



Maryland

Maryland Marketing Partnership Board Meeting

June 11, 2024

IN PERSON: 401 E. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21202, 17th Floor

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Members In Person:

Laura Van Eperen

Leon Bailey, Jr.

Leonard Railey

Dionne Joyner-Weems

Kevin Anderson

Members Present Virtually:

Lind Thornton Thomas

Sila Alegret-Bartel

Christine Brooks-Cropper

Captain Eric Nielson

Shannon Prudhomme

Members Absent:

Ali Von Paris

Allyson Black Woodson

Gerald W. Jackson

Senator Cheryl Kagan

Delegate Kris Valderrama

Henry Fawell

MMP Staff:

Robert Scherr, Director of Corporate Partnerships

Commerce Staff:

Sherri Diehl

Carolyn Hammock

Saundra Jones

Julie Miller

Maggie Whitescarver

I. Welcome and Roll Call - Chair Laura Van Eperen

- The meeting was called to order by Chair Laura Van Eperen at 10:02 a.m. Executive Director Sherri Diehl called the roll for attendance.. A quorum was established. Madam Chair introduced Secretary Kevin Anderson to give Commerce updates.

II. Commerce Update - Secretary Kevin Anderson

- Secretary Anderson spoke of upcoming meetings/events on his calendar. On Wednesday June 12, there will be an event with U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Governor Moore to celebrate the 700-foot channel reopening which is a big milestone in rebuilding and maintaining the Port and the economic system in Maryland. There will be a roundtable on Wednesday as well about the rebuild and the success of bringing the government together in the effort. Maryland still maintains its Triple A credit rating. Secretary Anderson also mentioned the publicity Maryland has been getting since the bridge crisis and how Maryland has handled it very well and used it as an opportunity. He praised the marketing and communication of the five financial programs and their allocated funds and the combined efforts of Commerce, Labor, and DHCD as they are protecting the workers, businesses, and ecosystem. Secretary Anderson mentioned how it isn't over yet with the bridge still needing to be rebuilt in the next couple years and dealing with traffic issues that may persist. He praised the data on the response from the bridge collapse, showing where support was sent, how it helped, and how the economy is still in a great place.
- An MOU was recently signed with NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.
- MEDCO and Commerce extended another MOU for great workforce opportunities.
- Governor Moore and Secretary Anderson helped to renew another MOU with South Australia, a strong MOU with cyber, technology, and aerospace and continuing to partner in workforce and research development. He reiterated the importance of relationships across the countries.
- Secretary Anderson discussed the promotion of delegations at international conferences: InfoSec in Europe, Select USA attracting foreign investment (in Maryland at Gaylord; a few Maryland counties have their own booths). He praised Maryland's competitiveness in competing for business opportunities. Maryland also had a presence at BIO International recently in San Diego with a successful Maryland reception. Secretary Anderson touted Maryland's ranking as #3 biotech cluster in the United States.
- He mentioned the target audience of marketing and following the data on where best to target.
- Secretary Anderson mentioned how we're entering into a serious and competitive aspect of how we'll grow our state and move into the next session. We need to

make sure our economy can keep up with and support our ambitions. He explained how a strategic plan will be finished in the next 60 days and help figure out where we want to focus and grow our state, but marketing will play a big role.

- Chair Van Eperen thanked Secretary Anderson for his update and she praised the progress of the Port and the state's success overall. She asked if the strategic plan is statewide and Secretary Anderson confirmed. He stated Maryland will now be strategy endowed and Chair Van Eperen commented that hopefully the MMP can dovetail on such strategies. Executive Director Sherri Diehl emphasized that we follow along in strategy based on the info presented in the strategic plan.
- Leonard Raley asked for any previews of the strategies in the plan.
 - Secretary Anderson explained a main part is looking at how to scale and tailor as much growth as we can. We need to look at the different sectors and see how we can support signature initiatives and establish an identity of who we are as a state; recognize the industries and which specific aspects Maryland can hang its hat on.
- Dionne Joyner-Weems asked about the BIO International Conference and competing for space and why Maryland can't host due to space limitations.
 - Secretary Anderson mentioned the Tourism Taskforce and how it will focus on how we can get stronger as a state to avoid missing out on hosting lots of conferences due to smaller conference spaces.
 - Joyner-Weems emphasized the phrase "strategy at work" and how it embodies Maryland's identity of always innovating and continuing to make progress.

III. Minutes Approval -March meeting

- Chair Van Eperen raised a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March. Leon Bailey Jr. moved to approve the minutes. Dionne Joyner-Weems seconded the motion. No opposition. Minutes were approved and accepted.

IV. Financial Report - Leon Bailey

- On the revenue side:
 - MMP Partner contributions paid in FY2024 (to-date): \$576,668
 - Transfer from Commerce to MMP for Workforce Marketing: \$300,000.
- On the expense side (July2023-June2024) (to date):
 - Total expenses for FY24: \$2,409,832
- Upcoming Expenses thru June 2024
 - Media Plan - \$2,050,000
 - Total projected FY24 expenses \$2,444,070
 - Other expenses include: Fundraising contractor, website, PR firm, photos/video/music, receptions, and printing)
- Projected Balance at the end of FY24: \$4,207,514 (includes revenue from partners to be collected through FY24 and interest payments from our account to date.)
- Chair Van Eperen called for a motion to approve the financial report. Leonard

Raley moved to approve the report. Dionne Joyner-Weems seconded the motion. No opposition. The financial report was approved.

V. Talent Attraction Updates - Julie Miller

- Julie Miller explains how our last meeting in March, we had just launched the talent attraction campaign and LiveWorkMaryland website. The website has been successful thus far with 385 users to the site and more than 5% engaged (more than 2 minutes on the site). Maryland is one of the few states dedicated to talent attraction (a few others: Michigan, Ohio....).
- To continue with the campaign, separate Instagram, Facebook, and Linked accounts have been created that are dedicated to talent attraction rather than the usual business attraction, since our target audience of young people in the workforce are on these platforms. Data has shown that social media is an influential tool for people deciding where to move and where to love. Social media is second to job boards for what people analyze when looking at where to move. Specifically, Facebook is the top social media platform that people use to research potential communities. This social media effort will enhance our paid efforts and it will also allow us to stay in the game where select competitors are in the playing field as well.
- The type of content that will be shared will vary, but some examples are: stories/clips from real Marylanders, roundup of job hirings, towns/city highlights, trends, collaborations, etc.
- Leon Bailey praised the idea and suggested the possibility of collaborating with GlassDoor in the future for promoting job opportunities.
 - Julie responded that we can look into that option, but for now we are focusing on a Salary Transparent Street collaboration.
 - Dionne Joyner-Weems expressed excitement for the implementation of social media since it is easier to bring up in different environments and we can discuss the topics in our own tones on social platforms (with some training and direction from the board) that allow for better authenticity. A possible workshop could be in the works on how to best leverage social media and have the board amplify the messages.
 - Carolyn Hammock added that we will work closely with the Tourism Office since the content of showing off Maryland is similar, but with the difference of selling the idea of visiting versus living.

VI. Advertising Update - Spring Wrap Up/FY 25 Media Plan - Planit

- Melanie Megale reported that all the business attraction campaign metrics improved. Recent engagement increased at a higher rate than our spending which is great news and shows we are being responsible with our spending. Impressions and clicks improved over 80% and Maryland's name was served to 123.1M people (impressions) year over year and 109% more conversions.
- Maryland was one of the first states to use LinkedCTV ads as it uses LinkedIn's data and the results are promising as it is coming out of its beta phase. The ads reached audiences on premium publishers (ex: Max, CBS News, Discovery+,

Roku, CNN, FoxSports, etc). The metrics show 97% video completion rate and Planit is retargeting the people who watched over 75% of the video as a way to continue the advertising effort. The average conversion rate has been 6.09%, but Life Sciences and Cyber is driving better conversions rates at around 8%.

- Dionne Joyner-Weems and Sherri Diehl reiterated the fact that personal communication strongly influences decision making on choosing Maryland which is why targeting people with ads is important.
- Planit continued to fine-tune the Native campaign, resulting in a 207% improvement in conversion rates which supports the value of content driven tactics.
 - Carolyn Hammock added how we want to incorporate more native ads because having the info come across more organically and in a story-based fashion has a stronger impact
- The International GDN campaign targeting markets in Canada and the UK continues to drive strong performance and the international campaign was expanded to include YouTube as well.
 - Carolyn Hammock added that there are further plans to expand the international campaign to Germany, France, and possibly Japan in the future.
- The Workforce Attraction campaign was relaunched after pausing during the fall flight to complete the microsite and creative refresh. Compared to the previous Spring flight, reach and engagement increased while the conversion rates saw a slight dip. Deployed 2 emails through Wired, resulting in an average conversion rate of 98%. Similar to the Business Attraction campaign, the native campaign was one of the strongest tactics. Planit ran a geo-fencing campaign around colleges in Maryland and surrounding states, targeting students nearing graduation. For social media, using vertical video had a good response and the possible incorporation of Governor Moore being in the ads directly talking to these college students could help in attracting and retaining for workforce.
- Business Retention campaign saw a 36% improved conversion rate, indicating higher quality traffic, despite driving fewer site visitors. Planit replaced standard banners with a hero unit on the Wall Street Journal, leading to a 15% increase in conversion rate. Planit is looking to possibly do a stronger push on Linked rather than WSJ. Following the success of content-focus ads on Linked, the budget was increased to achieve 12x more clicks and 28x more conversions. Keyword optimizations in the Paid Search campaign led to fewer impressions and clicks, but improved traffic quality as shown by a 22% increase in the conversion rate.
- Looking into FY25, Planit will do a big market analysis of markets and performance and do a refresh. Strategic media approach will continue to use an omni-channel approach, but double down on what's working and expand the use

of vertical videos, continue to enhance conference engagement, etc.

- Chair Van Eperen called for a motion to approve the budget allocation from Planit. Leonard Raley moved to approve the report. Leon Bailey seconded the motion. No opposition. The financial report was approved.

VI. PR Program Update - Abel

- For owned media, Abel crafted two press releases, the March release featured 7 MMP partners and the May release featured 10 partners. The releases collectively had over 105 million potential audiences, 300 media pickups, and 1,800 click-throughs. Abel continued to push out the C-Suite Insights blog posts.
- For earned media, Abel reported 8 media hits for the quarter, over 105 million audience reach, \$43,246 ad value equivalency, and one press release. One of the coverage pieces highlighted was a story about the medtech business Theradaptive in the Medical Design and Outsourcing publication. Another piece highlighted was in Business View magazine focusing on Maryland's Main Street development program.
 - Dionne Joyner-Weems asks what the ideal publications would be for us to be featured in. Sherri Diehl answered her ideal publications are CNBC series (cities of success) as we try to position a Maryland city as a successful city and the great media coverage would have a prime tv angle too. Another main goal is to tell the neurotech story in Maryland, possibly in the Wall Street Journal. Leon Bailey also mentioned a possible story angle for the movement of people to St. Charles County in Maryland.
- Some of Abel's current activities include pursuing the CNBC Cities of Success, more stories in the Business View Magazine, working with attending media and Commerce attendees at SelectUSA Investment Summit for stories, and negotiating with Salary Transparent Street for paid partnerships. The videos would feature some planned people as well as a few pulled from the street. Salary Transparency Street locations to feature were discussed (Baltimore City, Howard County, and a choice of Frederick, Montgomery, or Prince George's County). The main goal to reinforce known locations versus introduce lesser known counties was brought up. Focusing on the multitude of opportunities within and across industries to get high paying jobs was also discussed. The opportunity for us to repost on our account, have CTA to visit LiveWorkMaryland website, and we could have Hannah wear Maryland themed attire or other Maryland brandings for the video. The investment would cost \$55,000 for the partnership including 3 original videos, each published on TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn (but MMP would not own the content, but could shoot behind-the-scenes).
- Sherri Diehl asks for a vote on extending Abel's contract and moving forward with the partnership for Salary Transparency Street. Dionne Joyner Weems raised a motion to extend Abel's contract and to move forward with the \$55,000

partnership for Salary Transparency Street. Leon Bailey Jr. seconded the motion. No opposition. Abel's contract and Salary Transparency Street's partnership was approved and accepted.

VII. Receptions/Events - Rob Scherr

- The next MMP event will be at TopGolf in Germantown on July 16th.
- Securing the Government House for the reception next year (March 6, 2025) is in the works.
- Rob asks for people to submit suggestions on who to invite to the receptions as potential partners.

Public portion of the meeting is closed.

MMP Board Members Administrative Business

VIII. Fundraising Updates

- Rob Scherr announces that Chair Van Eperen's company, FOVNDRY has joined the partnership. The amount committed for each year is decreasing, so a push to create discussions with companies to build the funding back up has to be had. A few companies are being pitched and conversations are continuing as they discuss possible levels to enter the partnership. Rob Scherr will share a document with talking points to help people explain the partnership and attract conversations. The \$1 million level has been dropped to \$500,000. Board members are being asked to submit two potential targets and to make the connection to the partnership and Rob Scherr will continue conversations to further explain the partnership and hopefully pitch them to join.

Adjournment

- Chair Van Eperen closes the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

NOTE: Next Board Meeting September 24, 10-11:30, WTC Baltimore