

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2011

Sheree Sample-Hughes, 2nd Vice Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Board to order on Thursday, February 17, 2011, at the Fountains Conference Center in Salisbury at 6:20 p.m.

Voting Member in attendance: Jerry Boston, Somerset County; Rick Pollitt, Wicomico County.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Ted Shea, Wicomico County; Jerry Mason, Worcester County; Renee Stephens, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

Mr. Mason has Mrs. Louise Gulyas' voting proxy.

A quorum was present.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, Riggin Johnson, Kristen Kerchner, Milton Morris and Pat Tiger.

On a motion by Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Mason, the minutes of the Executive Board meeting on October 14, 2010, were approved as written.

Old Business

New Facility Update

Mr. Pennington reported that the portion of the remodeling project being financed through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), this is about 75% of the building or all the areas not occupied by Shore Transit, had to be rebid as all the bids received were over budget. After the rebid a contractor was chosen. USDA has not yet given the final approval of the bid, but this should be completed in about 10 days. The Shore Transit portion of the building remodel will be put out for bid in March followed by the front parking area and the Shore Transit maintenance facility. The target completion date for the building remodel is late October.

The loan through USDA has been locked in at 3.75% and the first two years will be interest only payments. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has approved a grant for \$800,000 for the project. There is also a bond bill for \$300,000 pending in the State Legislature. There are not enough funds in the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) FY11 capital grant for the fuel depot. We will be applying for funding for this portion of the project in the FY12 capital budget.

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Johnson reported that Shore Transit is running a First Saturday Free promotion, which offers free rides on the first Saturday of the month from November to March, in an effort to introduce new riders to the bus service and hopefully increase ridership. The program has been very well received.

The new Shore Transit website has been launched. A local company was awarded the contract to redesign the website which uses the Google Transit application. This application is normally used for large city transportation but will help our riders with the bus schedule and stops.

Mr. Johnson reported that general ridership through December was down with 166,000 rides but medical related ridership is up. The medical transportation agreement with Ocean City is working great for all involved. Diesel prices are currently about \$2.50 per gallon and the FY11 budget was figured on \$3.00 per gallon fuel. The Shore Transit fleet is moving towards gasoline rather than diesel as the equipment is easier to work on and cheaper to maintain.

Mr. Johnson noted that Greyhound was awarded a grant for two intercity routes that take riders to Baltimore. At this point there has not been an increase in Greyhound ticket sales as a result of these routes. Greyhound is looking forward to their terminal moving to the new facility. They currently stop at the Shore Transit bus yard 10 times per day.

Mr. Johnson told the Executive Board about Senate Bill 402 and House Bill 431 - Motor Carrier Companies Local Public Transportation Systems Exemption from Motor Carrier Permit Requirement which would remove transit from the Public Service Commission regulation. This will allow transportation services that operate under the auspices of the Maryland Transit Administration or other state agencies as well as the federal Department of Transportation to avoid costly duplication in regulatory costs and still meet all necessary health and safety requirements. The hearings for the bills are scheduled for next week.

Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) Update

Mr. Morris reported that for several years LSWA has run a very successful summer youth program. The 2009 program was one of the largest as it was supported by ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for vendors for the 2011 summer youth program will be going out soon.

Mr. Morris reported that this year there have been 300 training contracts issued with 50 for dislocated workers. For the adult and dislocated worker programs the participants must prove that they are legally allowed to work. Veterans are eligible for the program for 3 years. Other workers are eligible for 6 months to 1 year.

LSWA is working with HAWK and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) on a training program for the building and maintaining of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).

Mr. Morris reported that Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds, which are LSWA's main source of funding, have been zeroed in the Continuing Resolution currently in the House of Representatives; in the President's budget, WIA funds were reduced by 8%.

Mr. Morris noted that there are vacancies on the LSWA board, one for Wicomico County and several for Somerset County, for business members .

Budget Update

Mrs. Kerchner reported that LSWA is on budget for the year and trying to use longer term program funds that need to be expended before June 30. Shore Transit is at 43% of budget for the year; demand response is under budget and fixed routes are a little over budget.

New Business

Annual Employee Meeting

Mrs. Tiger reported that the Annual Tri-County Council Employee Meeting will be on Sunday, April 10 at 3:00 p.m. in the Danang Room of the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center. This is a mandatory meeting for all employees and hourly employees are compensated for attending. Refreshments will be available starting at 2:00 p.m. and Tri-County Council members are welcome to attend and meet the employees. The meeting will include information on the benefits, payroll changes for next year, a building update and awards.

Taste of the Eastern Shore Legislative Event

Mr. Pennington reported that we had one of our best turn out yet at the Taste of the Eastern Shore Legislative Event held in Annapolis on February 10. We again partnered with the Salisbury Chamber and this year the Mid-Shore Regional Council was included. In 2010 we had 15 sponsors; in 2011 we had 30 sponsors. All but one of the 2010 sponsors participated again this year.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington reported that the At-Large position on the Executive Board has been held for several years by a General Assembly member recommended by the Senator for the region. He contacted Senator Jim Mathias to ask if any of the General Assembly members would like to be nominated for that position and Senator Mathias asked to be nominated. As the election of officers was held in early January prior to the swearing in of the new General Assembly members, he asked the Executive Board to vote on the nomination. On a motion by Mr. Pollitt, seconded by Mr. Mason, the Executive Board unanimously voted to elect Senator Mathias to hold the At-Large position on the Executive Board for the term ending December 31, 2011.

Mr. Pennington noted that 2011 is the 10th Anniversary of the creation of the Tri-County Council and as the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) is due for a revision, we will be working on a 5 to 10 year visioning process starting in the late spring or early summer.

Mr. Pennington announced that Renee Stephens with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development will be hosting a manufacturing roundtable on March 4 at the One Stop Job Market. The Tri-County Council is a co-sponsor of this meeting.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Pollitt, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.