

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2019

Larry Dodd, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Board to order on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, at the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center in Salisbury at 6:15 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Larry Dodd, Wicomico County, Joe Mitrecic, Worcester County, Eldon Willing, Somerset County, who was also standing as proxy for Rex Simpkins, Somerset County.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Randy Laird, Somerset County.

Guests in attendance: Bill McCain, Wicomico County Council; Pat Schrawder, Representative of Senator Mary Beth Carozza,

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

A quorum was present.

On a motion and a second, the minutes of the Executive Board meeting on January 3, 2019, were approved unanimously with no opposition.

Old Business

A. Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) Update – Becca Webster

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) currently has one vacancy with another forecasted for July in Somerset County and one vacancy for Worcester County. Greg Padgham and Becca Webster have been able to speak before the Commissioners in Somerset County, are scheduled to speak to the Wicomico County Council in June, and plan to speak with Worcester County after budget season ends. Ms. Webster discussed with the Executive Board that the members of the Workforce Development Board must meet the criteria of being a business owner or person in charge of a business. The quarterly board meetings are held in the middle of the day and rotate between the three counties.

B. Shore Transit Update – Brad Bellacicco

FTA/MTA FY19 Operating grants are almost spent.

FY19 operating and capital grants are spent with the exception of a small amount of construction money, and the funds for two buses. Coordination with the Somerset County Finance Department is underway to obtain the match funds for those buses.

Level funding is expected for FY20.

The Department of Human Resources grant proposal was sent by Somerset County Department of Social Services to their procurement last month for \$1,600,000.

Shore Transit is studying the impact of the forthcoming change in minimum wage on their budget.

Shore Transit's advertising contract ends in November. Plans to complete a new RFP for \$50,000 are in process.

Ridership is generally down following the national trend, but increasing with the seasonal summer hiring, especially to and from Ocean City. Greyhound buses no longer go to Ocean City, but offer transportation to the resort town in their sales. Those riders transition from a Greyhound Bus to a Shore Transit Bus at the depot here to complete their ride. Greyhound reimburses Shore Transit \$4 per rider for that service. The Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is funding a study through BEACON to market ways to increase ridership of those for whom the transit system is not the only option.

There will be no West Ocean City Trolley this summer. Shore Transit is talking to the City of Salisbury regarding acquisition of the last two trolleys for City of Salisbury use.

There are 44 vehicles in the fleet. FY19 Capital funds for two medium buses is pending finalization with MTA.

The reorganization of support services in Shore Transit is working, and is effectively reducing supervision costs. Current staffing is as follows: eighty-five employees, fifty-two drivers (including three in training). We will be losing one driver Friday. Recruitment efforts are underway for four to six more drivers, a mechanic and a dispatcher.

There have been some minor warranty problems that have been addressed with the bus wash contractor.

Mr. Mitrecic inquired about the ability to contract with Shore Transit to provide transportation services for Worcester County for early voters to ride free from Pocomoke to Snow Hill during the seven-day early voting period this year. He would like to obtain information on the fixed routes already in place between Pocomoke and Snow Hill.

C. Update of CEDS Process – Greg Padgham

Mr. Padgham reported the final Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will be submitted to the Economic Development Administration by June 30, 2019. The Tri-County Council and the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University are drafting the document. The five year rewriting of the document this year provides the opportunity to restructure the format to an approximately fifteen-page color brochure with a marketing aspect. In addition, a web-based interactive dashboard will be the depository of the hard data and analysis detail. The final Stakeholders Meeting will be at Salisbury University on May 16th. Mr. Padgham introduced the new Lower Eastern Shore logo to the Board as well.

D. Walston Switch Parcel – Greg Padgham

Careful review of the 7-11 offer to lease by Mr. Padgham brought numerous areas of concern, both fiscally and environmentally, which led him to consult with legal counsel. Mark Tilghman, Esquire, reviewed the lease, and did not recommend moving forward. Under the terms of the lease, revenue could be delayed for nearly two years. In addition, placing underground gas tanks close to the MPC's stormwater management system was of noteworthy concern. The inherent risk assumed from selling alcohol on premises was among others.

There is additional interest in the property being explored by the realtor, which may prove to be a more promising option.

E. Administrative Services Update- John Donegan

Mr. Donegan presented the 3rd Draft of the FY20 Tri-County Council Budget. Inasmuch as grant awards from state agencies are not yet complete, the final draft budget will come before the Full Tri-County Council Board for adoption on June 19th. Mr. Mitrecic recommended that future changes between drafts be highlighted for quick reference. The 3rd budget draft features a 2% COLA for all staff, consequently paralleling the Lower Shore counties budgets this year.

The fiscal impact of the minimum wage law passed this year on the Tri-County Council has been studied. This analysis revealed that projected annual 2% COLA raises beginning FY20 for the next six fiscal years would effectively keep most TCC employee wages above minimum wage without mandated raises. The resulting impact is projected at approximately \$68,000 annually in FY25.

New Business

A. Lower Shore Workforce Alliance – Current Requests for Proposals - Becca Webster

One Stop Operator: RFP closed last week. We are required to procure a one stop operator for the purposes of coordinating the service delivery of participating American Job Center partners.

Mobile Unit: RFP closed today. The previous mobile became inoperable and was sold on January 23, 2019

Out-of-School Youth Program: RFP open through June. LSWA expects to award contracts to multiple sub-grantees.

B. Summer Youth Employment Programs – Becca Webster

The Summer Youth Employment Program is specific to public schools. The function is to put students to work from six to eight weeks per summer and fund staff for the program. There are two funding sources that will employ over one hundred students throughout the area. This is the first job for the majority of the students, and they learn job skills that are instrumental as they enter the workforce and begin to build a resume.

The Executive Board discussed the critical need for training in the trades, and the focus on same now offered in the vocational schools throughout the Lower Shore. Mr. Padgham noted that the new Tawes Vocational and Technical School was moving toward completion, and had a strong masonry program. Mr. Mitrecic spoke to the award winning welding program in Worcester Tech. Mr. Dodd expressed an interest in the schools putting more focus on the plumbing trade.

C. Tri-County Council Organizational Chart – John Donegan

Mr. Donegan presented a current copy for FY20 representing the structural organization of the Tri-County County as a resource to the members of the Board.

D. FY20 Payroll Schedule – John Donegan

The FY20 payroll schedule for the Tri-County Council was updated and provided as a resource to the members of the Board. As a highlight, November and May are three pay months, with the third pay having no payroll benefits deducted.

E. FY20 Tri-County Council Holiday Schedule – John Donegan

Mr. Donegan presented the TCC Holiday Schedule for FY19 – FY20. The number of holidays observed remains the same as last year, with only the dates updated.

A motion was made and seconded to vote on this item, and it was approved unanimously with no opposition.

F. Open Meetings Designation – Greg Padgham

Mr. Padgham reported that Ms. Becca Webster has operated as our Open Meetings Designee for the past few months. However, he is asking to have Brenda Howard, Executive Coordinator also approved as Open Meetings Designee for the Tri-County Council.

A motion was made and seconded to vote on this item, and it was approved unanimously with no opposition.

With no other business to present, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.