



## **Maryland Marketing Partnership Board Meeting**

**March 26, 2024 | 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**\*VIA CONFERENCE CALL\* (US) +1 813-575-7997 PIN: 448 510 980#**

**GOOGLE MEETS: [meet.google.com/avp-tikj-uuv](https://meet.google.com/avp-tikj-uuv)**

### **Members Present Virtually:**

Leonard Railey  
Laura Van Eperen  
Leon Bailey, Jr.  
Lind Thornton Thomas  
Sila Alegret-Bartel  
Christine Brooks-Cropper  
Henry Fawell  
Shannon Prudhomme  
Dionne Joyner-Weems

### **Members Absent:**

Ali Von Paris  
Kevin Anderson  
Allyson Black Woodson  
Gerald W. Jackson  
Senator Cheryl Kagan  
Captain Eric Nielson  
Delegate Kris Valderrama

### **MMP Staff:**

Sherry Diehl, Interim Executive Director  
Robert Scherr, Director of Corporate Partnerships

### **Commerce Staff:**

Carolyn Hammock  
Julie Miller  
Maggie Whitescarver

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

The meeting was called to order by Executive Director Sherri Diehl at 11:03 a.m. The Executive Director called the roll for attendance. Quorum was established. Executive Director Diehl mentioned the tragedy of the Key Bridge collapse early in the morning and explained how Commerce and the team are doing all they can to offer support where needed.

## **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 19, 2023**

Executive Director Diehl asked for any questions or comments regarding the minutes from December. There were no questions or comments. Executive Director Diehl raised a motion to approve. Laura Van Eperen moved to approve the minutes. Linda Thornton Thomas seconded the motion. No opposition. Minutes were approved and accepted.

## **III. Financial Report (Sherri Diehl, Executive Director)**

- ❖ On the revenue side:
  - MMP Partner contributions paid in FY2024 (to-date): \$421,668.
- ❖ On the expense side (July2023-March2024) (to date):
  - Total projected FY24 expenses \$2,419,070
  - Total actuals to date for FY24: \$2,289,442
    - Media Plan - \$1,972,736
    - Other expenses include: Fundraising contractor, website, PR firm, creative production, photos/video/music, receptions, and printing)
- ❖ Upcoming Expenses thru June 2024
  - Total Remaining Projected Expenses in FY24: \$129,628
    - (Contract services, creative, media)
- ❖ Projected Balance at the end of FY24: \$2.7M (includes revenue from partners to be collected through FY24)
  - FY25 and FY26 Budgets projected to be \$2M each year.

Executive Director Diehl called for a motion to approve the financial report. Leonard Bailey, Jr. moved to approve the report. Sila Alegret-Bartel seconded the motion. No opposition. The financial report was approved.

## **IV. PLANIT - AD CAMPAIGN UPDATE (Melanie Megale)**

Melanie Megale from Planit explained the Spring campaign launched in the beginning of March where they picked back up the workforce attraction campaign. The newest element is the workforce attraction microsite. The budget for the workforce attraction this flight was increased after being paused in the Fall and in hopes to drive more traffic to the new site. Additionally the campaign is more college focused, targeting students attending in-state and out-of-state schools, prioritizing schools and universities that have high tech programs, especially quantum. New

aspects of the campaign include expanding to vertical video and supporting the workforce attraction at the ASGCT Conference in May. With business attraction efforts, keeping with standard channels, launched the LinkedIn CTV campaign. Increasing support at conferences (SelectUSA). A successful campaign with display ads in the fall and now expanding to include YouTube. A decrease in performance with business retention was noticed in December so the team is ramping up the use of high impact banners which tend to have a stronger engagement.

- Linda Thornton Thomas asked what campaign has the strongest reach. Melanie answered that display campaigns tend to have the strongest reach as the cost is low, low frequency, and high reach. The next strongest reach is Meta such as Facebook and Instagram.
- Leonard Raley asked to have metrics of success explained. Melanie answered that the metrics are click through rate and time on site with the benchmark of 2 minutes so any more than 2 minutes spent on the site is a success.

## **V. WORKFORCE ATTRACTION CAMPAIGN (Carolyn Hammock and Julie Miller)**

Carolyn Hammock introduces the new Talent Attraction campaign. A press release by Governor Wes Moore was sent out, announcing the new campaign set on increasing efforts to attract people to live and work in Maryland. The focus is on bringing young, high tech workers to Maryland and keeping the young high tech talent graduates from Maryland colleges and universities in the state. The campaign's striking orange color draws attention and sets it apart from state competitors. A main component of the campaign is the use of videos. The new 30-second Talent Attraction video, which was produced in house, was shown.

- Dionne Weems Joyner applauded the energy of the video and noted how she would like to see more students included in the campaign, giving them a voice.
- Christine Brooks Cropper also applauded the energy but cautioned the team that in targeting 21-34 year olds, many of the students graduating with tech degrees aren't getting high paying tech jobs right away. The campaign needs to be conscious of its marketing to show that Maryland has the assets such as tech partners who are offering internships and have jobs to pay for certifications needed to achieve that ideal job.
- Dionne Joyner Weems responded that we should also focus on showing the people who are doing the work to help young students and graduates get these jobs so more people may want to be involved in the storytelling.
- Linda Thornton Thomas brought up the aspect of affordable housing and how some focus should be on showing specialized programs and incentives that can assist along the way.
- Leon Bailey suggested highlighting tech partners who are hiring and highlighting their businesses.
- Carolyn summarized how the Business.Maryland.gov site is for the business audience while the new talent attraction site is for the workers, showing what it's like to live and

work in Maryland. The new site is beginning to show how the worker audience engages differently, so the data will continue to be monitored.

Julie Miller gave a walk through of the new talent attraction website which was built on a platform by Planit with content created by the Commerce team. The website walkthrough highlighted the various sections (Live, Work, Explore, and Experience) and their subsections. A key aspect to the site is offering perspectives of real workers through brief Q&A series videos to give a more authentic feel. The site includes a job search function which pulls in open positions from a third party and allows website visitors to browse through and apply for jobs in a few clicks. The team is working with sister agencies, other boards, and groups to spread the word about our new campaign and website.

- Dionne Joyner Weems asked for details on engagement via social media for the new site. Julie responded that Commerce's social media accounts are built for business attraction so currently the ads for the talent attraction campaign are running through Maryland's Office of Tourism's social media accounts. She cites potential to grow in the future, but cautions executing with the right strategy.

## **VI. ABEL - PR UPDATE AND INFLUENCER DISCUSSION (Emily McDermott)**

Emily McDermott from Abel Communications discussed the various tactics they are pursuing across the owned, earned, and paid media realms. The PR team started releasing their C-Suite Insights interviews which live on Commerce's blog, but are pushed out through social media. The Q&A with the business executive gives a glimpse into their work and personal life in Maryland. The earned media included stories in the Site Selection magazine spotlighting the aerospace industry in Maryland. Two ideas are in the works. One is focusing on medical design and outsourcing and the second is a series of interviews on economic resiliency, focusing on different programs and initiatives Maryland offers. For paid media, one of the new avenues Abel is pursuing is the use of influencers. The key is to find influencers whose target audience matches that of MMP's campaign. One influencer that has been discussed is Hannah and her account Salary Transparent Street series where she is known for organic on-the street interviews, asking people what job they have and what they make for a living. Examples of Hannah's videos were shown. Abel is still in the negotiating stage with Hannah and her representative, but a possible plan would be to shoot a bundle of videos outside in late Spring, early Summer 2024 in locations such as Baltimore City, Frederick County, Columbia, Montgomery. Hannah also has a partnership with Indeed and some of her videos talk about certifications which also speaks to MMP's campaign.

- Hannah has worked with other companies before, but never a department of Commerce and Leon Bailey suggested the negotiation point out the mutual benefit for both sides in creating a strong partnership.
- Dionne Joyner Weems brought up the option of empowering MMP's own people and the board's connections to go out and create their own videos that could help spread the word on what MMP does. Emily mentioned that even if we go through paying an influencer, there is a possibility to do our own videos with organic promotion and some behind the scenes recording. Sherri clarified that Hannah would not be an ambassador for Maryland, all the board members are ambassadors and Hannah's platform would just be used to amplify our message.
- Christine Brooks Cropper brought up the importance of having diversity represented in the videos to make sure the perception is that people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to get the jobs they want in Maryland.

## **VII. MMP ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Executive Director Sherri Diehl moves into administrative items and recommends having a regularly closed section of the meeting so we can discuss fundraising with board members.

- **Executive Director Appointment and Executive Committee Vote**

Sherri explains executive committee board positions. She submits Laura Van Eperen as Chair, Leon Bailey as Vice Chair, Leonard Raley as Treasurer, and Linda Thornton Thomas as Secretary. Sherri calls for a motion to approve the nominations. Henry Fawell moved to approve the minutes. Dionne Joyner Weems seconded the motion. No opposition. New executive committee appointments were approved.

- **MMP Board Member Roles and Responsibilities - Sherri Diehl**

Sherri encourages everyone to attend all four board meetings per year and to do their best to attend the receptions. The goal is to have at least three events per year and the board is looking for ideas on how to bring the group together rather than just cocktail receptions, possibly including one casual environment (TopGolf?) and one roundtable discussion. Christine Brooks Cropper proposed having the partners host an event to bring in more prospective partners since potential partners want to hear current partners' "why" for investing when deciding for themselves on whether to invest. Dionne Joyner Weems explained how she wants the MMP to be seen as a source, and a group of thought leaders so that people can look to the board for info they need to help amplify Maryland's message and spread the word.

- **Fundraising Update - Robert Scherr**

The board has \$2 million projected to spend in 2025-2026. Some cuts will be made, mostly to the media plan. July 1, 2026, the budget will cut about half a million dollars if fundraising efforts aren't increased. Rob Scherr encourages people to spread the word about the MMP through reposting and sharing social media content posted by the MMP's LinkedIn or Commerce's other accounts. The board is looking for high targets and more diversity in partners. Encourages board members to start the conversation with prospective partners and then send them to Rob to continue the conversation.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

- Executive Director Sherri Diehl extended a motion to adjourn the meeting. The business meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

**NOTE: Next Board Meeting June 11, 2024 10-11:30 a.m.**  
**WTC Building, Baltimore, MD 21202**