

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

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2017

Merrill Lockfaw, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Wednesday, June 21, 2017, at Waterman's Seafood in West Ocean City at 6:10 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Charles Fisher and Randy Laird, Somerset County; Bob Culver, Wicomico County Executive; John Cannon and John Hall, Wicomico County; Bud Church, Ted Elder, Joe Mitrecic and Diana Purnell, Worcester County; Dennis Williams, Princess Anne Town Council; Muir Boda, Salisbury City Council; Esther Troast, Pocomoke City Council; Senator Jim Mathias; Delegate Mary Beth Carozza; Delegate Charles Otto.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Mindie Burgoyne, Maryland Department of Commerce.

A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, Brad Bellacicco and John Donegan.

Guests in attendance: Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council; Charlotte Davis, Rural Maryland Council.

On a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Mitrecic, the minutes for the meeting of March 15, 2017, were approved as written.

Dr. Mike Scott, Director of the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Center (ESRGC), was scheduled to give a presentation on the Eastern Shore Agriculture and Healthcare Dashboards but due to unforeseen circumstances had to cancel.

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director of the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), talked about some of the programs and projects funded by the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). For FY18 RMPIF will be \$3,667,000 and each of the rural regional councils will receive \$211,133. Rural programs across the state can submit grant applications for the remaining funds. The RMC has been charged with leading the Rural Broadband Task Force which was created by legislation during the 2017 session.

Chair Lockfaw read a note from Smith Island United thanking the Tri-County Council for allowing them to exhibit at the 2017 "Taste of the Eastern Shore" Legislative Event.

June 21, 2017

Old Business

A. Shore Transit Update – Brad Bellacicco

Shore Transit will be returning to regional routes this fall. Schedules will be printed in two colors and it will be noted that certain stops will not be served in inclement weather.

Currently cash flow is good. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is processing reimbursements of \$65,000 for FY17.

Shore Transit got an additional grant for \$126,000 for senior and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) riders.

MTA has completed the small bus contract and Shore Transit will be receiving eight buses in a few weeks.

Shore Transit has 91 employees of which 53 are drivers and there are 2 in training. Interviews are being conducted for an Operations Manager.

There is a meeting this week with the general contractor for the Phase III public water and sewer hook-up. The schedule is to have the hook-up to the pipe across Route 50 completed by the end of July.

Delegate Carozza stated that she has been working with Shore Transit to provide rides for veterans and connected them with Delmarva Community Transit (DCT) to get them to Baltimore for care. Shore Transit connects to all medical facilities on the shore.

B. Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) Update – Becca Webster

Mr. Pennington gave the LSWA update for Mrs. Webster, who is attending a conference.

Both the local and regional plan have been completed and approved by the state.

The One Stop Job Market (OSJM) operator Request for Proposal (RFP) has been awarded to a private company. This company will be handling both the lower and upper shore regions.

The Resource Sharing Agreement between the OSJM partners is almost complete.

C. FY2018 Budget – John Donegan

The finance department is fully staffed again with the hiring of three people.

The auditors have started the preliminary work for the FY2017 audit and plan to have it completed by December.

The funding amounts in the budget are accurate at this time. Shore Transit amounts may change as the final grants amounts have not yet been received.

On a motion by Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Culver, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to approved the FY2018 Budget.

D. Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) – Mike Pennington

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) was funded in the Governor's FY2018 budget. This year the Tri-County Council will be receiving \$211,133. The amount of funding for the summer youth program was increased from \$30,000 to \$60,000. The funds will also be used to support the programs of the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurial Center (ESEC), two dashboard projects with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Center (ESRGC), loan management software and consulting services to start the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), program support for Project Opportunity and regional marketing.

E. Revolving Loan Fund – Mike Pennington

Information to date on the steps taken to create a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) was included in the meeting packet. We are currently working on an U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) application for \$1 million. The IRP would be a 1% interest loan for 30 years with interest only for the first three years. We would only borrow from the loan if we relend it. USDA does restrict loans from this program to \$150,000 or less. A Tri-County Council resolution authorizing Mr. Pennington to apply for the IRP is required with the application.

On a motion by Senator Mathias, seconded by Mr. Boda, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to approve a resolution authorizing Mr. Pennington to apply to USDA for an IRP loan for the Tri-County Council RLF.

F. 2017 Citizenship Award – Merrill Lockfaw

Two nominations for the 2017 Citizenship Award have been received. Any additional

nominations need to be submitted by July 10 as the Executive Board will choose the awardee at their July 26 meeting.

New Business

A. FY2017 Department of Commerce Budget Amendment – Mike Pennington

The Maryland Department of Commerce's (DOC) grant requires that all budget line items be plus or minus 10% of the budgeted amount. We are making some adjustments to our budget to meet this requirement.

On a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Hall, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to accept the changes to the FY17 DOC budget as presented.

B. Tawes Crab & Clam Bake – Mike Pennington

The Tawes Crab & Clam Bake is on July 19. The Tri-County Council is partnering with Somerset County Economic Development, Maryland Department of Commerce, Worcester County Economic Development, Rural Maryland Council and Maryland Broadband in a tent again this year. Tickets will be available for Tri-County Council members.

C. Invasive Species Control – John Hall

There was discussion about a regional response to invasive species control.

On a motion from Mr. Fisher, seconded by Senator Mathias, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to pursue this as a region.

Other Business

At the request of the Tri-County Council, Mr. Pennington asked the State Highway Administration (SHA) to dedicate highways in honor of former Delegate Norman Conway and Somerset County native Donnie Drewer.

The dedication of the Salisbury Bypass in honor of Delegate Conway will be held on Wednesday, September 20 at 1:30 p.m. Former House Speaker Cass Taylor, Former House Speaker Clay Mitchell and House Speaker Mike Busch have been asked to speak. The dedication of Route 413 in honor of Mr. Drewer will be held on Wednesday, June 28 in Somerset County.

Senator Mathias thanked his Eastern Shore colleagues and members of the Tri-County Council who helped get the bill for payment in lieu of taxes passed during the 2017 legislative session.

Personnel Matter

Chair Lockfaw announced that he has received a letter from Mr. Pennington stating that Mr. Pennington will be retiring from his position with the Tri-County Council on December 31, 2018.

There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Mitrecic, seconded by Mr. Boston, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.