



UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Cecil County
Kent County
Queen Anne's County

Executive Board

Dr. Alan McCarthy
Chair
Cecil County Council
Commissioner

Ronald H. Fithian
1st Vice Chair
Kent County
Commissioner

Robert 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: February 12, 2015, 4:00 PM -5:30 PM

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

Participants: Dr. Alan McCarthy, Chairman, Commissioner Robert Buckey, 2d Vice Chairman, Councilwoman Joyce Bowsbey, Member, Commissioner James J. Moran, Member, Doris S. Mason, MSW, Executive Director, Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc., Jacqueline Petito, Intern, Washington College

Welcome/Purpose of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 4:00 PM by Chairman McCarthy announcing that he would be chairing the Executive Board for the year and welcoming the new members. Each of the meeting participants was given the floor to make brief introductions including their background. Introductions were made by Commissioner Buckey of Queen Anne's County, who announced that he became a Commissioner so that he could "give back to the community;" Councilwoman Bowsbey of Cecil County announced, "I am not a politician, but a community activist;" Commissioner Moran of Queen Anne's County, announced that he believes in "both donating [his] time and money" as well as being proactive;" Executive Director Mason stated that she has a strong background in Workforce and Economic Development "with over 23 years of service in the State of Maryland" and has been recently accepted as a LEAD Maryland fellow; Jackie Petito, Intern, announced that she has worked with the Harvest Directory for nearly 3 years and that there are over 200 agri-businesses now being marketed by USRC via its on-line portal; Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant, announced that Freddie Bell Jones, Inc., is an MBE/DBE certified business, which offers training services, Organizational Development, Management Services, and Office Services to non-profits and the State of Maryland.

Chairman McCarthy recognized the two former board members departing leadership, past Chairman David Dunmyer, Commissioner of Queen Anne's County and past First Vice-Chairman Diana Broomell, Councilwoman of Cecil County commending them for their service to the Upper Shore Regional Council. Executive Director Mason shared that a Proclamation had been awarded to past Chairman Dunmyer on behalf of Governor O'Malley, and that both past Chairman Dunmyer and past Vice-Chairman Broomell had been sent carved awards on behalf of the Upper Shore Regional Council for their dedication and service.

Chairman McCarthy announced the guidelines and decorum to be adhered to throughout the duration of the Executive Board meeting.



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Review of Corrected September and Vote on November Minutes

The September, 2014 Executive Board Meeting Minutes were introduced for approval with the minor revision recommended by Councilwoman Broomell to adjust the travel budget from \$5K to \$3K.

***The Motion was made by Commissioner Moran and seconded by Councilwoman Bowsbey. The Motion was passed unanimously.**

Next, the November 2014 Executive Board Meeting Minutes were introduced for approval.

***The Motion was made by Commissioner Buckey and seconded by Councilwoman Bowsbey to approve the November 2014 Minutes. The Motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Buckey inquired as to why the November 2014 Minutes were just being introduced for approval; Executive Director Mason shared that the November 2014 Minutes were being approved in February, because there were no December or January Executive Board Meetings.

Approval of Annual Meetings (updates for Calendar FY 2015)

The Executive Board reviewed the proposed Upper Shore Regional Council Meetings for 2015. They are: February 12, 2015; March 26, 2015, June 18, 2015 (immediately following Full Council), September 24, 2015 (immediately following Full Council) , and December 10, 2015 (Immediately following Full Council).

The Special Meetings were listed as January 8, 2015, 11:45-12:45 (Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, Maryland, MD Joint Regional Council's Meeting- Winter MACo) and August 14, 2015 (Joint Regional Council's noon luncheon meeting @ Summer MACo).

The Upper Shore Regional Council Meetings for 2015 were introduced for approval with the recommendation that the March 26, 2015 meeting be changed to March 19, 2015, due to board member calendar conflicts.

***The Motion was made by Commissioner Buckey and seconded by Councilwoman Bowsbey to approve the Upper Shore Regional Council Meetings for 2015 with a minor revision to change the March 26, 2015 meeting date to March 19, 2015.**

Chairman McCarthy turned the meeting over to Executive Director Mason. Ms. Mason announced that she would discuss Budget/Fiscal pending Treasurer Pickrum's joining the meeting by conference call.

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Budget Fiscal

Executive Director Mason reviewed the Upper Shore Regional Council Budget for FY 2015, stating that beginning bank balance was \$104,944.23 plus a total expected allocation of \$220,000.00. The total allocation plus beginning balance is \$326,944.23. The amount received to date from USRC's funding sources is \$74,500. Each of the Executive Board members reviewed the Upper Shore Regional Council Budget FY 2015 in their packets.

Commissioner Buckey inquired as to whether or not Queen Anne's County gave less than the other counties. Executive Director Mason shared that all counties gave the equal amount of \$12K.

Executive Director Mason discussed the \$35,000.00 expected to be allocated from the USDA as a part of an Unsolicited Grant funds for the Harvest Directory and the Vineyard Project. Executive Director Mason then directed the Executive Board to review the display of the Chesapeake Wine Country.

Executive Director Mason announced that the \$1,000.00 grant received from Verizon for the Youth Retention Project's GEO-Dashboard was also included in the allocations column of the budget. Executive Director Mason further state that USRC's Maryland DBED allocations are received quarterly.

Councilwoman Bowsbey discussed that she has not yet seen the allotment of the \$12,000.00 for USRC by Cecil County, in the FY 2016 allocations but would look into it.

Chairman McCarthy suggested that the budget change to the period of the Board Year. Executive Director Mason agreed stating that there were a few things out-of-alignment with the Board and budget year and that it should be shifted to reflect when new members are selected. Chairman McCarthy indicated that it would make sense for the Executive Board to work with a budget that they will spend. Another possibility is to shift the terms to match the Budget FY.

Commissioner Buckey inquired about the budget's line item for contracts. Executive Director Mason directed the Board to review the listing of USRC's contracts in their packet for review. Executive Director Mason requested that the Board review and approve the new Loblolly contract for \$10,500.00 indicating that the contract was to further develop the Chesapeake Wine County website and work on the shoreVines website to include training videos, expert wine videos, vineyard management company and marketing of the wineries. Commissioner Buckey suggested that the letterhead be changed on the contract to reflect the names of the new Executive Board members.

Councilwoman Bowsbey recommended that the Executive Director consider (for the Chesapeake Wine Country) a promotional such as done by Sunny D Lakes in New York, (a Christmas Tour) in which each vineyard provides a ornament on the grape wine wreath as a promotional for its wine trails.



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Commissioner Buckey asked if bids were put out for the Loblolly contract. Executive Director Mason indicated that the Board in the past used Loblolly and that she is pleased with their work on ShoreVines and the Chesapeake Wine Country. The contract is by definition a “small contract.”

The contract for Loblolly in the amount of \$10,500.00 was introduced for approval.

***Councilwoman Bowsbey made a Motion to approve the contract for Loblolly in the amount of \$10,500.00. Commissioner Moran seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Moran inquired as to whether the amount was already allocated; Executive Director Mason confirmed that the amount had been allocated for the Loblolly contract and also suggested that the Executive Board visit the website at www.chesapeakewinecountrymd.com to see the project. Commissioner Buckey commended Executive Director Mason on doing a good job and inquired as to what she wanted to do with the surplus presently on the books. Executive Director Mason indicated that goals 1 and 2 of the USRC Strategic Plan: Broadband (Goal #1), Workforce (Goal#2) and Harvest Directory/Wine Country Expansion, should be the focus of those expenditures.

Executive Director Mason discussed the Audit Proposals received by the various auditors. Chairman McCarthy indicated that \$7,000.00 was too much considering the overall budget and the average number of checks written monthly by the organization. It was further discussed that Craig White, Cecil County Budget Director would look at the books and make suggestions. Councilwoman Bowsbey indicated that she is in agreement with Mr. White making suggestions, so long as the Bylaws do not require a full blown formal audit.

The Executive Board further inquired about which checks and balances were in place. Executive Director Mason shared that she writes and signs the checks, retaining the invoices and a copy of the check, then sends them off to the vendor. Other small items, for which she cannot write a check on-site, she pays and then gets reimbursements, which are reviewed (with receipts) and signed off on by the Board Chair.

Commissioner Buckey inquired about the role of the USRC's Treasurer. Executive Director Mason indicated that the Treasurer is on the account with the bank, and can check the balances and the reports. She further shared that the Treasurer, William Pickrum has recently recommended QuickBooks for our use.

Commissioner Buckey suggested that two signatures should be added to every single check written and that QuickBooks will tie into the checking account directly. Executive Director Mason discussed having Treasurer Pickrum sign and review bank balances. Chairman McCarthy suggested also showing the Treasurer the check register and having him sign off on it monthly. Commissioner Buckey suggested completing a balance sheet regularly.

Commissioner Buckey indicated that he would help Executive Director Mason set up QuickBooks once the program is purchased.



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Project Updates and Discussion

Review of Recently Submitted DBED Quarterly Report

Executive Director Mason shared that she provides quarterly updates to the Department of Business Economic Development (MD DBED). The reports include the Scope of Work outline the 7 strategic plan goals and the work done. She indicated that the next report is due by the 30th of next month. A copy of FY 2015 – 2nd Quarter Report submitted to the Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED), (provided in the Executive Board Members packets) was reviewed.

Youth Engagement Survey

Executive Director Mason reviewed the Youth Engagement Survey (Goal 6). The survey was conducted in partnership with the Upper Shore Regional Council, Rural Maryland Council, and Center for Rural Entrepreneurship with a great deal of support and oversight from the school administrators and staff.

In the fall 2014 semester, 2,512 6th through 12th grade students participated in the survey 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 online in classroom environments with teacher supervision. High school students constituted 26% of the total respondents, with 11% being juniors and seniors. 74% of survey respondents were middle school students.

The youth focus groups included over 175 representative middle school and high school students from Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties involved in leadership roles, or enrolled in technology or vocational programs.

Executive Director Mason shared that the data will be displayed on a GEO Dashboard, which Washington College's GIS Department is currently constructing engaging some of the youth, who were involved in the Project from Kent County High School.

Review of Grant Status Report

The Executive Board reviewed the grant status report provided by Freddie Bell Jones, Inc. Executive Director Mason shared that the outstanding grant proposals are the Blackstone Ecological Grant and the USDA Unsolicited Grant.

Chesapeake Wine Country (Goal 5)

Executive Director Mason reported that since last Fall, the Upper Shore Regional Council has been partnering with New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, to share in its work with marketing Chesapeake Wine Country via the Vintage Atlantic Wine Region. There are 6 total trails as a part of the Vintage Atlantic Wine Region. All of the other trails are adding Chesapeake Wine Country's logo and link to their website and vice versa to market the entire 4 state wine region.

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Commissioner Buckey invited Executive Director Mason to come to Queen Anne's County and be interviewed on QATV regarding the Chesapeake Wine Trail. Commissioner Buckey will make arrangements for the interview.

Commissioner McCarthy inquired as to whether the USRC was connected with WCTR, a radio station which connects the farms. Executive Director Mason indicated that the USRC does in fact have a spot on the station which airs daily.

Upper Shore Harvest Directory (Goal 5)

Jackie Petito, Intern, Washington College reported that 200 agri-businesses are on the Upper Shore Harvest Directory website. There are currently 165 in the print brochure. 35 new businesses have been added since the print version was released last Fall. Executive Director Mason reported that the Upper Shore Harvest Directory APP can be found by going to the (Android and IOS) APP stores and searching "Harvest Directory". Businesses such as alpaca farms, petting zoos, dairy farms, etc. can be found in the Directory,

Rural Maryland Council

Executive Director Mason reported that the Rural Maryland Council (RMC) connects all 18 counties that are rural in the State of Maryland. Executive Director Mason sits as the 1st Vice-Chairman for the RMC and is currently working on the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF), which if passed, will funnel \$6 million dollars in the budget for rural counties to include assistance with broadband infrastructure. The RMC is currently scheduling meetings with key legislators to gain support. The regional councils all sit on the RMC's Board and will benefit from the RMPIF.

LEAD Maryland

Executive Director Mason announced that she was recently accepted into "LEAD Maryland" as a fellow. The mission of LEAD Maryland is to identify and develop leadership across the state to serve agriculture, natural resources and rural communities.

March 26, 2015 Full Council Meeting Agenda (Kent)

The Full Council meeting has been moved to March 19, 2015, and is being planned for Kent County.

Taste of the Eastern Shore

The Taste of the Eastern Shore, a Legislative Event is scheduled for February 19, 2015 in Annapolis, Maryland. Tickets are \$50.00. Executive Director Mason invited the Executive Board to attend indicating that the USRC could do the registration on any interested member's behalf. The "Taste of the Eastern Shore" reception provides an opportunity to meet and interact with legislators and partners from all across the state, while sampling Eastern Shore cuisine.

Upper Shore Regional Council Orientation

Executive Director Mason discussed the Board Orientation binders and announced that she was able to meet with the new members individually, and had done so with each. She then directed the Board Members to



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review the SOPs, which were provided in a binder containing the current strategic plan and goals, performance plans, business resources list, partners list, time sheets, expense forms and PR Media List.

Councilwoman Bowsbey recommended that the *Cecil Guardian* and *The Herald* (out of Rising Sun) be included on the organization's press list. Executive Director Mason indicated that the SOPs are a growing and living document.

Open Forum for all Executive Leadership

Chairman McCarthy suggested that the USRC host a picnic at a vineyard and to invite the local communities to participate in possibly July. The Executive Board discussed following up with the vineyards regarding hosting such an event in their off season.

Commissioner Buckey moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 PM, which was seconded by Commissioner Moran.

Next Meeting: March 19, 2015 immediately following the Full Council meeting.