

Tri-County Council

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

Tri-County Council Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2005

Louise Gulyas, Chair, called the meeting of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland to order on Wednesday, May 25, 2005, at the Henson Center at UMES in Princess Anne, Maryland at 5:50 p.m.

Members in attendance: Sam Boston, Charles Fisher, Mike McCready, James Ring, Paul Ward, Somerset County Commissioners; Gail Bartkovich, Chip Dashiell, Larry Dodd, Stevie Prettyman, Wicomico County Council; Sonny Bloxom, Judy Boggs, Tom Cetola, Bud Church, James Purnell, Virgil Shockley, Worcester County Commissioners; Charles Massey, County Administrator, Somerset County; Ted Shea, Administrative Director, Wicomico County; Gerald Mason, Chief Administrative Officer, Worcester County; Doug Gosnell, Sharptown Commissioner; P.J. Purnell, Crisfield City Councilman; Bob Hawkins, Pocomoke City Councilman; Senator Lowell Stoltzfus; Delegate Rudy Cane; Delegate Bennett Bozman; Mike Pennington, Tri-County Council Executive Director; and Kristie Eberly, Tri-County Council Office Manager. A quorum was present.

The following guests were also in attendance: B.J. Corbin, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance; Rob Hart, Shore Transit; Beth Whitelock, Jo-Ellen Mason-Foley and Rebecca White, Tri-County Council; Steve McHenry, Rural Maryland Council; Gary Allen, Partnership for Sustainable Forestry; Kathy Magruder, DBED, Dan Ridder, Maryland State Forest Service.

On a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Church the minutes to the previous meeting of February 10, 2005, were approved as written.

An informational presentation on Economic Development Through Forestry was given by Gary Allen of the Partnership for Sustainable Forestry, Kathy Magruder of DBED and Dan Ridder of the Maryland State Forest Service.

Old Business

LSWA Update

Mr. Corbin reported that the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance sponsored a job fair on April 14 at the Wicomico Civic Center in Salisbury. It is estimated that over 1,000 people attended.

Mr. Corbin reported that the mobile One Stop Job Market has been delivered and he hoped that everyone was able to tour it prior to the meeting. He then asked the Tri-County Council to look at the proof picture of the wrap for the bus. He asked if anyone had any additions or changes to be made before the wrap is approved for printing. As there were no additions or changes, on a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Dashiell, the Tri-County Council

unanimously approved the proof of the wrap for the mobile One Stop Job Market.

Mr. Corbin reported that LSWA's 5 year Operational Plan was due for revision but since the WIA Reauthorization legislation is still pending DOL and DLLR have advised LSWA to do a two year extension for the current 5 year plan. He then asked the Tri-County Council to approve this course of action. On a motion from Mr. Dashiell, seconded by Mr. Cetola, the Tri-County Council unanimously approved of LSWA doing a two year extension to the current 5 year Operational Plan.

Mr. Corbin distributed workforce data for the region and each individual county for the Tri-County Council's review. He asked that any questions about the data be directed to his office.

Mr. Corbin reported that the LSWA Board has become more diverse and is now in compliance with U.S. Department of Labor regulations. He also reported that the Lower Shore Career Guide is almost complete and will be available in the fall of 2005.

Human Resources Update

Mrs. Whitelock reported that the bidding process to assign drivers to a specific fixed route has been completed. She also reported that the Safety Committee has implemented some changes to or new practices that are working well. The Safety Committee will meet again on May 27.

The Tri-County Council picnic will be held on September 10 at Shad Landing in Snow Hill.

Mrs. Whitelock reported that there will be a 14% increase in health insurance premiums for the 2005-2006 fiscal year. She also reported that all employees will receive a 2% COLA beginning in July and some will receive a step increase based on their performance review.

Mrs. Whitelock reported that due to some administrative problems, she is recommending that the Tri-County Council's benefit plan administrator be changed from Benefit Mall to Nationwide Insurance. If the Tri-County Council agrees with this change, the resolution, which was distributed, is needed in order to implement the change. Following discussion, on a motion from Mr. Dashiell, seconded by Mr. Cetola, the Tri-County Council unanimously approved a resolution to change the benefit plan administrator to Nationwide Insurance.

Shore Transit

Mr. Hart noted that in 2000 Shore Transit had 95,000 passenger trips. In 2005 Shore Transit will have over 1,000,000 passenger trips. He distributed a chart showing the increase in ridership during FY05 in comparison to FY04 and the increase in ridership over the last five years. He also noted that the buses going to Ocean City are overfilled even though the large

buses carry 35 passengers. Additional buses are being run at peak times which has increased the costs for those routes.

Mr. Hart also distributed a review of the performance measures of certain routes, including the Deal Island route which is being cut.

Mr. Hart reported that he has been meeting with area dialysis units in an effort to work more efficiently together. All of the meetings have been positive and the dialysis units are going to do what they can to keep transportation efficient yet costs low.

Committee Updates

Regional Healthcare Committee

Mrs. Gulyas reported that there will be six students from the Lower Shore enrolled in the dental hygiene training program at Allegany College for the fall 2005 semester. Members of the Regional Healthcare Committee will be meeting with representatives from the University of Maryland Dental School in a few weeks to discuss the possibility of a dental hygiene distance learning program.

Water & Sewer Committee

Mrs. Bartkovich reported that the committee met earlier in the day with Steve McHenry of the Rural Maryland Council and Dan Nees of the Environmental Finance Center as the guest speakers.

Telecommunications Committee

Mr. Shockley reported that Worcester County has chosen Lower Shore Broadband Cooperative as the vendor to supply wireless broadband to Worcester County. They plan to have the system up and running by November.

GIS Committee

Mr. Pennington reported that the GIS Committee will be meeting in June.

CEDS Committee

Mr. Pennington reported that the CEDS Committee's Revision Subcommittee will be meeting in June.

New Business

2005-2006 TCC Budget

Mr. Pennington reported that the grant amounts projected for Shore Transit from MTA are only estimates as MTA has not released this information yet. Confirmed amounts will be available by the next Tri-County Council meeting and he will discuss this funding in greater detail then. The Tri-County Council and the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance have received confirmation of grant amounts from their funding sources. Following discussion and questions, on a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mr. Dashiell, the Tri-County Council unanimously approved the 2005-2006 Tri-County Council budget.

Other Business

Bylaws Amendment

Mr. Pennington reported that the Executive Board has discussed and approved an amendment to the bylaws on the secession of the Chair of the Tri-County Council which was included in the meeting packet. The Tri-County Council's lawyer has also reviewed and approved the amendment. On a motion from Mr. Cetola, seconded by Mrs. Bartkovich, the Tri-County Council unanimously approved the bylaws amendment on the secession of the Chair.

Mrs. Gulyas reported that the 2005 Legislative Reception was a great success with over 200 attendees.

Mr. Pennington noted that the Tawes Crab and Clam Bake will be held on July 20. The Tri-County Council will again be sharing a tent with Somerset County EDC.

Mr. Pennington asked if the Tri-County Council would like to hold a joint meeting this fall with the Mid-Shore Regional Council and the Upper Shore Regional Council. Following discussion in favor of such, the Tri-County Council asked Mr. Pennington to report on the potential meeting topics at the next Tri-County Council meeting.

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