

Tri-County Council

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes February 3, 2014

Jim Purnell, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Board to order on Monday, February 3, 2014, at the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center in Salisbury at 6:30 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Somerset County; John Hall and Rick Pollitt, Wicomico County; Merrill Lockfaw, Worcester County.

A quorum was present.

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

On a motion by Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Hall, the minutes of the Executive Board meeting on October 30, 2013, were approved as written.

Old Business

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Bellacicco reported that in 2013 Shore Transit had the fewest number of accidents since it was established in 2004.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) grant payments are still slow coming in. Currently, Shore Transit is about \$500,000 over budget. A request has been made to MTA for additional funding for preventative maintenance as too small an amount was put in the FY14 budget in anticipation of a preventative maintenance grant. MTA has requested that a revised FY14 budget be submitted by March 5.

Bus routes are being modified next week due to the tight budget and passengers will now be charged for bus transfers. The Salisbury to Ocean City route will be run in the mornings and evenings only with passengers needing to call for rides during the day. There will be a public hearing in May for the additional route changes that are being planned.

There has been a significant increase in medical transportation passengers. Due to this increase, all available vehicles, including those assigned to staff, have been engaged. There are 5 new small buses scheduled to arrive this summer and 2 minivans due to arrive in April or May. There are no plans to retire 5 buses when the new ones arrive as all vehicles are needed and a few non-CDL drivers have been hired.

About 25% of Shore Transit's service is medical transportation requested by the county health departments. The health departments are paying the same rate as they were in 2004 of \$52 per hour. They do not pay for no show appointments. Even if there are 2 or more passengers

on the bus, they only pay for 1 passenger. Transport time begins when the passenger boards the bus and there is no compensation for backhaul time. Shore Transit does all of the medical transportation for Somerset and Wicomico health departments and out of county transportation for Worcester health department. All the health departments have been given some preliminary information on the changes that need to be made and Mr. Bellacicco will be meeting with all of them in March.

Shore Transit purchased snow removal equipment which has enabled them to clean the Shore Transit areas and assist with the front parking areas of the TCC Multi-Purpose Center.

Some cracks have been found in the maintenance facility building. The building contractor has turned them into expansion joints. There is a one year warranty on the building and it will be monitored so any additional issues can be addressed before the warranty ends on June 30.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for adding propane fuel to gas buses has been released.

The ridership survey has been completed and the data is currently being compiled.

Mr. Bellacicco noted that he is working on an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan as requested by MTA. MTA has approved the Drug & Alcohol Policy.

Mr. Bellacicco reported that Shore Transit is looking at ways to raise money to pay for rides for veterans. They have applied for a grant from the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore and have gotten some contributions from veterans' organizations. Pohanka Automotive Group has offered to sell us a car for \$10,000. Tickets would be sold to recoup the cost of the car and any money made above the cost of the car would be used for rides for veterans. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Lockfaw, the Executive Board unanimously voted to approve Shore Transit to continue to investigate this option but asked that more details be presented at their next meeting.

Mr. Pennington reported that at the October 2, 2013, Tri-County Council meeting, the Tri-County Council approved a temporary \$250,000 line of credit for 90 days to support Shore Transit operations until MTA funding arrived. With the continued slow payments from MTA, Mr. Pennington requested that the Executive Board keep the line of credit open. Following discussion, on a motion from Mr. Lockfaw, seconded by Mr. Boston, the Executive Board unanimously voted to keep the \$250,000 line of credit open.

TCCMPC Annexation

Mr. Pennington reported that MTA will not let us move on to Phase III, which includes annexation of the property into the City of Salisbury in order to connection to public water and sewer, until Phase II is completely finished. He expects Phase II to be finalized in April or May.

“Taste of the Eastern Shore” Legislative Event

Mr. Pennington reported that the the “Taste of the Eastern Shore” Legislative Event will be held on February 13 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis. Transportation is available to Annapolis with the bus leaving the TCC Multi-Purpose Center at 2:30 p.m. We have gotten several new sponsors this year and more exhibiting sponsors.

Legislative Agenda Items

Mr. Purnell asked the Executive Board if they had any priority items for our Legislative Agenda which are as follows:

- Restoration of Highway User Revenue
- Economic Impact Analysis for Phosphorus Management Tool

New Business

TCC Multi-Purpose Center Budget

Mr. Pennington reported that the Eastern Shore Regional Library is currently negotiating a lease for about 2,700 sqft of space in the building. The area will require minimal finishing work and they want to occupy by July 1.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) have agreed to a rent increase of \$2.50 per sqft effective July 1, 2014. Rent for all Tri-County Council divisions will also increase by \$2.50 per sqft at that time.

Other Business

Mr. Pennington noted that the Tri-County Council Finance Director resigned in November. The position will not be filled until the new fiscal year at the earliest.

Mr. Pollitt noted that he is collecting information on the viability of gasification of trash and/or poultry waste. This could possibly be a regional effort. When he has gotten more information he will discuss this in greater detail at a future meeting.

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