

Tri-County Council
for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
Serving Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties

Executive Board Meeting Minutes
Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center
July 22, 2020

Joe Mitrecic, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, Executive Board to order on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center in Salisbury, at 6:14 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Joe Mitrecic and Ted Elder, Worcester County, Josh Hastings, and John Cannon, Wicomico County, Eldon Willing and Randy Laird standing with proxy for Rex Simpkins and Senator Mary Beth Carozza.

Guests in attendance: Mindie Burgoyne, Maryland Department of Commerce, and Senator Addie Eckhardt,

Staff in attendance: Greg Padgham, Brad Bellacicco, Becca Webster, Monique Snyder and Brenda Howard.

A quorum was present.

Voting members unanimously approved the minutes of the May 20, 2020 as written.

Old Business

Shore Transit Update – Brad Bellacicco

Routes

- COVID Response – Shore Transit is still requiring masks for all riders and the driver's area on its bus remains enclosed.
- Fixed Route ridership was initially down to 30%, but has been climbing daily and is now at 77%.
- Summer loops have been helping people get to jobs in Ocean City, but may need to run longer. Shore Transit is still serving the Ocean City Inlet but Ocean City Transit is helping out by taking riders from the West Ocean City Park and Ride into Ocean City on Friday and Saturdays when traffic is busiest in the resort.

- Salisbury University routes will start on August 10th and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore will start some programs on August 3rd .
- Origin To Destination (OTD) is still operating at about 40% as senior centers and non-profits remain closed.
- Shore Transit has effectively passed the Worcester SSTAP rides & funding to the Worcester County Office of Aging

Vehicles

- The Shore Transit revenue fleet is currently at thirty-nine.
- Of the seven small and seven medium buses on order as of the last meeting in May, we have now received three of the small buses and they are in operation. The remaining three should arrive this fall/winter and the mediums in the spring.
- Summer temperatures are taking a toll on the buses especially A/C systems & diesel vehicles

Staffing

- Shore Transit currently has eighty-eight employees of which fifty-three are drivers. We are continuing to adjust to the workload demands and COVID-19 concerns. Eight drivers are out for medical concerns, and three are working from home.
- One supervisor and two family members tested positive for COVID-19. They are experiencing no symptoms so far but have been quarantined.
- Four drivers were furloughed due to the reduced OTD workload, and three have returned to the fixed routes.
- We are looking to hire two more drivers for the Salisbury University routes.

Funding

- We are still waiting to close June's accounting, but Shore Transit should end FY20 balanced due to the reduction in demand in OTD services and less overtime. Lower fuel prices and the strategy of using smaller buses have contributed to reducing overall costs to operate.
- FY2021 funding is still in question. The State Transportation Fund is down, equating to approximately a 15-25% cut in funding.

- Federal CARES grant should be forthcoming to help with COVID expenses and lost revenue. We could not be operating the full schedule now without this grant.
- Shore Transit appreciates the FY21 county support received though matching funds.
- We still need to secure the FTA and MTA funds, and the biggest question outstanding is still the Department of Human Resources (DHS) \$1.6M grant, which is 22% of our funding. The grant paperwork has been reviewed and modified by Attorney General's Office. Funding ratios are listed below:

FTA/MTA	50%
DHS Grant	22%
Fares & Tickets	10%
County Contributions	12%
Non-Fare Revenue/ Sponsored Routes	5%

The following Shore Transit Budget Handout on the following page was available at the meeting for reference and discussed.



Shore Transit Budget Handout

The FTA/MTA numbers below are the expected FY21 support, the grants have not been awarded. The Maryland Transportation Trust Fund has suffered from a major loss of revenue due to the COVID reduction in travel. We were told to expect a 15-25% reduction in the MTA Operating Grants.

Income Sources:

FTA/MTA	FY2021	Match	
5307	\$2,113,602	33.64%	\$1,071,360
5311	\$339,615	25%	\$113,205
SSTAP	\$142,040	25%	\$47,347
Mobility	\$114,496	20%	\$28,624
Preventive Maint.	\$720,000	10%	\$80,000
Total	\$3,429,753		\$1,340,536

Fares & Tickets	\$600,000
Non-Fare Revenue	\$100,000
Sponsored Routes	\$225,000
County Contributions	\$760,000
DHS Grant	\$1,408,000
CARES Grant	\$620,000 + MTA shortfall

Administrative Services Update – Greg Padgham

- The American Job Center (AJC) remains closed to the public by the local and state partner agencies. Limited AJC staff are in the facility on an as-needed basis and none of the agencies are seeing the public. Shore Transit continues to operate and host the public outside the facility.
- Tri-County Council (TCC) and partner agencies in the AJC continue to plan for the eventual reopening with safety shields and prescribed traffic patterns among other initiatives.
- The Multi-Purpose Center (MPC) facilities staff continue to follow CDC cleaning protocols and continue to acquire proper air filters for the RTU units. The MPC staff has also attended pandemic facilities training hosted by Allen and Sheriff.
- The cleaning staff responded quickly and efficiently to the positive COVID-19 viral test in Shore Transit earlier this week. Our Human Resources Department implemented our internal protocol notifying staff and the appropriate agencies and encouraging staff to get tested.
- IT, HR, Executive and Finance staff continue to be fully operational from home with limited need-based visits to the MPC.
- Finance is progressing with the FY20 audit and working with our federal auditors from the TGM Group. We expect the audit to be completed by the end of November.

Executive Updates – Greg Padgham

Mr. Padgham updated the Board on the status of the funding for the Economic Development/Executive Division of the Tri-County Council as noted below:

- A supplemental EDA grant related to COVID-19 response in the amount of approximately \$507,000.00 was awarded to the Mid-Shore Regional Council (\$400,000) and the Tri-County Council (\$107,000). The two-year grant will be used to gather data for the creation of a number of GIS tools related to the COVID emergency. The Eastern Shore GIS Cooperative of Salisbury University will be create the tools based on data gathered from county economic development offices and the two regional councils.
- The MD Department of Commerce provided an additional (supplemental) \$20,000 for FY20 over and above the already granted \$200,000. The amount for FY21 had been reduced to \$180,000 in response to anticipated shortfalls in the state budget.

- The Rural Maryland Council has reduced the amount of FY21 RMPIF funds requested by the Tri-County Council to \$390,164. This represents a reduction of 5% (\$20,500) from FY20. Requests from various Lower Shore organizations have been received and sub-recipient grants will be issued upon receipt of the funds by the Tri-County Council.

Mr. Padgham directed the Board's attention to his previous 90-day itinerary and asked if there were any questions regarding activity. There were none.

New Business:

- Mr. Padgham notified the Executive Board of the use by a political action group of a logo confusingly similar to that of the Tri-County Council. The Executive Director has spoken with the Council's attorney and the consensus is that a cease and desist letter will be sent by the attorney to the political action group.
- Mr. Padgham presented an overview of the Maryland Broadband Education Network administered by the Governor's Office of Rural Broadband. A discussion of the available funding opportunities and application to same by the Lower Shore counties was discussed.

Other Business:

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Mitrecic received a unanimous vote to adjourn and the meeting concluded.