

Tri-County Council

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

Executive Board Meeting Minutes April 21, 2005

Louise Gulyas, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Executive Board to order on Thursday, April 21, 2005, at the Tri-County Council office in Snow Hill at 6:00 p.m.

Members in attendance: Sam Boston, Mike McCready and Charles Massey, Somerset County; Chip Dashiell and Ted Shea, Wicomico County; Tom Cetola and Jerry Mason, Worcester County; Delegate Bennett Bozman; Jim Gring and Renee Stephens, DBED; Mike Pennington and Kristie Eberly, Tri-County Council. A quorum was present.

The following guests were also in attendance: Beth Whitelock, Tri-County Council; Rob Hart and Bruce Richardson, Shore Transit; B.J. Corbin, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance.

On a motion by Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Dashiell, the minutes of the previous Executive Board meeting of March 17, 2005, were approved as written.

Old Business

Shore Transit Update

Mr. Hart introduced Bruce Richardson, Fleet Manager, to the Board members.

Mr. Hart reported that he will be meeting with the dialysis providers in the area and the counties' health departments in the next week to resolve patient transportation problems. He noted that in the past dialysis units ran their own patient transportation. Funding for this service is provided thru SSTAP and the counties' health departments and commissions on aging. He will also be meeting with the Worcester County Commission on Aging on April 22.

Mr. Hart reported that due to some problems, the cash handling for Shore Transit was moved to the Administrative Office in Snow Hill. Due to limited space and security concerns at this at this location, an alternative way to handle this had to be found. Peninsula Bank has agreed to handle this task for us beginning May 1.

Mr. Hart distributed and reviewed information on regional ridership, changes to the schedule for certain routes and state performance standards.

Mr. Hart reported that Shore Transit will be over budget for 2004-2005. Carryover from previous years will be used to make up the difference. He also noted that due to the rise in fuel and insurance costs, expenses in other areas may need to be cut in order to be within budgeted amounts for 2005-2006.

Chair Gulyas noted that she is trying to get an appointment with senior staff at MTA to discuss the performance standards for rural transit. She feels that the performance standards should be changed to reflect the longer distances between stops, smaller and less dense population and therefore fewer passengers on some routes.

Chair Gulyas then asked the Executive Board to approve Shore Transit providing two buses and drivers to shuttle attendees from the parking areas to the dedication ceremony for the Ocean Pines Veterans Memorial. On a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Boston, the Executive Board unanimously approved using Shore Transit buses to provide shuttle service for the Ocean Pines Veterans Memorial dedication.

LSWA Update

Mr. Corbin reported that the mobile One Stop Job Market has been delivered and he hoped that everyone enjoyed their tour of it prior to the meeting. To start with it will be in Somerset County two days a week, Worcester County two days and Wicomico County one day. This schedule will be evaluated on a regular basis to insure that all areas are being properly served. Sharon Jones will be handling the mobile program.

Mr. Corbin reported that the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance's budget has been cut 12% for 2005-2006.

LSWA sponsored a job fair on April 14 at the Wicomico Civic Center in Salisbury and they estimate that over 1,000 people attended.

Mr. Corbin noted that he and his staff are still working on the lower shore career guide and are planning to have it ready for distribution in September or October. They are also working to complete the five year operational plan and will be submitting it to the Tri-County Council at their May meeting. He also noted that the LSWA Board is now compliant with federal membership guidelines and is more diverse.

Human Resources

Mrs. Whitelock reported that Shore Transit is in the process of allowing drivers to apply for the route they want. With drivers continually assigned to the same route they will be better acquainted with the route and the customers on it.

Mrs. Whitelock reported that TCC employees will be receiving merit increases, based on the current payscale, for good performance reviews. Also all employees will be receiving a 2% COLA increase in July. Through elimination of positions and combining some positions, staff has been reduced by 33 positions which is about a \$500,000 reduction in salary.

Mrs. Whitelock reported that three companies, Landmark Insurance in Crisfield, AIG in Ocean City and Huber Oros in Timonium, made a presentation on their health insurance
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offering to a group of TCC employees. The group has chosen Huber Oros to handle the TCC's health insurance for 2005-2006. Several questions were raised about not continuing to use a local company to provide health insurance. Mrs. Whitelock stated that the chosen company was already providing more information and better customer service than the previous provider has given us in two years.

Mrs. Whitelock noted that the TCC picnic will be held on September 10, 2005, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Shad Landing in Snow Hill.

Regional Healthcare Committee

Mrs. Gulyas reported that the Regional Healthcare Committee will be meeting later this month and will have a speaker discussing mental health issues. Committee members are still working with the University of Maryland Dental School on the viability of a distance learning program on the Eastern Shore.

GIS Committee

Mr. Pennington reported that the GIS Committee has not met since the last Executive Board meeting.

Water & Sewer Committee

Mr. Pennington reported that the Water & Sewer Committee will be meeting in a few weeks.

Telecommunications Committee

Mr. Pennington reported that Worcester County received several bids to provide broadband service for the entire county. The low bidder was the Lower Shore Broadband Cooperative. The Worcester County Commissioners will not be awarding the project until they see a presentation from the low bidder.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Mr. Pennington reported that a small group of CEDS Committee members will be meeting on June 9 to work on redeveloping the CEDS document for 2006.

Foreign Trade Zone Study

Mr. Pennington reported that DBED has agreed to help fund the Foreign Trade Zone feasibility study. He then asked the Executive Board to pass a resolution authorizing him to file an application, on behalf of the Tri-County Council, with DBED for this funding. On a motion by Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Dashiell, the Executive Board authorized Mr. Pennington to file an application with DBED for funding for a Foreign Trade Zone feasibility study. He also noted April 21, 2005

that each county will also need to pass a resolution authorizing the Tri-County Council to file an application with DBED on their behalf.

2005-2006 Budget

Mr. Pennington reported that the latest version of the 2005-2006 budget was included in the meeting packet. As Shore Transit has not received notification on all of its funding from MTA, there could be a few more changes to the budget figures. The Tri-County Council will be asked to vote on the budget at the May 25 meeting. He also noted that each county will need to include the local match for transit in their budget.

New Business

Affordable Housing

Mr. Pennington reported that the Wicomico County NAACP sent a letter asking that the results of the affordable housing studies being completed and in progress in the tri-county region be coordinated by the Tri-County Council. He also noted that the affordable housing issue was raised at the last CEDS meeting. Following discussion, the Executive Board decided to table the matter and wait a few months to see how each county is handling the issue.

Other Business

Beach Replenishment

Chair Gulyas asked the Executive Board to approve a letter being sent to the local senators and congressmen asking them to support beach replenishment funding for the Atlantic coastline. Following discussion, on a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Dashiell, the Executive Board unanimously approved sending a letter to local senators and congressmen asking them to support beach replenishment funding.

BEACON Support Letter

Mr. Pennington reported that he was contacted by BEACON at Salisbury University asking if the Tri-County Council would send a letter of support for their application for grant funding for a regional needs assessment of the mental health needs of senior citizens. On a motion by Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Dashiell, the Executive Board unanimously approved sending a letter of support for BEACON's application for grant funding for a regional senior mental health needs study.

Tri-County Council Website

Mr. Pennington reported that the Tri-County Council website has been redesigned and updated. The web address is www.lowershore.org.

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DBED Grant for 2005-2006

Mr. Pennington reported that DBED has notified the Tri-County Council that they will provide \$140,000 in funding for 2005-2006. The Scope of Work for this funding is due May 20, 2005. If anyone has an item to include in the plan, let him know as soon as possible.

Tawes Crab & Clam Bake

Mr. Pennington reported that the Tri-County Council be sharing a tent and the expense of the tent with Somerset County Economic Development, Maryland DBED, DNR and Worcester County Economic Development at the Tawes Crab and Clam Bake again this year. This also includes 20 tickets. Board members who would like a ticket for the event, contact either Mr. Pennington or Mrs. Eberly. A boat has been hired for a cruise of the Crisfield harbor the morning of the Tawes Crab & Clam Bake. More information will be provided as plans become finalized.

Economic Development Workshop

Mr. Pennington noted that DBED is sponsoring a Training Seminar for Eastern Shore Economic Development and Community Leaders on May 5, 2005, in Denton. For more information, contact Mr. Pennington.

Legislative Update

Delegate Bozman gave a recap of the 2005 legislative session and talked about some items of importance for the 2006 legislative session.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Delegate Bozman, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.