



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

September 9, 2020 | 2:30 p.m.

**\*VIA CONFERENCE CALL\***

Toll Free: 1-415-993-2640  
Conference Code: 545 333 884#

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Cherry, Chair  
Secretary Kelly Schulz  
Aaron Tomarchio  
Angela Sweeney  
Capt. Eric Nielsen  
Sen. Cheryl Kagan  
Henry Fawell  
Julian Boykin  
Justin Meighan  
Laura Van Eperen  
Leonard Raley  
Stuart Page  
Tom Sadowski

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Del. Kris Valderrama

### **MMP STAFF**

Tom Riford  
Robert Scherr

### **COMMERCE STAFF**

Sherri Diehl  
Carolyn Hammock  
Liz Fitzsimmons  
Lutisha Williams  
Signe Pringle

**MMP Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Page 2**

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Meeting was called to order by Chair, Karen Cherry at 2:30p.m. Robert Scherr called the roll for attendance. Quorum was established.

**II. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**a. Approval of Minutes of April 20, 2020**

Chair, Karen Cherry asked for a motion to approve minutes from April 20, 2020. Ms. Laura Van Eperen moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Angela Sweeney second. No oppositions.

**b. Financial Report**

The financial update presented by Mr. Leonard Raley for the period ending on June 30, 2020. They are as follows:

On the revenue side, the total partner contributions paid in FY 2020 is \$557,000 with a current balance of \$3,190,993. On the expense side, the amount paid in FY 2020 is \$1,575,425.81 – this reflects expenses for media placements, research, web development, the Business Summit (September, 2019) and VIP reception. Remaining expenses for FY 2020 include approximately \$900,000 of the \$1.8 million in the Media Plan through June 2020.

**c. Executive Director's Report**

Immediately following the financial report, Chair Karen Cherry asked for remarks from Executive Director, Tom Riford. Mr. Riford mentioned two very productive MMP Townhall meetings that were held in July. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he expressed to the Board that we had to pause some of the marketing efforts and a complete marketing report will be provided at a later date. He also shared that one of the highlights during this time of the pandemic, a new public service announcement campaign ran called "Masks on Maryland" through the MD Office of Tourism that worked synergistically with the MD Department of Health campaign.

As it relates to the budget, there has been a lot of challenges which has impacted our partners and companies throughout Maryland, Mr. Riford expressed. He stated that the MMP is now more important than ever in an effort to try and help the business community and the economic climate by attracting businesses to Maryland. Mr. Riford also mentioned that the organization has officially hired a new public relations firm...Abel Communications. Mr. Riford provided some quick updates:

- The Office of Tourism helped to coordinate "International Underground Railroad Month," which kicked off on September 1;

**MMP Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Page 3**

- All Welcome Centers reopened on September 2; and
- New Tourism website officially launched on September 3

In conclusion, Mr. Riford shared that the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) completed \$3 million of emergency grants funding for various art organizations.

**d. Partnership and Contract Updates**

Corporate Partnership Manager, Rob Scherr provided the following updates:

- Secured 2020 partnership renewals - \$1,408,000 over three years
  - Whiting – Turner - \$500,000
  - Peterson Companies - \$253,000
  - Transamerica - \$250,000
  - MEDCO - \$150,000
  - Howard Hughes - \$100,000
  - T. Rowe Price - \$100,000
  - Bozzuto Group - \$30,000
  - Merritt Companies - \$25,000
- In-process 2020 renewals (commitment, but unsigned agreement) - \$100,000
  - Legg – Mason/Franklin Templeton - \$100,000
- Remaining 2020 renewals - \$635,000
  - Tradepoint Atlantic – indication of non-renewal. Reduction was requested
  - Clark Construction – Past Due
  - M&T Bank – Past Due
  - Wexford Science & Technology – October
  - Royal Farms – October
  - H&S Bakery – November
  - H&S Properties – November
- Estimated 2020 Losses (Non-Renewals) - \$860,000
  - Non-Renewals
    - McCormick & Co., CyberCore Technologies, Miles & Stockbridge, Alban CAT, Kelly & Associates, Harkins Builders and Donohoe
  - Reduction of partnership levels
    - Howard Hughes, Tradepoint Atlantic and Buzzuto
- 2020/2021 Pipeline
  - Soft solicitation began in August

## MMP Board Meeting Minutes

### Page 4

- 2021 Renewals - \$2,025,000
  - MedStar Health, Howard Bank, Perdue Farms, Kaiser Permanente, WR Grace, UMMS, Weller Development, Brown Advisory, BGE, Cisco, and St. John Properties
- 2022 Renewals - \$305,000
  - Ellin & Tucker, USM, Morgan Stanley, and Buzzuto

#### **e. Abel Communications**

Mr. Tom Riford introduced the Board's new public relations firm (Abel Communications). The President of Abel, Ms. Gina Richmond expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with the MMP and promote the State of Maryland. Ms. Richmond introduced the team who will be MMP's point of contact. They are: Ms. Gina Richmond (Strategist), Ms. Lorianne Walker (Account Lead) and Ms. Allison Beres (Account Support).

She expressed that the program goals would focus on:

- Increase National Awareness
- Highlight Maryland Businesses
- Promote Maryland's Key Industries
- Serve as an Extension of the MMP Team

The scope of work that the agency will do is help MMP reach its goals through a targeted high-impact communications program that resonates with corporate decision makers and influencers. She expressed that the PR program is to include the following elements:

- Research & Planning
- National Media Relations
- Account Planning & Strategy

The timeframe would be between July 1, 2020 thru December 31, 2020 (6 months). The key themes Ms. Richmond communicated were: (1) how Maryland became the center of the COVID-19 fight; (2) five factors that will determine where people live – post COVID; (3) a strategic regional office location: optimizing your search; (4) Maryland: the Emerging East Coast Tech Epicenter; and (5) Women/Minority business support & leadership.

Lastly, she mentioned that the media relations program will generate strategic, meaningful coverage about the state of Maryland and its commitment to helping companies grow and prosper.

#### **f. Marketing Report**

HZ representative, Rebecca Yatovitz expressed to the Board that the agency removed all things hinging on the audiences being in a specific location (BWI, Simplifi, Wilkins and Ravens). All of these platforms have had great successes in the past, but because people were being quarantined due

**MMP Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Page 5**

to COVID-19, bans on travel and no large group gatherings, the decision was made to forego these buys as the foot traffic would not be as high volume to warrant the money spent. Also, she mentioned that online display and WSJ newspapers were paused in the Spring. However, print media continued as is. Also, according to HZ representative, Maria Kimball, in the Spring, a Tech Workforce-targeted audio campaign through Pandora was launched; one event-targeted campaign for RSA San Francisco, testing messaging GDN and YouTube and ran in various print publications. Overall, Ms. Kimball stated that these few tactics performed strongly. As expected, Google search generated the highest conversion rate, while GDN drove the greatest reach. The RSA campaign outperformed the campaign for the same event in 2019.

Ms. Kimball shared that the Campaign Parameters for the Fall Media Campaign would run September 2020 through December with emphasis on September through November. The audience would consist of business owners, C-Suite Executives and Site Selectors. The cost associated with this effort is over \$1 million to be allocated between in-state retention, out-of-state attraction and workforce efforts.

**g. BIO 2021 Trade Show and MMP**

According Assistant Secretary Signe Pringle, the BIO International Convention has been postponed to June 14-17, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She shared that the BIO International Convention is one of the largest gathering of the life sciences industry in the world. Each year 15,000-20,000 biotechnology and pharma leaders as well as over 1,800 exhibitors from the US and 65 other countries participate in four days of programming, networking and partnering. A request was made that Commerce and the MMP enter into an Inter-Agency Agreement, in which MMP would oversee the branding, pavilion execution, and complementary marketing (digital, ads, signage), and assist with developing new sponsorship opportunities to offset the costs.

Estimated Cost Breakdown is as follows:

- \$92,000 – Leasing of 2000 sq ft @ \$46 from BIO
- \$300,000 – Vendor estimate to design and build-out leased space
- (\$136,000) – Recoup estimate from pavilion exhibitors for paid booth space (min of 16 exhibitors @ \$8,500 each)
- \$15,000 – Networking events

The MMP board of directors voted to approve the recommendation that MMP enter into an Inter-Agency Agreement with Commerce to fully support the BIO 2021 show, with additional information and final costs being gathered.

**III. Update: Secretary Kelly Schulz**

Secretary Kelly Schulz provided an update on Commerce's COVID-19 Business Assistance Program, in which approval of \$95 million in grants of up to \$10,000 to more than 9,300 businesses.

- Contracts executed with 5,012 businesses for the \$50 million first round, including more than 230 non-profits;
- Contracts sent to 4,361 for-profit businesses in the \$45 million second round; and
- Another 569 non-profit applications – totaling \$5.59 million have been certified for DHCD's program

Secretary Schulz added that Commerce awarded nearly \$75 million in loans of up to \$50,000, in which contracts were sent to 1,640 businesses. There were \$3.8 million in manufacturing grants of up to \$100,000 approved for 53 businesses – established Maryland Manufacturing Network. Also, \$1 million in MSAC grants provided to 64 arts organization and 61 independent artists. She also mentioned that another \$3 million is being awarded to artists, organizations, A&E District managers, and county arts agencies. According to Secretary Schulz, \$5 million in emergency funds for MSBDFFA loans – 24 applications totaling \$1,677,500 have been approved as of 8/21/20.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

The business meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for December, 2020, exact date TBD.

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