homes, Home-Based/Small-Businesses as “Last –Mile” Alternatives**

Executive Director Mason introduced Anthony Randall, Director, State Government Affairs, and Verizon. Mr. Randall indicated that he had attended today's meeting with other team members that would present on new technologies. Mr. Randall further stated that Verizon has been active in the community for 130 years.

Jose Espino, Radio Frequency Engineer, Verizon, (of the 8 Eastern Shores of Maryland Counties – except Cecil (as Cecil is a part of the DE and PA network) indicated that the status of the infrastructure is much better on the Eastern Shore. He further indicated that there were 119 cell sites throughout all counties and that 17 cell sites are planned for the Eastern Shore and 50 are planned for the entire region with the introduction of 4G & LG service. The projection for this year on the Eastern Shore is 24 cell sites.

The challenge for the Eastern Shore is the vast distances to cover with very little population density. Verizon is deploying new “small cell” technology. As there is more usage now than in the past, distance and coverage will change. Pockets or footprints will change also. In populated areas with youth, such as Ocean City and Salisbury, large populations of cell areas work to offset traffic.

Chairman McCarthy inquired about the limitations of cellular/wireless. Mr. Espino indicated that there are “thousands” of limitations. He added that some limits are set by the government not allowing certain spectrums.

Sean Christenson (Verizon), Account Executive, County and Local Government, shared that Verizon offers two solutions, which can be used for consumers at home, businesses, or government agencies:

- 1) Backup Router- provides backup connectivity for business continuity when the primary data connection is lost or is used to easily set up temporary or remote locations when natural disasters or other emergencies disrupt operations.  
WIFI- connects 20 devices; Dialup- connects 4 devices
- 2) Network Extender- extends network with existing Broadband connection – good for areas such as a basement.

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Riley Price, Regional Operations/Quality Assurance Consultant of Verizon introduced the following products:

- 1) 4G LTE Installed Internet- "Big Red Box" is an installed alternate to satellite, DSL, and backup, LTE internet (installed outdoors) connects the home to the internet via Verizon's fast 4G LTE network.
- 2) VR4G Network- is used to connect to the internet in an area that qualifies.
- 3) 4GLTE Router- is a portable device that brings a signal into a router. Can be used at home, on a boat or summer home. Up to 3 devices through internet cable and 10 through WIFI.

Commissioner Short shared that the 4G had not operated so well for businesses or residents in Kent County, as it has been difficult to open PDFs.

Commissioner Moran inquired as to whether or not the maps could be made available, which describe all of Verizon's service areas for 4G on the Shore.

Denise Lovelady, Community Liaison, Congressman Andy Harris' office shared that she had used the 4G tool and that it has worked well for her.

Commissioner Buckey shared that he could not use his at home. Commissioner Buckey inquired as to whether or not Verizon could communicate directly with farmers in Queen Anne's County to work out deals to get the devices on towers in the area. Commissioner Buckey further shared that 82% of the residents of Queen Anne's

County commute outside of the County for work on a daily basis, and that if it were cost-effective, access to the internet would allow more to work from home.

Anthony Randall of Verizon indicated that, while he could not share certain proprietary information, he wanted to highlight that investments are being planned for 2015, which will greatly improve the 4G services and access in the Shore region.

Commissioner Moran stated that politicians would like to be equipped to figure out how to get more towers, and also to figure out cost effective ways for doing so. He suggested that Public Private Partnerships (P3s) may be the key to moving the process along. Jose Espino of Verizon indicated that the process takes roughly 18 months to prioritize areas and get the towers erected.

Commissioner Buckey shared that via ALCONET (a previous presenter at a USRC Full Council meeting), a government-based provider, Allegany County used TV White Space to provide 95% of the County with wireless access. In Allegany, the farmer's towers are used to create a star grid.

The Full Council Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

***The Next Full Council Meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2015 in Queen Anne's County.***

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