

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

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes
October 2, 2013

Sheree Sample-Hughes, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Wednesday, October 2, 2013, at Si'Culi Restaurant in Berlin at 6:10 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Somerset County Commissioners; Bob Culver and John Hall, Wicomico County Council; Rick Pollitt, Wicomico County Executive; Jim Bunting, Louise Gulyas and Merrill Lockfaw, Worcester County Commissioners; Laura Mitchell, Salisbury City Council; Delegate Norman Conway.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Judy Boggs, Worcester County Commissioner; Harold Higgins, Worcester County Administrator.

Mrs. Boggs had Mr. Bud Church's proxy. Mr. Higgins had Mr. Jim Purnell's proxy.

A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, Brad Bellacicco, and Kristen Kerchner.

Guests in attendance: Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council.

On a motion from Mr. Lockfaw, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, the minutes for the meeting of June 26, 2013, were approved as written.

Old Business

Shore Transit Update

Mrs. Sample-Hughes noted that when the Wicomico County Council met with Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Secretary Jim Smith in September, the need for funding for Shore Transit was discussed. MTA will be using a picture of the maintenance facility ribbon cutting in their annual report.

Mr. Bellacicco reported that representatives from Greyhound are very impressed with the operation and facility and are considering using it for additional services.

Shore Transit hired six new drivers in September and there are seven strong candidates for the training class in October.

Shore Transit staff is working on updating the route schedules as the timing between stops has

express model for certain routes.

The vehicle fleet is aging but the maintenance staff has been able to keep up with repairs and routine maintenance. MTA has approved five new buses and two minivans in the FY14 capital budget. Mr. Bellacicco is waiting for approval from MTA to convert some of the vehicles to gas and propane fuel.

Mr. Bellacicco is expecting a visit from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sometime this month as a part of FTA's audit of MTA. FTA will be visiting only two MTA project sites.

Mr. Bellacicco noted that Shore Transit will be providing transportation for the Celtic Festival at Furnacetown this weekend.

Mrs. Mitchell asked if Shore Transit would be providing transportation for voters to polling sites for the 2014 election. There was discussion as to whether or not this would be appropriate considering the Tri-County Council is governed by elected officials. It was noted that passengers can call and schedule a ride to their polling site and some of the routes have stops near to polling sites. Mr. Bunting made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gulyas, to not offer special transportation to the polls on Election Day in 2014. All in favor, one opposed.

Mr. Pennington reported that three months into FY14 the grants from MTA were just signed a week ago and no funding for the year has yet been received. As a result, Shore Transit has been using some carryover funds and the Tri-County Council's \$500,000 line of credit to support operations but the line of credit is almost extinguished. The bank has agreed to extend a separate temporary \$250,000 line of credit until MTA funds arrive. Mr. Pennington asked the Tri-County Council to approve the temporary line of credit otherwise Shore Transit will have to cease operations until MTA funding arrives. Following discussion, on a motion from Mr. Lockfaw, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to approve a temporary \$250,000 line of credit.

Following additional discussion, Mrs. Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lockfaw, to amend the motion to state that the temporary \$250,000 line of credit is approved for a period of 90 days.

The Tri-County Council also agreed that Mrs. Sample-Hughes should send a letter to MTA Secretary Smith stating their concern about the significant amount of time it took for the grant paperwork to be received.

Draft FY14 Budget

Mrs. Kerchner reported that the draft FY14 Budget was included in the meeting packet for review. She was asked why there was rent included in some of the budgets when the Tri-County Council owns the building. The rent is for utilities, insurance, cleaning and upkeep of the building. On a

accept the FY14 Budget as presented.

GED Testing

Mrs. Sample-Hughes reported that as of January 1, 2014, all General Education Development (GED) testing will be computer based only. With this change Salisbury University will no longer be a GED testing site and lower shore residents would have to go to Chesapeake College to take the test. Wor-Wic Community College has the resources available to support the new testing requirements and will become a GED testing site effective November 1, 2013.

New Business

Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy

Mr. Pennington reported MTA does not feel that the current Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy is sufficient and has ask that it be redrafted and approved by the Tri-County Council members. With MTA's guidance the policy is now compliant with MTA and FTA requirements. A local 24/7 testing vendor has been found so that all shifts can be tested.

Mrs. Mitchell asked if all employees shouldn't be tested not just Shore Transit since the Tri-County Council is grant funded. Mr. Bellacicco noted that this policy is for safety sensitive positions not all positions. Discussion followed and the Tri-County Council asked for the following additional information:

- What would the additional cost be to include all employees in the testing pool?
- Would the testing of all employees affect our insurance rates?

On a motion from Mrs. Gulyas, seconded by Mr. Bunting, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to table this item until more information is available.

Termination of Healthcare Tax Credit (HCTC) Program

Mr. Pennington reported that the Healthcare Tax Credit (HCTC) Program will be ending on December 31, 2013, due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The program has four employees of which one will be going to the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) and three will be terminated if there is no other position available for them. The Tri-County Council will be losing \$50,000-\$75,000 in annual revenue from administration of the program.

TCCMPC Annexation

Mr. Pennington reported that a bus wash was included in the design of the maintenance facility building but public water and sewer is needed in order to use it. The closest connection site is at Wor-Wic Community College and this site would have sufficient capacity. He has spoken to the City of Salisbury and the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center property would have to be

annexed in order to hook in to the public utilities. The annexation application fee is \$35,000 and October 2, 2013
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MTA has agreed that capital funding can be used for this purpose. The Tri-County Council would not have to pay city taxes but would be subject to storm water fees. The design and engineering costs of the project are estimated at \$200,000-\$300,000.

Following discussion, on a motion from Mr. Bunting, seconded by Mr. Lockfaw, the Tri-County Council voted to authorize Mr. Pennington to apply to the City of Salisbury for annexation of the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center, with all in favor and Mrs. Mitchell abstaining.

Lower Shore Economic Development Tour

Mrs. Sample-Hughes reported that as discussed at the last meeting, a Lower Shore Economic Development Tour has been organized for October 10. The group will be visiting Great Bay Wind and Northrup Grumman in Princess Anne then going to Pocomoke for a tour of Bel-Art and Chesapeake Bay Farms. If you will be going on the tour, please let Mrs. Eberly know by Friday, October 4.

2013 Citizenship Award

Mrs. Sample-Hughes noted that nominations for the 2013 Citizenship Award are due to the Tri-County Council office by October 18. There is currently only one nomination. The Executive Board will choose the recipient at their next meeting and the award will be presented at the Tri-County Council meeting in December.

Taste of the Eastern Shore Legislative Event

Mrs. Sample-Hughes noted that the Taste of the Eastern Shore Legislative Event is scheduled for February 13, 2014, at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis. We are partnering again with the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mid-Shore Regional Council on this annual event.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington reported that the Rural Maryland Council is asking for letters of support to be sent to the governor asking him to fund the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). The RMPIF was passed in the 2006 legislative session but not funded. The Rural Maryland Council is asking that RMPIF be funding for \$6 million in the FY15 budget. Following discussion, the Tri-County Council agreed to send a letter in support of funding the RMPIF in the FY15 budget to the governor.

Mr. Pennington noted that the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) for Patuxent River Naval Air Station is progressing. A public information meeting for the lower shore will be held on October 3 at 6:00 p.m. in the One Stop Job Market in Salisbury.

Mr. Pennington reported that the Aerospace Study has been completed. The Telecommunication

Committee has been renamed the Technology Committee and is tasked with using the
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Aerospace Study results to benefit the region. Mr. Merrill Lockfaw has agreed to chair the Technology Committee.

Mr. Pennington noted that the next Tri-County Council meeting is scheduled for December 11 which is during the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) Winter Conference. The date will be changed and a notice sent to members as soon as possible. The Tri-County Council, the Mid-Shore Regional Council and the Upper Shore Regional Council will be meeting for a joint lunch on Thursday, December 12 during the MACO conference.

Mr. Pollitt reported that he is on the Maryland Transportation Task Force. The Transportation Trust Fund is not being funded at a rate as high as in the past. The urban counties in central Maryland get most of the funding from the Transportation Trust Fund but the rural counties want and need a fair share for their own projects. The Transportation Task Force is looking at way to address this and other issues.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Bunting, seconded by Mrs. Gulyas, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.