



UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Cecil County
Kent County
Queen Anne's County

Executive Board

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
Chair
Cecil County
Councilman

Ronald H. Fithian
1st Vice Chair
Kent County
Commissioner

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

Joyce Bowsbey
Member
Cecil County
Councilwoman

James J. Moran
Member
Queen Anne's
Commissioner

William W. Pickrum
Kent County
Commissioner
Treasurer

Senator Steven Hershey
Delegate Steve Arentz
Delegate Jay Jacobs
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: March 19, 2015, 3:45 PM – 4:03 PM

Location: The Kitchen at the Imperial Hotel
Chestertown, Maryland, 21620

Participants:

Dr. Alan McCarthy, Chairman, William Short, Kent County Commissioner (representing Kent County Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian), Robert Buckey, Queen Anne's County Commissioner, Jim Moran, Queen Anne's County Commissioner, Jamie Williams (representing Kent County Commissioner, William Pickrum), Joanne Richart-Young (representing Cecil County Councilwoman Joyce Bowsbey), Member, Doris S. Mason, Executive Director, and Ummu Bradley Thomas, Consultant, Freddie Bell Jones, Inc.

Welcome/Purpose of Meeting

Executive Director Doris S. Mason announced that the meeting would be a shortened one as the Full Council Meeting had just concluded.

Executive Director Mason presented the February 12, 2015 Executive Board Meeting Minutes for a vote.

Chairman McCarthy stated that since two of the members were not present (Councilwoman Bowsbey and Commissioner Pickrum) and that the attending proxies (Joanne Richart-Young, Jamie Williams and Commissioner William Short) were not in attendance during the February 12, 2015 Executive Board Meeting that the vote on the Minutes be postponed until the next meeting.

Commissioner Moran made the motion to postpone the vote on the February 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Buckey. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Mason announced that the following agenda items would be reviewed again at the next meeting and had just been reviewed in the Full Council Meeting: Project Updates and Discussions such as the Youth Engagement Survey (USRC Strategic Plan goal # 6), Chesapeake Wine Country (USRC Strategic Plan goal #5), Upper Shore Harvest Directory (USRC Strategic Plan goal #5), Rural Maryland Council Work (USRC Strategic Plan goal #7) LEAD Maryland Update and Open Forum for all Executive Leadership including Legislative Updates.

*122 N. Cross St., Chestertown, MD 21620
(410) 810-2124 – Phone; FAX (866) 571-5607*

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Budget/Fiscal

Executive Director Mason further announced that she would review the FY 2015 Budget and current account balances as copied in the meeting packets. USRC recently received \$37,500.00, the second quarterly DBED Drawdown for the FY (as Commissioner Pickrum was absent).

A copy of the Upper Shore Regional Council's Funding Sources approved September 18, 2014 was provided in the Executive Board's packets. Funds received-to-date for FY2015 were announced as follows:

DBED	\$75,000.00
Kent County	\$12,000.00
Queen Anne's County	\$12,000.00
Cecil County	\$12,000.00
Verizon	\$1,000.00

The total received allocations to date were listed as \$112,000.00.

EDA

Executive Director Mason announced that the USRC has secured an appointment scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2015 with Alma Plummer, Economic Development Specialist, Philadelphia Regional Office, US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, for she and Chairman McCarthy to discuss the feasibility of the Upper Shore Region (via Cecil County) becoming an Economically Distressed District (EDD).

Executive Director Mason explained that if at least one county could qualify, the others would benefit as a result of the qualification. She further indicated that the USRC is anticipating qualifying the region based upon statistics, for Cecil County.

The USRC has pulled together some initial statistics with consultants Freddie Bell Jones Inc. such as:

Cecil County has the 6th highest unemployment rate in our state and highest crime rate in our state [and also has within it the municipality with the highest crime rate (Elkton)]. Queen Anne's, although it is a wealthier county in our state, is 4th from the lowest weekly wage (which indicates that those who are the working poor are not doing well at all); although there are pockets of extreme wealth in the county.

With regards to employment growth over the last 5 years (out of 24 jurisdictions), Kent is 24th (last place at -8.8%), Cecil is 19th (-6.9%), and Queen Anne's is 15th (at -4.9%).

When we consider ranking per pupil funding in our school systems, Queen Anne's is (24th) last in the state and Cecil is 21st (out of 24).



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Chairman McCarthy asked whether or not the fact that 45% of the Cecil County Public School's students are on Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) could be a factor. He also indicated that a business will soon close in Cecil County with 55 employees.

When we consider ranking per pupil funding in our school systems, Queen Anne's County ranked lowest in the State.

Executive Director Mason indicated that to become an EDA project, the project must be located in a region that, on the date EDA receives an application for Investment Assistance, is subject to one (or more) of the following economic distress criteria:

- (1) An unemployment rate that is, for the most recent twenty-four (24) month period for which data are available, at least one (1) percentage point greater than the national unemployment rate.
- (2) Per capita income that is, for the most recent period for which data are available, eighty (80) percent or less of the national average per capita income; or
- (3) A Special Need, as determined by EDA

Commissioner Buckey indicated that he would like to join both Executive Director Mason and Chairman McCarthy for the meeting with Economic Development Specialist Plummer.

Audit Decisions

Chairman McCarthy announced that it had been decided (due to the low amount of checks written by the USRC) that the audit will be conducted through the Kent County's fiscal department (overseen by County Administrator Ernie Crofoot) as opposed to paying an exorbitant amount of money for a full-blown audit. He further announced that the audit will be handled amongst the three Counties on a rotational basis.

Bookkeeping Software Update

Executive Director Mason announced that she submitted an order to Kent County's IT Department to order and upload the QuickBooks to her system. She further announced that she would be contacting Commissioner Buckey regarding the customized set-up once received and uploaded.

Review of Grant Status Report

Executive Director Mason indicated that the Grant Status Report is available in each packet. She indicated that the Blackstone Foundation grant request will be resubmitted to USDA as an unsolicited ecological Grape Production and Management Proposal and that a Family and Community Development Partnership of Kent County- Building Assets- Youth Leadership grant will be submitted to Verizon in the very near future.

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Fall Strategic Planning Updates

Executive Director Mason announced that the Upper Shore Regional Council will renew its strategic plan, 2013-2015, in the Fall during its previously scheduled Thursday, September 24, 2015 (as listed on the 2015 meetings list) meeting and will host an all day session.

Commissioner Moran initiated the Motion to adjourn; which was seconded by Commissioner Short. The meeting adjourned at 4:03 PM.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, April 23, 2015, 5:30 PM – 6:45 PM, Upper Shore Regional Council, 122 N. Cross Street, Chestertown, MD 21620.

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