



September 13, 2021

Lockheed Martin Lobby, The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda
12:00pm – 2:00pm

Commissioners in attendance:

Margaret Wood, D.A. PMP	Co-Chair, WOOD Consulting
Ed Coleman	Co-Chair, Ameren
Howard Blackwell Bowen	Ewing Oil Company, Inc. – call in
Susan Chambers	Strouse – call in
Kai Hirabayshi	Amazon – call in
Arnold Jablon	Venable – call in
Manish Kothari	Sheladia Associates, Inc.
Julie Lenzer	UM Ventures – call in
Aris Melissaratos	St. John Properties – call in
Gwen McCall	F&L Construction and Solid Waste, LLC
Mike Miller	OGOS Energy, LLC – call in
Laura Neuman	Entrepreneur – call in
Leon Pinkett III	Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation (BARCO)
Elizabeth Rendón-Sherman	LG TEK
Gary Rudell	Total Biz Fulfillment
Saif Rehman, PhD	NexGen Consulting – call in
Paul Silber, PhD	Blu Venture Investors – call in
Geoff Turner	Choptank Transport, Inc. – call in
Eugene Silverman, PhD	Berkeley Springs Instruments
Robert Wallace	BITHGROUP Technologies – call in

Ex-Officio Members:

Senator Brian Feldman	Senate, District 15 – call in
Secretary Kelly Schulz	Department of Commerce
Secretary Tiffany Robinson	Department of Labor – call in
Tom Sadowski	Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) – call in
Troy LeMaile-Stovall	Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) – call in

Guests:

Greg Slater	Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Samantha Biddle	MDOT
Allison Mayer	Office of the Governor – call in
Meredith Wimbrow	Office of the Governor – call in
Hunter Marsh	Office of Delegate Brian Crosby, District 29B – call in
Monica Jeffries Hazangeles	President and CEO, Strathmore
Pauleesha Rivera	WOOD Consulting

Commerce Staff:

Julie Woepke	MEDC Executive Director
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Tom Riford
Jayson Knott
Janes Palma
Michael Siers
Jennifer LaHatte

Assistant Secretary
Senior Director
Acting Research Director
Economist
Director, Policy & Program Development

I. Call to Order

Upon a quorum present, Co-Chair Dr. Margaret Wood called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm and welcomed attendees and guests. She gave a special welcome to new Commissioner Tom Sadowski who replaced Bob Brennan as Executive Director of MEDCO and thanked Ms. Monica Jeffries Hazangeles and the Strathmore Board for hosting the meeting.

II. Strathmore Welcome

Dr. Wood introduced Ms. Monica Jeffries Hazangeles, President and CEO, Strathmore, and referenced that her bio is in the folders. She stated Monica joined the staff in 1994 as special events coordinator, named Executive VP in 2005, the same year the Music Center opened and became President in 2011. She assumed the role of CEO in September 2018.

Ms. Jeffries-Hazangeles addressed the Commission and provided an overview of the venue, attributed its success to a public private partnership, which continues to support the facility. She noted that during the pandemic, continuous programming occurred in creative ways to include an outdoor stage, and invited the Commissioners to attend future events and programs. Ms. Jefferies-Hazangeles arranged for the Music Center to be open and a volunteer available to allow Commissioners to experience the concert hall.

III. I-495 & I-270 Traffic Relief Plan (TRP) and Purple Line Updates

Secretary Greg Slater, Maryland Department of Transportation, addressed the Commission. Recognizing transportation is an economic driver, Secretary Slater provided an update on the Purple Line Project, a 16-mile light rail line that will extend from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County. He stated the line would have 21 stations connecting the University of Maryland to more of the state with dedicated rail. He said the Purple Line creates the first east-west rail connection across District of Columbia suburbs. Engaging 150 different contractors, he stated the project is 44% complete. He described several aspects of the project and emphasized the project has already led to \$2 billion in economic impact and development, adding the project has the potential to grow more than 20,000 permanent jobs over the life of the project. Presentation on file.

Secretary Slater then presented an overview of the I-495 & I-270 Traffic Relief Plan. He described the project will facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people as 1.3 million more people and 1 million more jobs come to the region by 2045. He stated private investment would offset more than \$1.2 billion in costs. He described the phases of the project, high occupancy lanes, commuter bus service, toll rates, and next steps. Presentation on file.

Secretary Slater answered questions from the Commissioners. Discussion focused on construction contract announcements for small business; resources for small businesses along the Purple Line; job opportunities from this project and the Port of Baltimore benefiting from the TRP; expansion of BWI Airport and need for a new air traffic control tower; and the number of projects simultaneously under construction throughout the state.

Secretary Slater departed the meeting.

IV. Review and approval of June 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the June 14, 2021 meeting minutes stood approved.

V. Rankings & Research Subcommittee

Dr. Wood welcomed Elizabeth Rendón-Sherman to her new role as chair. She stated that she has actively participated in this Subcommittee since its formation in 2016.

MS. Rendón-Sherman reported that a Subcommittee meeting was held July 29th and the discussion centered on the development of a hybrid reporting system for the rankings and economic indicators based on the MEDC's June meeting and further research. The Subcommittee is working with the Secretary to develop a scorecard and/or a dashboard that addresses the rankings and indicators needed by the Governor, Secretary and Commission. She stated that there would likely be a format to review at the Commission's next meeting.

In lieu of a scorecard, Ms. Rendón-Sherman reported the following:

- Maryland's unemployment rate fell to 6.0% in July as the state continues to recover from COVID-19.
- In July, Maryland added 22,200 total nonfarm jobs and 6,800 private sector jobs.
- BWI Airport saw 1.8 million passengers in June 2021, the most since the pandemic and above even February 2020 (pre-pandemic) levels.
- According to new data, with 138 of the nation's fastest growing private sector firms, Maryland ranks third among the states for Inc. 5000 companies as a percentage of total companies.
- According to new data from the Cyberstates 2021 report, Maryland ranks first in the new Cyberstates Diversity Index which measures diverse representation in tech.
- According to data from fDi Intelligence, Baltimore moved up five (5) spots on their list of top big cities for connectivity. Baltimore now ranks second among large cities for connectivity, which includes internet speed; mobile phone subscribers; airport access and flights; and number of ports and performance.

VI. Commerce Subcabinet Regional Resources Team Calls

Dr. Wood reminded the Commissioners that during the June meeting, discussion occurred on identifying economic drivers and challenges on a regional level. Secretary Schulz suggested and invited Commissioners to participate in the monthly five (5) regional resources team calls with State Agency representatives of the Commerce Subcabinet. Several Commissioners participated in meetings over the summer and she invited those Commissioners to share feedback. Overall, most participating noted the cross collaboration among state agencies; need for workforce and engaging universities such as Frostburg State University in Western Maryland; impact of transportation on local economies; and the importance of outdoor recreation opportunities.

VII. Department of Commerce Update

Secretary Kelly Schulz began her presentation by updating the Commission on the Department's space consolidation plans that will lead to a \$700,000 per year savings. She stated the mission is to reduce the leased space from seven (7) floors to five (5) floors and bring the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) operations to the World Trade Center. She added that standard operation procedures, which have been in place for a number of years, are in the process of being updated.

Secretary Schulz then introduced Mike Siers, Economist, to provide an overview of the State's economy. Mr. Siers highlighted the factors that lead to the State's improved ranking to 12th Best State for Business by CNBC. He illustrated that State's strengths and then reviewed economic recovery slides that included employment by county, industries, mothers in the labor force, and factors that are being watched that impact the economy.

Mr. Siers and Secretary Schulz then took questions and comments by the Commissioners including the impact of Federal mandate for vaccination on contractors; broadband connectivity for children, particularly in low income and rural areas; importance of last mile broadband connectivity; confirmed Covid-19 cases/testing tracking; and restaurant and leisure workforce.

Assistant Secretary Tom Riford then addressed the Commissioners and presented the economic impact of the arts in Fiscal Year 2020. He reported that 228 arts organizations throughout the state received funds and the importance of the grants. Mr. Riford described the channel for funding; attendance levels, and operations spending. He then reported that the arts support 10,624 jobs resulting in an impact of over \$848 million. He added that operations and visitor spending supported \$20.2 million in state and local taxes in Fiscal Year 2020.

Mr. Jim Palma then addressed the Commissioners and explained the State's Federal allocation of \$1 million from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for planning. Working collaboratively with State Agencies, the application for funding was submitted September 10th and included projects ranging from broadband, statewide resiliency planning, an industry cluster analysis and supply chain analysis.

Mr. Jayson Knott continued the Commerce presentation by highlighting the recent business attraction and expansion opportunities. He described recent wins; other announcements and groundbreakings; existing pipeline and breakdown of jobs by region; and industry and capital expenditure for both at least 25 and 50 jobs respectively.

All Presentations on file.

VIII. Good of the Order

Co-Chair Wood announced the TEDCO quarterly report was included in the meeting materials. She inquired whether there were any questions on the report. No questions asked. No further information exchanged.

IX. 2021 Meetings

Co-Chair Wood announced the next meeting scheduled for November 16, 2021.

X. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.