

Tri-County Council

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes July 24, 2013

Sheree Sample-Hughes, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Board to order on Wednesday, July 24, 2013, at the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center in Salisbury at 6:25 p.m.

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

A quorum was present.

Guests in attendance: Renee Stephens, MD Department of Business and Economic Development.

Staff in attendance: Mike Pennington, Kristie Eberly, Brad Bellacicco and Milton Morris.

On a motion by Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Pollitt, the minutes of the Executive Board meeting on May 15, 2013, were approved as written.

Old Business

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Bellacicco reported that the Shore Transit move to the TCC Multi-Purpose Center (TCCMPC) has been completed but still unpacking especially in maintenance. A problem with the new asphalt in the bus parking lot became apparent during the over 90^o week this summer. The contractor, Harkins Construction, is determining the best course of action to address the issue.

Mr. Bellacicco noted there was some confusion and issues from the passengers regarding the change of the transfer point from Calvert Street in Salisbury to the TCCMPC but that has now been resolved. Overall the passengers seem pleased with the waiting area, vending machines, bathrooms and covered loading zone now available at the TCCMPC

Mr. Bellacicco reported that Shore Transit needs both a bus and a van on the Salisbury/Ocean City route during morning and evening rush hours in order to accommodate all the passengers. He will be checking with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to see if they have a larger used bus for this route during the summer months.

For 11 months of FY13, the passenger count was 381,000 with 2,064,000 miles driven.

Mr. Bellacicco reported that Shore Transit is looking at converting vehicles to gas and propane gas as a less costly alternative to gas only. This would include the installation of a propane

fueling station at the TCCMPC. Diesel buses cannot be converted. The conversion kits could be moved from one vehicle to another as vehicles are replaced. MTA has agreed to back the project which would be put out for bid.

Mr. Bellacicco noted that MTA still has not approved Shore Transit's FY14 budget.

Mr. Pollitt thanked Shore Transit for providing transportation to the county cooling centers during the recent heat wave.

Mr. Pennington reported that during the period of March through June, Shore Transit was contacted to provide more Origin to Destination (OTD) transportation than normal and needed to use the services of more outside vendors to meet demand. As a result the program may not break even for FY13. The health departments don't pay for all OTD transportation, only their clients. Shore Transit is required by law to provide Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) service. The program is being reviewed to determine the ways to cut costs while maintaining the same level of service to these customers.

LSWA Update

Mr. Morris reported that the sequester resulted in a 5.1% funding reduction in the 1st quarter FY14 funding. Due to the funding reduction LSWA will only be providing basic services during that time.

Mr. Morris noted that 91 participants were enrolled in a training program during FY13.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the new Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) program is expected in the fall with awards being made in January 2014.

Mr. Morris reported that in 2014 significant changes are being made to the state GED testing program. All tests will now be computerized and must be taken in an approved computer lab. Salisbury University is the local testing center but they do not want to change their computer lab to conform to the new criteria and will no longer offer GED testing. The closest testing center will now be Chesapeake College in Queenstown. Wor-Wic Community College is interested in hosting the GED testing program and their computer lab meets the new criteria. If Wor-Wic decides that they do not want the GED testing program, the Tri-County Council has a computer lab in the One Stop Job Market that can be modified to meet the state requirements. The cost of the GED test is \$45.

New Business

FY14 Budget

Mr. Pennington noted that all funding has been approved for FY14 except the MTA funding for Shore Transit. A finalized budget should be ready for the next Tri-County Council meeting.

Healthcare Tax Credit (HCTC) Program

Mr. Pennington noted that the Tri-County Council administers a gap filler health insurance coverage program for people who lose their job due to competition from overseas trade. The service is provided for residents of Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, South Carolina, Mississippi and Alabama. The current program's funding is scheduled to expire December 31, 2013, and will not be renewed due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). There will be four jobs impacted by the ending of this program and the Tri-County Council will lose the administration fee.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington reported that the Tri-County Council received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development for equipment for the kitchen in the TCCMPC. Telemon, a One Stop Job Market partner agency, has presented a proposal for food service while using the kitchen for a food service training program.

Mr. Pennington asked the Executive Board members if they would like to call for nominations for the 2013 Citizenship Award which, if awarded, would be presented at the Tri-County Council meeting in December. Following discussion, the Executive Board members asked Mr. Pennington to send notification of the call for nominations to the Tri-County Council members.

Mr. Pennington reported that the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mid-Shore Regional Council were interested in holding the "Taste of the Eastern Shore" Legislative Event again in 2014. He asked the members of the Executive Board if they would like to participate again. Following discussion, the Executive Board agreed that the Tri-County Council would like to participate again.

Mr. Pennington reported that the Aerospace Feasibility Study has been completed and included a list of recommendations for the region. There is interest by the vendor who did the study along with other groups in the region to work on implementing some of the recommendations. The Tri-County Council currently has a Telecommunications Committee that was formed to work on the regional broadband issues. With the formation on the Maryland Broadband Cooperative and the One Maryland Broadband Network the committee has not met in quite a while. He then suggested that the committee be renamed the Technology Committee and tasked with working on a variety of technology related projects including aerospace and broadband. Following discussion, the Executive Board decided to change the name of the committee from Telecommunications to Technology and they should work on recommendations in the Aerospace Feasibility Study.

Mr. Pennington noted that there are currently two parties interested in the 5,000 sqft of vacant space in the TCCMPC. He also met with the City of Salisbury in regards to connecting the TCCMPC to public water and sewer. He will make updates as this project progresses. The TCCMPC has been designated a Priority Funding Area.

Mr. Pennington also noted that a room has been reserved at the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) Conference for the regional councils to have lunch together on Friday, August 16. Check the conference agenda for the room number.

Mrs. Sample-Hughes noted that as discussed at the Tri-County Council meeting in June, an economic development tour of the region is being planned for the fall. Information will be sent out when scheduling is complete.

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