

Tri-County Council

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes July 30, 2014

Jim Purnell, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Board to order on Wednesday, July 30, 2014, at the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center in Salisbury at 6:05 p.m.

Voting Members in attendance: Jerry Boston, Somerset County; John Hall, Wicomico County; Merrill Lockfaw, Worcester County; Senator Jim Mathias.

Non-Voting Members in attendance: Renee Stephens, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

A quorum was present.

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

Guests in attendance: Craig Stofko, Somerset County Health Department.

On a motion by Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Lockfaw, the minutes of the Executive Board meeting on May 14, 2014, were approved as written.

Old Business

Medical Transportation for Somerset County Health Department

Due to rising costs and an increasing number of clients needing medical transportation, Shore Transit has been forced to raise the amount that is charged for service in order to break even. Medical transportation in Somerset County increased 11% in FY2014. The Somerset County Health Department determined that they can provide some of the service themselves at a cheaper rate than is being charged by Shore Transit. Mr. Craig Stofko was invited to talk to the Executive Board about their transition plan.

Mr. Stofko stated that accepting the rate increase along with the increasing number of clients would deplete their transportation budget in 5-6 months. They will be providing their own transportation within the county and have purchased two vans and a sedan and hired three drivers. They hope to have the vehicles in August and start the transition on September 1. They would like Shore Transit to provide service to wheelchair and dialysis clients and all out of county service which would be about half of the clients that are normally served each year.

Mr. Bellacicco offered to work with Mr. Stofko and his staff as they make the transition and to coordinate with them on other cost savings suggestions.

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Bellacicco reported that there was a 6.8% increase in ridership in FY2014. Most of the increase came from medical transportation. The two wheelchair accessible minivans have arrived and the 5 small buses are expected to arrive in a few months. He does not yet know if the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) will allow the purchase of vehicles in FY2015.

Shore Transit is still short on drivers despite six new drivers just completing training.

The new route schedule for summer has been implemented. The drivers like the changes to the routes and our customers are getting use to the changes. There will be a Public Hearing on August 26 for the planned winter schedule. The winter schedule will reduce service hours starting October 6.

Mr. Purnell stated that he has gotten several complaints about the elimination of the bus stop in the Germantown section of Berlin as the nearest bus stop is now a mile away. Mr. Bellacicco stated that he would look into the reason that it was eliminated and discuss it further with him.

The ridership on the West Ocean City trolley route is increasing with about 40 passengers per day. Some modifications have been made to the stops based on usage.

Mr. Bellacicco reported that the conversion of buses to dual gas and propane fuel starts tomorrow. They will be converting one bus per day until all nine are completed. The propane filling station has been installed and will become operational once the electricians finish running electric lines. Propane currently costs \$2.06 per gallon plus tax.

The Executive Board asked Mr. Pennington to monitor the Somerset County Health Department transportation transition and let them know if there are any problems.

New Business

FY15 Budget

Mr. Pennington reported that the FY2015 operating grants from MTA arrived yesterday. This is the earliest he can remember them arriving. The grants are for level funding plus \$200,000 for the West Ocean City and Downtown Salisbury trolleys. MTA has not yet informed us of the final figures for the capital and preventive maintenance grants.

We have received final grant figures for all other funding sources and plan to present the FY2015 budget to the Tri-County Council at their meeting in September.

Procurement Procedure

Mr. Pennington explained that the Tri-County Council's Procurement Procedure was updated to include some special requirements made by MTA including approval by the Executive Board.

Following discussion, on a motion from Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Boston, the Tri-County Council Executive Board unanimously voted to approve the Tri-County Council's Procurement Procedures.

Other Business

The Eastern Shore Regional Library moved into the Tri-County Council Multi-Purpose Center on July 1. There is still about 2,000 sqft available for rent in the building.

The Lower Shore Workforce Alliance's Summer Youth Employment Program Appreciation Luncheon will be held on August 8 at University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Tri-County Council members are welcome to attend and help honor the youth and employers that participated this year.

The "Taste of the Eastern Shore" Legislative Event is scheduled for February 19, 2015, at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Boston, seconded by Mr. Lockfaw, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.