

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

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2019

Larry Dodd, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Wednesday, March 20, 2019, at the Globe Restaurant in Berlin at 6:00 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Larry Dodd, Wicomico County; Ted Elder, Joe Mitrecic, Josh Nordstrom, and Diana Purnell, Worcester County; Charles Laird, Eldon Willing, Somerset, Dennis Williams, Princess Anne; Doug Gosnell, Sharptown; George Tasker, Pocomoke.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Laura Hurley, Wicomico County, Worcester Co., Doug Taylor, Somerset County

Mr. Dodd carried proxy for Josh Hastings, Marc Kilmer, and John Cannon, Mr. Laird carried proxy for Craig Mathies, Randy Laird and Rex Simpkins, and Joe Mitrecic carried Bud Church's proxy.

A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Greg Padgham, Brad Bellacicco, John Donegan, Brenda Howard, Becca Webster.

Guests in attendance: Erin Silva, Salisbury University, Mindie Burgoyne, Maryland Dept. of Commerce, Mayor Richard Meehan, Town of Ocean City, Ryan Snow, Governor's Office; Melissa Kelly, Senator Van Hollen's Office, Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council, Emily Nock, Delegate Wayne Hartman's Office

Minutes were presented by Secretary Ted Elder, with the correction of Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio's title to Office of the Governor inasmuch as she was not appointed to the Department of Natural Resources until January 19, 2019. On a motion from Joe Mitrecic, seconded by Doug Gosnell, the minutes for the meeting of January 3, 2019, were approved as modified.

Guest Speaker:

Ms. Erin Silva, GIS Project Manager with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) presented an interactive demonstration of the DelMarVa Index. Development of this website has been a collaborative effort between the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative, Tri-Council Council of the Lower Eastern Shore, and the Mid-Shore Regional Council.

Modeled after Long Island Index, the DelMarVa Index gives users access to datasets of information about the Eastern Shore. Under the premise that information is power to make better decisions, this centralized platform of data is an effective tool developed to encourage more data driven discussion among its users. Examples of information readily available is population information, labor force, income ranges of our labor force, and business types in the region. The data can be used as a marketing tool to attract new business to the area, promote important initiatives from around the region and supply the analysis to celebrate local successes. It can also be used as a conversation starter on how to collect timely and more meaningful data.

With a focus on continuous quality improvement, ESRGC routinely seeks input from partners and stakeholders through project partner and advisory committee meetings to ensure project goals are being met.

Ms. Silva gave an interactive demonstration of the kinds of information currently available and how it can be used. The demonstration focused solely on the “view data” functionality which consists of interactive graphs and charts. The completed site will also feature a “use data” option which will link users directly to the data tables if they wish to download and perform their own analysis. Users are currently able to print pages of information, and make screenshots of the data. The ability to share data links is still under review.

Old Business

A. Shore Transit Update – Brad Bellacicco

Mr. Brad Bellacicco reported that the FTA/MTA FY 2019 operating grants are being expended a bit ahead of schedule, so the team is making adjustments in spending to stay within the allocated funds. Capital grants have been depleted this year with the exception of some construction funds and money for three buses. All MTA and EDA Phase III construction funds owed have been requested, and we are working with Somerset County Finance Department on their match funds. Shore Transit has been told to expect flat funding or less for FY 2020.

Effective Easter Monday, we will add four new routes to our existing service for increased summer jobs. There will not be a West Ocean City Trolley route this summer. We will be servicing some of the stops with other routes, and we plan to consolidate three of our Salisbury routes into two in the fall, if necessary due to budgetary constraints.

Shore Transit currently has forty-three in our bus fleet, plus a new small bus that arrived this week will be introduced into service next week. We have a FY 2019 Capital two medium buses purchase pending MTA statewide contract finalization.

Shore Transit has lost some employees that are not being replaced, and reorganized existing staff to help cut costs. There are currently ninety employees, of which fifty-five are drivers. We are recruiting for four more drivers, a mechanic and a dispatcher. It has proven difficult to find good job candidates.

The National Transit Database reports are complete. Additionally, the Annual Transportation Plan is done except for the last section, which is due Friday.

There have been some minor warranty problems with the Shore Transit facility, which are being addressed with the contractor. Our bus wash system is working well, and the gray discoloration on the buses is now going away.

Lastly, Shore Transit is continuing to field a computer management and tracking system to improve maintenance and parts tracking for the fleet.

B. Taste of the Eastern Shore – Gregory Padgham

Mr. Padgham reported that the Taste of the Eastern Shore Legislative Event held on February 14, 2019 was a success again this year. 488 people attended the event. Contributing sponsors funded a total of \$30,600, reducing the overall costs of the Tri-County Council.

C. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – Gregory Padgham

Mr. Padgham reported that in order to maintain the Lower Shore's designation as an Economic Development District (EDD), the United States Department of Commerce requires a current CEDS be in force. Every five years, the CEDS must be totally rewritten, and then updated annually. With the re-writing due this year, the Tri-County Council has been collaborating with BEACON at Salisbury University and the CEDS Stakeholders Committee to develop the needs and goals of the different economic sectors in the region. Four planning sessions have been held to date this year, January 15, February 26, February 28, and March 5.

The Department of Commerce is looking for more focus in the new CEDS toward marketing and branding. Our new document will be 12-15 pages in a glossy folder with linkages to 100+ pages of supporting data on the website. It remains our priority at the Tri-County Council to market the Lower Eastern Shore as a region.

New Business:

A. Resolution No. 19-01 – Brad Bellacicco

Mr. Brad Bellacicco introduced Resolution No. 19-01 to the board for a vote to authorize Mr. Gregory Padgham to file application with the Maryland Transit Administration of the

Maryland Department of Transportation for section 5303, 5304, 5307, 5309, 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317 and/or 5339 grant(s) under the federal transit act, and upon approval of said application execute the grant on behalf of the Tri-County Council.

On a motion from Joe Mitrecic and seconded by Diana Purnell, the resolution was approved, and signed by Mr. Larry Dodd, Chair on March 20, 2019.

B. Tri-County Council Draft Budget for FY20 – John Donegan

Mr. Donegan presented the first draft budget for fiscal year FY20. Mr. Donegan pointed out that we would present a final Draft budget at the June executive committee meeting for approval and that the reason the June budget would still be a Draft is that at that time TCC will not have been formally notified of its grants income for FY20 from all sources.

C. Status of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) – Greg Padgham

Mr. Padgham reported that RMPIF was fully funded again for FY20. This will be the second year that the five Regional Councils throughout the State of Maryland have been fully funded by the Maryland Legislature.

D. Local Lower Shore Workforce Alliance Plan – Becca Webster

Mrs. Webster explained the FY20 Lower Shore Workforce Alliance plan has been developed. Due to size of the plan, the following URL link http://www.lswa.org/Portals/0/Public/Documents/2019.03.04_Draft%20Local%20Plan%20Revisions_For%20Website.pdf was made available in the March 20th email, to Full Board Members for review and was presented to the Board for a vote.

Mr. Dodd asked for a vote, Mr. Mitrecic made a motion to approve, it was seconded. The plan was unanimously approved as written.

E. Lower Shore Workforce Investment Board Vacancies – Becca Webster

Mrs. Webster reported that there are still vacancies on the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in Somerset and Worcester Counties. She is anticipating a vacancy in Wicomico in the near future. Mrs. Webster elaborated that there are now minimum requirements for sitting board members to ensure that they have the authority to act on decisions on the board. Mrs. Webster related that she has been charged with the responsibility to speak at board meetings for each county's commissioners and/or council and discuss the WIB. Somerset County currently has her on their schedule in April, but she has been having trouble getting before the Boards for Wicomico and Worcester. The

presentation should take no more than ten minutes. Both Ms. Purnell and Mr. Dodd invited Mrs. Webster to contact them to facilitate a presentation before each of their respective boards.

F. Review of TCC Standing Regional Committee Efforts – Gregory Padgham

Mr. Padgham gave a brief background that Tri-County Council regional committee efforts began with the CEDS in 2002. The role of these committees is to provide additional data for writing and updating the CEDS. Unfortunately, the regular meetings in some committees have lapsed this year, but Mr. Padgham explained some of them should be reinstated, and he will be reaching out within the next few weeks to reconvene the Water and Sewer and Infrastructure Committees. Mr. Dodd added that Wicomico County has been having serious issues with flooding and septic failure, and volunteered to serve on the Water and Sewer Committee. He also proposed that Somerset have a voice on the committee as well because of their problems with flooding in the past few years.

Other Business

Mr. Ryan Snow was asked to update the Board on the status of the bill to repeal the post Labor Day school law enacted by Governor Hogan in 2018. Mr. Snow advised that some legislators are pressing hard to reverse the bill, but Governor Hogan is opposed, as the bill makes good sense. There was also conversation about the bill to raise the minimum wage to \$15.00 in 2025 slated to be voted on this week, and the impact that would have on local small business owners.

There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Joe Mitrecic, and it was seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.