

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 2020

PRESENT

Dr. Mary Bolt (Cecil College), Linda Burris (Delmarva Power), JoAnn Dawson (Fairwinds), Danny DeMarinis (URP), Joe DiNunzio (Artesian Water), Sandra Edwards (CC Acting Director, OED), Bruce England (SWN), Vince Fiorelli (Chesapeake Utilities), Michael Lara (Northrop Grumman), Sandy Maruchi-Turner (Tourism Manager), Morgan Miller (CCPL), Maureen O'Shea (CC Agribusiness Coordinator), Robert Palsgrove (WSFS), Michael Ratchford (W.L. Gore & Assoc.), Richard Starr (CC OED Coordinator), Dr. Rich Szumel (Christiana Care-Union Hospital)

ABSENT

Woody Jackson (Citizen), Dr. Jeffrey Lawson (CCPS), Bob Meffley (CC Council), Dr. Carl Roberts (BDC), Mike Travers (Cecil Dancenter)

GUESTS

Debbie Brown (CC Chamber of Commerce), Alan Sexton (SWN), Scott Sturgill (Quest End Capital)

Call to Order & Welcome – Mike Ratchford

- Meeting called to order at 8:02 am
- Minutes from November 4, 2020 meeting approved with edit of Joe DiNunzio noted as present at November 2020 meeting

Chairman's Report – Mike Ratchford

- Terri to distribute EDC meeting dates for CY2021. Will continue to meet virtually until Covid protocols change, first Wednesday each month at 8:00 am.
- Sent letter to Dr. McCarthy on behalf of EDC thanking him for his leadership as County Executive and noting how things moved forward (job growth, infrastructure, wage growth, and support of EDC).
- Thank Dr. Rich Szumel for his service on the EDC and for his informational updates regarding the hospital, especially during this pandemic

Review of EDC Fall 2020 Survey – Mike Ratchford

- Do survey every 2-3 years to get feedback on whether fulfilling mission as well members' expectations
- Received 13 out of 21 responses.
- Seems EDC is on right track; received good suggestions for improving.
- Meetings great forum for providing information to business community, having speakers, suggesting policy
- Suggestion to redo subcommittee structure – replace Finance and Communication subcommittees with new Small Business and Agriculture subcommittees; restrict to four subcommittees – OED tasked to work on proposal, changing charters, focus/passions of committees
- Cecil Chamber putting together new Government Relations Committee – provides voice on legislative matters

- Plan to invite new administration to EDC meeting in Jan-Feb of 2021. New OED director to start December 7th.
- Invite suggestions for speakers, topics, etc. Like idea of working with Chamber committee

A copy of the EDC Survey Results was provided to EDC Members.

Acting Director's Report – Sandra Edwards

- Administering grants through CARES Act funding and State funding for Restaurant Relief
 - When finished will be giving out \$1.8M through CARES 2, started out with \$1.5M, Administration made up difference
 - Restaurant Relief grant gave out \$663,000 from State, County using CARES Act funding to cover difference to \$860,000
 - People still contacting us regarding grant funding available – looking at putting together additional grants but time running out, holiday schedules, new administration
- Received Micro Ag program grant in partnership with Upper Shore Regional Council – will be in 2021
- Still receiving prospect calls
- New director coming onboard

Subcommittee Reports:

Workforce Update – Bruce England

- Thank Mike for leadership of committee over years
- Data from last month's meeting hasn't changed
- Hiring – companies across variety of industries still hiring; trying to attract people back into workforce, training programs
- Dec. 10th – hosting Virtual Hiring event; may do monthly if successful

Education Update (Cecil College) – Dr. Mary Bolt

- Cecil College's Career Center participating making students aware of Virtual Hiring event
- Bio Processing degree passed – brings good-paying jobs in County/regionally
- Classes starting in Spring – about 12% on campus, 44% synchronous, 44% asynchronous
- Have GEARS funding left – training available for companies
- College open for business

Education/Library Update (CCPL) - Morgan Miller

- Operational Status – Perryville, Elkton, and Chesapeake City branches open in limited capacity, access computers, resources, and librarians
 - Will stay open as long as safe to do so
 - Rising Sun and Cecilton running contactless pick ups
- Working on outreach solutions; i.e., Book Mobile, computers
 - Trying to get computers, technology, and high speed internet to people
- Spent summer building new website for Library – page for businesses and nonprofits, 2nd page for jobs/careers
- Content Learning Videos available
- Hiring for North East Library -- Library should be completed after new year and opening in mid-April
- Team Librarians recognized across State by Citizens for Libraries – Outstanding Employees of the Year, especially for Start Up Cecil

Communications Subcommittee – JoAnn Dawson

- Second movie to be filmed in Cecil County in March-April unless picked up by Hallmark

Union Hospital Update - Dr. Rich Szumel

- Integration with Christiana phenomenal
- Currently have more Covid positive cases in hospitals than any time during Pandemic
- Have surge plans if needed
- On Divert -- OR, ICU, PCU full; other hospitals in area on Divert
- Spread the Word – need to social distance, wear mask
- Expect another peak in 2-3 weeks
- Great communication with County, State, and with mothership
- New vaccines – logistical nightmare of distributing
 - 2 Manufacturers
 - Phizer vaccine – difficult storage requirements; ordered freezers to store
 - Require 2 doses; window of time between is 21 days (Phizer)
 - Require vaccines come from same lot – recordkeeping will be extremely difficult
 - Vaccine will be distributed in limited quantity
 - CDC guidance on vaccine distribution – healthcare workers, vulnerable populations
 - Who would be distribution site(s)? Waiting for disposition on this
- Dr. Szumel leaving Christiana/Union at end of month – position being eliminated
 - Christiana will administer via leadership triad – will let Mike and Debbie (Chamber) know contact information

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Our next EDC meeting will be Virtual on January 6, 2021 at 8:00 am. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Springel
Administrative Assistant