

Tri-County Council

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Time: 12:00PM

Location: Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center

Room: Worcester Room

Minutes

Gregory Padgham, the Tri-County County Council Executive Director, conducted roll call and the following were in attendance:

Wicomico County Acting Executive

John Psota – Proxy carried by Kristen Goeller

Wicomico County Council

John Cannon – Chair

Josh Hastings – Third Vice Chair

Nicole Acle

Worcester County Commission

Ted Elder – First Vice Chair

Diana Purnell

Joe Mitrecic – Proxy by Weston Young

At-Large Member

Senator Mary Beth Carozza – Proxy carried by Pat Schrawder

General Assembly

Delegate Carl Anderton – Proxy carried by John Cannon

Municipality

Muir Boda – Proxy carried by Josh Hastings

Mayor Zack Tyndall – Mayor of Berlin

Tri-County Council Members

Senator Addie Eckardt - representative

Weston Young – Worcester County Chief Administrator

Laura Hurley – Wicomico County Administrator

Mindie Burgoyne – Maryland Department of Commerce

Tri-County Council Guests

Grayson Middleton – Governor Hogan Representative

Melissa Kelly – Senator Van Hollen Office

Scott Warner – Mid Shore Regional Council

Eric Banks – City of Crisfield

Tri-County Council Staff

Gregory Padgham – Executive Director

John Donegan – Administrative Services Director

Leslie Cabell-Porter – Lower Shore Workforce Alliance Director

Brad Bellacicco – Shore Transit Director

Monique Snyder – Regional Communications Developer

Stephanie Wilkins – Economic Development Coordinator

Per the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, a quorum of twelve voting members, two from each county, need to be present. The Chair, John Cannon, could not call the meeting to order, due to only have a quorum of eleven. The staff provided an update to all those who attended.

Tri-County Council Staff Updates

A. Shore Transit Updates – Brad Bellacicco, Shore Transit Director

1. Ridership & Routes

- Fixed Route ridership for February up to 400 plus, March 450 per workday
- Ocean City ridership up.
- Origin to Destination (ADA, SSTAP, & paratransit): Go Getters reopened the end of February, Wicomico MAC Center active, and Dialysis centers are busy.

2. Vehicles

- Revenue Fleet at 37, normally over 40.
- Delivery of the 7 FY2019 & FY2020 F650s medium buses in April
- FY2022 Shore Transit was awarded two medium buses and ordered two small buses. The medium buses due early next year and the small buses by the end of this year. MTA bus contract hit by inflation prices up 10%.
- Propane continues to help and converted seven small buses. The seven new medium buses plus 2 300 (in Del now) & 301, five small buses. Paying \$3.25 for gas today, topped out at \$3.85 3/8. Propane contract is \$1.65.
- Finalizing RFP to put cameras on the buses with CARES funding and also adding computers to better manage the fleet.

3. Staffing: 86 employees currently with 51 drivers

- Critically short of dispatchers, but two started Monday, need one more.
- Shortage of drivers is limiting capability
- Needs six to eight drivers for the summer schedule, also need a mechanic

- Working with the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance to train people to get their CDL's
 - Many older drivers have retired. Pay is not keeping up with salaries available in other businesses. Increased Federal requirements to get CDL.
4. Funding
- FY23 budget up 5% due to salary increases and inflation
 - This represents returning to full service, but cannot yet due to drivers & buses
 - MTA is holding COVID funding to cover
- B. Administrative Services – John Donegan, Administrative Services Director
1. Tri-County Council Financials: The Council was presented with the Council Financials, which was included in their packet.
 2. FY23 First Draft Budget: Mr. Donegan informed the Council that they will be seeing this at the May Executive Board meeting and at the June meeting they will be voting to approve the budget.
- C. Lower Shore Workforce Alliance Update – Leslie Porter-Cabell, Director
1. American Rescue Plan Act Update – The recipients that were chosen for the first rounds of funds are:
 - TidalHealth
 - Vehicles for Change
 - MAC, Inc.
 - Wor-Wic Trade
 2. Grace Center Update – Terminated the Youth contract due to not being in compliance. As of March 15th, the program has been brought in-house, with the partnership of Telamon.
 3. American Job Center Mobile Update – Hired a new mobile driver and it will making its first appearance since the pandemic at the Junior Achievement. The bus schedule is currently being developed.
 4. Business Services Update – Hiring two positions for this department through the American Rescue Plan Act.
 5. Childcare and Transportation issues continue to be an issue for mothers going back to work. The Lower Shore Workforce Alliance has looked into business who are providing childcare services and they have only found one business.
- D. Regional Economic Development – Gregory Padgham, Executive Director
1. Regional Branding and Marketing – Monique Snyder, Regional Communications Developer
 - a. The Economic Development office had a booth at Summer MACo, Winter MACo, the Rural Maryland Summit, and the Ocean City Trade Show. Hundreds of branded merchandise and brochures were handed out at these events. Also fielded many questions for our local economic development offices – which were either answered or referred.
 - b. The LESMD.net site is currently being updated and Monique is working with the web developer for the updates.
 2. Review of 2022 – 2023 CEDS Document: Mr. Padgham reviewed the different categories that are covered in the CEDS. He informed the Council that it is a

requirement with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and we must submit it to keep our Economic Development District (EDD) status. The Tri-County Council will be submitting the document to EDA in April.

3. Brief review of FY23 Grant Application for Economic Development
 - a. Economic Development Administration: The Tri-County Council utilizes these funds for operating.
 - b. Maryland Department of Commerce: The Tri-County Council will be applying for funds again for operating expenses.
 - c. Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund: These funds come from the Rural Maryland Council each year.
 - d. Economic Development Administration CARES: These funds will be ending at the end of FY22. They were used in partnership with the Mid-Shore Regional Council and ESRGC to develop GIS dashboards on the Delmarva Index.
 - e. County funds: Used for Economic Development.
4. Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Update: The Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore has been in constant contact with Maryland Department of Commerce and the other Regional Councils. Mr. Padgham stated that he is still awaiting to hear what the parameters of the grant.

Final Remarks

Melissa Kelly stated that a Federal Grant called the Congressionally Directed Spending, formerly known as earmarks was approved and heading to the President's desk for signature. This is direct funding for the Eastern Shore region and it focuses on infrastructure improvements, economic development, and supporting local schools and universities.

The Chair, John Cannon, reviewed the importance of having a quorum present at each meeting. He stated that if you are unable to attend the meeting to let Mr. Padgham or Ms. Wilkins know so that they can make other arrangements to have a quorum present.

The update that was provided ended at 1:00pm.