



CALVERT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

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Board of Commissioners

Earl F. Hance
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MINUTES

August 12, 2020

Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bonnie Barrett, Tony DeStefano, Eric Eitel, Stacey Hann-Ruff, Larry Jaworski, Mina Kim, Carrie Polk, Scott Russey, Kasia Sweeney

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Benton, Susan Cox*, Tommy Luginbill, Gywn Novak*, Kim Owen*, Kristin Williams*

GUESTS PRESENT: Lisa Creason – Small Business Development Center, Ruthy Davis – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, Angella Hunter – Soil Conservation, Kathy Maney – Chamber of Commerce, Jennifer Moreland – Calvert County Community Resources, Steve Wall – Maryland Department of Commerce, Angella Walters Small – College of Southern Maryland, Pam Wilkerson – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

STAFF PRESENT: Danita Boonchaisri, Hilary Dailey, Kathy MacAdams, Tammy Bowen

***Excused Absence**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Scott Russey.

II. CALL FOR AGENDA REVISIONS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

With a call for agenda revisions being made by Russey, and none being received, a **motion** was made by Tony DeStefano to approve the agenda as submitted. The **motion** was seconded by Carrie Polk, and carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 10, 2020 MEETING

On a **motion** by Polk, seconded by Stacey Hann-Ruff and carried, the minutes from the June 10, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Nominating Committee Recommendation

Prior to announcing the Nominating Committee's recommendations, Russey and DeStefano were recused from the discussion by being placed in a separate virtual breakout room. Danita Boonchaisri reported that the Nominating Committee recommended Russey and DeStefano be nominated as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. A **motion** was made by Larry Jaworski to reappoint Russey as Chairman and DeStefano as Vice-Chairman. The **motion** was seconded by Bonnie Barrett,

and carried. Russey and DeStefano then rejoined the meeting and were informed of their reappointments.

B. Housing for All

Jennifer Moreland, Director of Calvert County Community Resources, presented on the status of housing in Calvert County. She shared a Housing for All Task Force presentation created at the request of the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners. The task force is chaired by the Reverend Dana Jones and Moreland touted his experience and leadership skills. One of the key goals of this task force is to educate the community on the impact of the existing housing shortage in Calvert County. Those most affected are young adults, young families, the disabled, veterans, and the local workforce. The task force will be working closely with Economic Development to conduct a comprehensive housing study. This type of study has not been performed since 1999. At the conclusion of Moreland's presentation, Boonchaisri stated that a copy of the PowerPoint slides would be forwarded to the members of EDAC.

C. Labor/Workforce Update

Ruthy Davis, Workforce Director, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, gave a presentation on the status of the current workforce situation in Southern Maryland. She detailed initiatives being taken to deal with the reemerging economy and the resulting needs of the workforce and businesses. When COVID first hit, the unemployment system was overwhelmed due to the large number of people applying for claims, with many struggling to get their claims processed. As a result, a new system was implemented that was more user friendly and capable of handling the surge in claims. At its peak, there were over 5,000 unemployment claims filed in Southern Maryland. The Maryland Department of Labor is currently conducting research to determine how many have since returned to the workforce. Davis also noted the industries that were the hardest hit by the pandemic.

Pam Wilkerson, Workforce Operations Manager, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, continued the presentation by detailing steps being taken to get Southern Maryland back to work. The Tri-County Council is partnering with the College of Southern Maryland and other community-based organizations and local businesses to respond to an emerging skills need as a result of COVID. After conducting an analysis to identify these needs a new program, Skill Up Southern Maryland, is being implemented and will be available online in the fall to anyone in the region interested in enhancing their skill set. In collaboration with CSM, free training will also be available to qualified individuals.

D. Navigating Our Recovery – Getting Back to Business

1. Back to Business

Kathy MacAdams, Business Retention Specialist, reported that due to COVID she would like to hold a "virtual" business walk in lieu of EDAC's annual Fall Business Walk. She would like this to occur prior to Small Business Saturday scheduled for November 28. MacAdams also asked if there was interest in holding a Back-to-Business virtual event similar to the one held in June. She suggested that this be held on October 14, the date of the next EDAC meeting and agreed to select representatives from industries that are experiencing the most difficulties to attend. MacAdams also requested that members email her with any suggestions.

2. Tourism and Nonprofit Challenges

Hilary Dailey, Tourism Program Specialist, gave an update on the continuing challenges tourism and nonprofits are facing due to COVID. A company called Destination Analysts provides weekly updates on American travel. This week's key finding was that staying safe continues to be the number one priority across the nation and this trend will likely last through the next six months. The majority of those who do plan to travel during this period will visit beaches, parks and rural areas.

A Calvert County travel survey was conducted and the results were similar to findings at the national level. Locally, the majority of people felt the safest staying at hotels, followed by campgrounds and private homes. Every respondent listed that increased sanitation and safety is the number one priority when visiting attractions and restaurants. Most of the county's anchor attractions are open with strict guidelines and procedures in place. In addition, the county's Visitors Center, located outside the Calvert Marine Museum, is open to the public and people have been taking brochures and contacting attractions. A Travel Confidently social media campaign is currently underway to promote attractions that are open and welcoming visitors. With regard to nonprofits, fundraising remains their biggest hurdle as these events have all been cancelled.

3. CARES Act Funding

MacAdams gave a presentation detailing the results of the first round of CARES Act grant funding for Calvert County's small businesses. She reported that a total of 107 grants were awarded to the local business community, noting the types of industries that received the funding. She was pleased to announce that 48 percent of the funds were allocated to women-owned businesses. Further, 20 percent and 6 percent went to minority and veteran-owned businesses, respectively. Calvert was one of the few counties in Maryland that offered a \$1,500 grant to sole proprietors and 37 of these were awarded in the first round. A second round of grant funding is now in progress and MacAdams urged members to help spread the word to small businesses and nonprofits.

4. CalvertHealth Update

Kasia Sweeney, Vice President of Strategy and Business Development, began her presentation by thanking the community for its support of the hospital and its employees. Donations of food and PPE, including homemade masks, were received from over 30 businesses and 200 individuals.

Sweeney reported that CalvertHealth has tested 2,080 residents for COVID. Of those individuals, 215 tested positive, with 101 needing inpatient care at the hospital. Seven patients required transfer to another facility for a higher level of treatment. Unfortunately, there have been 14 deaths in Calvert County attributed to COVID. Sweeney reported that CalvertHealth was one of the few hospitals in the state that offered hazard pay to front line staff caring for patients. Of 133 CalvertHealth employees that were exposed to COVID patients and subsequently tested, there were zero positive results.

At the onset of the pandemic, several safety protocols were implemented. Already rigorous sanitation practices were enhanced, and a UV light disinfecting system that was in place prior to COVID was expanded to include additional areas in the hospital. In April, the ICU

was expanded to twice its normal capacity. With regard to testing, this was initially conducted via a drive through tent located at the hospital. As testing became more readily available, CalvertHealth teamed with the Calvert Health Department to staff a testing site at the Vehicle Emissions Station in Prince Frederick. Currently, most physician offices have access to COVID testing and the Urgent Care Center in Prince Frederick is conducting rapid COVID testing by appointment.

Sweeney informed members that CalvertHealth's website is continuously kept up to date to keep the public informed about testing sites, hospital visitor status and what services are open and available. At the conclusion of Sweeney's presentation, Boonchaisri noted that the Calvert Health Department's website maintains current information and statistics. She reported that at the present time, individuals in the 15-to-19 year age range are showing the highest positivity rate, closely followed by those ages 20 to 27.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public attended and no comment was taken.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next EDAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2020, at 9 a.m. Location TBD but this meeting will likely be virtual.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, a **motion** to adjourn was made DeStefano at 11:44 a.m. The **motion** was seconded by Jaworski, and carried.