

# **Tri-County Council**

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

## Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes September 24, 2014

Jim Purnell, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Wednesday, September 24, 2014, at Great Hope Golf Course in Westover at 6:35 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Charles Fisher and Rex Simpkins, Somerset County Commissioners; Bob Culver and John Hall, Wicomico County Council; Delegate Norman Conway; Delegate Charles Otto; Dennis Williams, Town of Princess Anne; Michael Pruitt, Snow Hill City Council

Mr. Purnell had Mrs. Louise Gulyas' proxy. Mr. Boston had Mr. Craig Mathias' proxy.

A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, Brad Bellacicco and John Donegan.

Guests in attendance: Patrick Mitchell and Scott Brent, Maryland Broadband Cooperative.

On a motion from Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Boston, the minutes for the meeting of June 25, 2014, were approved as written.

Patrick Mitchell, Maryland Broadband Cooperative (MDBC), updated the Tri-County Council members on the progress of MDBC. MDBC has a presence across the entire state and in every rural region. The permits have been received from the Army Corp of Engineers for the 9 mile bay crossing from Taylor's Island to Cove Point. This should be completed in July 2015.

MDBC received a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant and matching funds from the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) to connect McCready Hospital in Crisfield to existing fiber. The Somerset Health Department and Roads Department will also be connected as part of this project.

### **Old Business**

#### **Shore Transit Update**

Mr. Bellacicco reported that on October 6 Shore Transit will be reducing its hours from 1200 to 800 per week for the winter.

Mr. Bellacicco stated that the fleet is showing its age and mileage. Shore Transit is expecting five small buses next week from FY14 capital funding. They will arrive ready to convert to dual gas

and propane fuel. There is a savings of .85/gal with propane and five buses have already been  
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converted to dual fuel. The FY15 capital funding request included a minivan, a medium bus and two small buses.

The maintenance facility has a few construction warranty issues which are still being addressed. The annexation of the property, so that it can be connected to water and sewer, is moving through the City of Salisbury's process and Phase III of construction will start after the annexation is complete.

The Salisbury trolley is running on Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Mr. Bellacicco reported that Medical Assistance (MA) transportation continues to increase along with the cost to operate it. Pricing to the health departments was based on us providing the service. With the increased demand, about 50% of the service had to be outsourced. In FY14 the no show rate was 30% which equated to a loss of \$300,000. Due to this Shore Transit had a \$500,000 deficit at the end of FY14 but most of the deficit has been paid.

The Wicomico County Health Department, which has about 150 trips per day, has decided to do a competitive bid for their MA service provider. Shore Transit cannot bid since they receive federal funding.

Somerset County Health Department has not yet gotten their MA vehicles. They have agreed to pay an increased rate of \$36 per hour until they can provide service. The rate for the other Health Departments is \$53 per hour.

Shore Transit will continue to provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transportation but not MA transportation. MA transportation is not subsidized by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). Funding for MA transportation comes to the Health Departments from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the funding has not increased along with the demand.

### **FY15 Budget - Draft**

Mr. Pennington reported that the draft FY15 budget was included in the meeting packet. Shore Transit has an increase of \$200,000 in operational funding from MTA. The Salisbury trolley is not included as the City of Salisbury is providing funding.

On a motion by Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Culver, the Tri-County Council unanimously voted to approve the FY15 Tri-County Council budget.

### **New Business**

#### **2014 Citizenship Award**

Mr. Purnell asked the Tri-County Council members if they were interested in asking for  
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nominations for the 2014 Citizenship Award. If awarded it would be presented at the December Tri-County Council meeting. Following discussion, the Tri-County Council members decided to call for nominations.

### **“Taste of the Eastern Shore” Legislative Event**

Mr. Purnell reported that we have again partnered with the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mid-Shore Regional Council for the “Taste of the Eastern Shore” Legislative Event which is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2015, at the Loews in Annapolis. Previous sponsors will be contacted shortly and new sponsors are always welcome.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.