

Tri-County Council

For the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland
Serving Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes April 23, 2014

Jim Purnell, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Wednesday, April 23, 2014, at the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center in Salisbury at 6:05 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Somerset County Commissioners; John Hall and Sheree Sample-Hughes, Wicomico County Council; Rick Pollitt, Wicomico County Executive; Jim Bunting and Bud Church, Worcester County Commissioners; Senator Jim Mathias; Delegate Charles Otto; Jay Parker, Town of Princess Anne; Laura Mitchell, City of Salisbury.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Renee Stephens, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

Mr. Church had Mr. Merrill Lockfaw's proxy.

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; Joe Jimerson, LJT & Associates.

On a motion from Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Boston, the minutes for the meeting of December 9, 2013, were approved as written.

Mr. Joe Jimerson, LJT & Associates, spoke to the group about the findings and recommendations in the Unmanned Aerial & Space Systems & Launch Industry Feasibility Study or Aerospace Study. He also discussed the educational and business opportunities potential for the region that Wallops Island could support.

Mr. Scott Warner of the Mid-Shore Regional Council, spoke for Mike Thielke with the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurial Center (ESEC). He talked about ESEC's \$2 million revolving loan fund and how it had helped some small businesses get started or expand. ESEC is also involved with the Shore Venture classes held at Wor-Wic Community College, which teach entrepreneurs about starting a small business. There were 16 graduates of the three month class held earlier this year. Hot Desks, located in the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center, is a co-working space for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Hot Desks also hosted a location for the NASA App Challenge, a worldwide app creation competition, for the second year in a row.

Old Business

Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) Update

Mr. Pennington, reporting for Mr. Morris, noted that LSWA met or exceeded all of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) program goals for FY13. He is expecting FY15 funding to be increased slightly over FY14. Currently LSWA is working with DLLR to assist the employees of Standard Register, which will be closing later this year.

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Bellacicco reported that Shore Transit submitted an \$8.8 million budget for FY15 to the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA).

In the FY14 capital budget, Shore Transit asked for 5 small buses and 2 minivans. The minivans are scheduled to arrive in a few weeks and will be used for Origin to Destination (OTD) service. About 60% of time on the road is for OTD service and half of the OTD trips are medical assistance for the county health departments. OTD service costs \$55 per hour for each rider, which is \$10 less than an outside vendor would charge. There is a 25% "no show" rate for OTD service. The health departments currently pay for only the time the client is on the bus and will not pay if the client is a "no show". Agreements that were made with the health departments in the past are for less than the actual cost of service and Shore Transit is losing money on OTD service. The health departments have been made aware of this and Mr. Bellacicco is working to renegotiate the contracts for FY15.

The FY15 budget included funding to upgrade the scheduling software to improve efficiency and coordination of service.

Mr. Bellacicco announced that MTA has given Shore Transit a \$300,000 grant for preventative maintenance.

Mr. Bellacicco noted that he is waiting for concurrence from MTA on the vendor chosen to convert several gas buses to gas and propane fuel. He is also waiting on the concurrence to start on Phase III which includes connection to public water and sewer.

The seasonal regional routes start running again on April 27. Shore Transit is working with a consultant to revise routes and stops to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

"Taste of the Eastern Shore" Legislative Event Recap

Mr. Pennington reported that despite having to be moved back one week due to the weather, the "Taste of the Eastern Shore" Legislative Event was attended by about 300 people. There were six new sponsors this year and several sponsors have already stated that they plan to participate

TCC Multi-Purpose Center Management

Mr. Pennington reported that the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL) has signed a 5 year lease for 2,800 sqft. Construction on the space is underway and ESRL is planning to move in July 1. New lease rates have been negotiated with the current tenants and will commence on July 1, 2014. The TCCMPC has its first tenant leasing space in the server room.

New Business

FY13 Audit

Mr. Pennington reported that there were no findings in the FY13 audit. The audit has been sent to all grant funding agencies and the three counties.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington reminded the Tri-County Council members that 2013 Financial Disclosure Statements are due to the Maryland Ethic Commission by April 30. Also there are still some members that need to file their 2012 Financial Disclosure Statements.

Mr. Pennington noted that the Tawes Crab and Clam Bake is scheduled for July 16. The Tri-County Council will again be partnering with Somerset County Economic Development, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development and Maryland Broadband Cooperative for a tent at the event.

Mr. Pennington also distributed a letter from Secretary Eloise Foster of the Maryland Department of Budget & Management recognizing the Tri-County Council's support of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF).

Mrs. Stephens announced that there will be auditions for the TV show "Shark Tank" held at Salisbury University on May 9.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Church, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.