

TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND
SERVING SOMERSET, WICOMICO AND WORCESTER COUNTIES

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2011

Louise Gulyas, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Thursday, March 24, 2011, at the Blue Dog Café in Snow Hill at 6:10 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston and Craig Mathies, Somerset County Commissioners; Bob Culver and Sheree Sample-Hughes, Wicomico County Council; Madison Bunting, Merrill Lockfaw and Virgil Shockley, Worcester County Commissioners; Dennis Williams, Town of Princess Anne Commissioner; Bob Hawkins, Pocomoke City Council

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Ted Shea, Wicomico County; Renee Stephens, MD Dept of Business and Economic Development.

Mr. Ted Shea has Mr. Rick Pollitt's voting proxy. A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, John Donegan, Riggin Johnson and Milton Morris.

Guests in attendance: Andrew Gohn, Maryland Energy Administration; Jeff Harman, Brad Hastings and Heather Smith, Becker Morgan Group; Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council.

On a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Shockley, the minutes for the meetings of September 16, 2010, and January 6, 2011, were approved as written.

Offshore Wind Presentation

Mr. Gohn from the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) talked about the possible development of offshore wind as an untapped resource. The approval for developing this would have to go through the state legislature. MEA is recommending that wind turbines be no closer than 10 miles from the shoreline. If this resource is developed, MEA is anticipating \$1.44 per customer per month in transmission costs. The Tri-County Council asked Mr. Gohn to keep them informed as this progresses.

Old Business

New Facility Update

As there were several new members present, Mr. Donegan reviewed the background information on the purchase and renovation of the Tri-County Multi-Purpose Center building

Mr. Donegan reported that for the renovation there will be 9 separate Request for Proposals (RFP) for various sections of the building as a result of the requirements imposed by the different funding sources. The RFP for Phase 1, which includes all areas of the building not occupied by Shore Transit, is complete. The pre-construction meeting is scheduled for next week with plans for construction to start on April 4. The RFP for Phase 2, which is for the Shore Transit occupied areas of the building, is underway with the plan to start construction on May 1.

Mr. Donegan introduced Mr. Jeff Harmon with Becker Morgan Group who is the architect for the Shore Transit portions of the facility. Mr. Harmon reviewed the site plan and maintenance facility plan. The bus wash will be an alternate in the maintenance facility RFP. The plan is to build the shell for the bus wash and add the equipment at a later time but bus wash can't be operational until the site is hooked up to public sewer. He noted that the current septic system is in good shape and should last 5-10 more years but is unable to handle the output from the bus wash. Storm water management has already been planned to take in account the future expansion of the front parcel and additional parking.

Mr. Harmon noted that the maintenance building has been designed to support solar panels for when funding becomes available to add them.

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Johnson announced that the new Shore Transit website is up and showed some of its features. Shore Transit is the second site in the state to be using Google earth for trip planning.

Mr. Johnson reported that both Senate Bill 402 and House Bill 431 were unanimously passed during the 2011 Legislative Session. These bills remove public transit from the oversight of the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Johnson reported that through February Shore Transit is at 57% of budget for the year even with an increase in fuel costs in February. But if fuel prices continue to increase and don't drop or level for a length of time, they could be over budget by \$50,000 at the end of the year. In an effort to avoid this situation, the Shore Transit Advisory Board has identified services with low ridership and is recommending the Tri-County Council make the following service changes:

- Routes 121, 131, 141, 151, 171 – Salisbury local
Change last service loop from 7:30 pm to 6:30 pm
Projected savings - \$18,900
- Routes 431 and 451 – Ocean Pines
All service for this bus stop will be call-in service only.
Projected savings - \$17,500
- Route 701 – Princess Anne/Crisfield
Reduce Saturday service to every 3 hours
Projected savings - \$5,700

A Public Hearing is not required for these changes.

On a motion from Mr. Shockley, seconded by Mrs. Sample-Hughes, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to approve the service reductions.

Mr. Johnson reported that revenue is 15-20% higher than expected. The First Saturday Free program, which offered free bus rides on the first Saturday of the month in January, February and March, increased ridership from 500 to 1,700 rides. The Tri-County Council members were interested in continuing this program or a variation of it through the summer months. Following discussion, Mr. Shockley made a motion to have \$1 bus rides on Saturdays through the end of September. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. All in favor, one opposed, motion passed.

Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) Update

Mr. Morris reported that a partnership between University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Hawk Institute for Space Science (HISS) and LSWA has started an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) maintenance training program. The program orientation session will be tomorrow and 28 participants have signed up for the training.

New Business

2011 Annual Employee Meeting

Mr. Pennington reported that the 2011 Annual Employee Meeting will be held on April 10 at 2:00 pm at the Wicomico Civic Center in Salisbury. This is a mandatory meeting for all employees to distribute information on benefits, agency wide updates and give awards. The members of the Tri-County Council are welcome to attend.

Budget for FY12

Mr. Pennington reported that the first draft of the FY12 Budget was included in the meeting packet for review. This is only a draft as LSWA and Shore Transit will not find out how much funding they will be receiving until closer to the start of the new fiscal year.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington distributed a flyer from the Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) announcing their annual conference June 5-7 at the Hyatt in Cambridge.

Mr. Donegan noted that the Tri-County Council website, www.lowershore.org, has been redone and asked that members visit and give their feedback.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Shockley, the

meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.