



July 27, 2020
12:00pm – 2:00pm
Minutes

Commissioners in attendance:

Anirban Basu	Chair, Sage Policy Group
Margaret Wood	Vice Chair, Wood Consulting
Scott Burger	Lolli & Pops
Annemarie Dickerson	Former Owner, Francis Scott Key Family Resort
Kai Hirabayshi	Amazon
Manish Kothari	Sheladia Associates, Inc.
Julie Lenzer	UM Ventures
Aris Melissaratos	St. John Properties
Mike Miller	OGOS Energy, LLC
Laura Neuman	Entrepreneur
Jeanette Glose Partlow	Maryland Chemical Company, Inc.
Elizabeth Rendón-Sherman	LG-TEK

Ex-Officio Members:

Secretary Kelly Schulz	Department of Commerce
Secretary Tiffany Robinson	Department of Labor
Robert Brennan	Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO)
Linda Singh	Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)
Senator Brian Feldman	Maryland Senate, District 15

Guests:

Meredith Wimbrow	Office of the Governor
Bruce De Puyt	Maryland Matters
Erika Schissler	Maryland Department of Legislative Services
Emily Haskel	Maryland Department of Legislative Services

Commerce Staff:

Julie Woepke	MEDC Executive Director
Kyle McColgan	Special Assistant to the Secretary
Signe Pringle	Assistant Secretary
Tom Riford	Assistant Secretary
Mat Palmer	Chief Operating Officer
Nancy McCrea	Director, Research & Information Services
Jayson Knott	Senior Director, Business Development Business & Retention

Elizabeth Carven
Lisa Swoboda
Mike Siers
Allyson Redpath
Jennifer LaHatte

Senior Director, Regional Growth & Retention
Senior Director, Military & Federal Affairs
Economist
Director, Entrepreneurship
Director, Policy & Program Development

I. Call to Order

Chairman Basu called the meeting to order at 12:02pm and welcomed attendees and guests. Roll call of the Commissioners taken. Chairman Basu made several announcements related to Commissioners and stated that with the resignation of Vice-Chair Marty Brunk, the position of Vice Chair was offered and accepted by Dr. Margaret Wood.

II. Chairman's Updates

Chairman Basu provided a brief overview of the economy and the effects of COVID-19. Reflecting on the Commission's May meeting and the importance of flattening the curve of COVID-19 cases to affect the economy, he stated Maryland has done well overall to bring the unemployment rate down to 8% from the 14.3% high in the spring. He added that nationally, 13 million workers are unemployed. However, retail, home and used car sales are showing signs of recovery. He added that while the State has not yet seen the V recovery, there is progress as long as individuals and businesses feel comfortable with COVID-19 cases, prevention measures, guidance and compliance.

III. Department of Commerce Update

Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz began her presentation by stating in addition to the COVID-19 business response, the Department has been very active in the four (4) areas recommended by the Commission during the re-evaluation of the Strategic Plan: 1) Communication & Outreach, 2) Messaging, Telling Our Story, 3) Regionalism, and 4) Innovation & Entrepreneurship. She began her presentation by providing a brief overview of early COVID-19 impacts to the economy by several of the Commission's Scorecard Indicators – Overall Unemployment and by Region; BWI Passengers; Consumer Spending; Leisure and Hospitality revenues; and Venture Capital Investments.

Chief Operating Officer Mat Palmer provided an overview of the State Budget in light of COVID-19, reflecting on the impact from reduced revenues resulting in a FY21 shortfall of \$2.6B and a projected FY22 shortfall of \$4B. He described potential impacts to the Commerce budget and provided an update on the Department's current personnel.

Chairman Basu inquired where the State and Department would spend future Federal funds, if approved. Mr. Palmer stated funds to be retargeted to those businesses in need.

Secretary Schulz then described current impact to the Advantage Maryland Program due to the current economic climate. She noted businesses are reporting lower projected job numbers and the Department's exploration of methods to assist businesses in reaching their requirements. Secretary Schulz then provided an overview of the COVID-19 Relief Business Assistance Grants and Loan Programs. She updated the Commission on the avenues of communication of the relief programs and efforts.

Assistant Secretary Tom Riford presented the recent activity of the Maryland Marketing Partnership. He highlighted new online and print advertising; out of home ad placements; the postponement or cancellation of trade shows and events; and introduced the launch of “Innovation Uncovered” blog focused on entrepreneurs and the search for the “Future 20.” Mr. Riford reviewed the Back to Business webpages that provide guidance to businesses in reopening. He concluded by describing the traditional tourism advertising and the launching of public service announcements encouraging the use of masks, “Mask on Maryland.”

Ms. Elizabeth Carven addressed the Commission by providing an update on the Regional Team COVID-19 business response activities and the daily funding and updates to local economic development partners. She described the continuous communication between partners, legislators, industry groups and Chambers of Commerce. She concluded by highlighting new development projects by regions and announced a partnership with Hub Labels to print and mail “Safely Open” window clings to economic development offices for distribution to businesses.

Ms. Lisa Swoboda continued the topic of Regionalism by describing the Defense Manufacturing and Statewide Joint Land Use Compatibility Implementation Grants awarded to the State. Among the activities the grants will support include: expansion and acceleration of technology transfer; technology readiness assessments and use case development; apprenticeship programs; training curricula; outreach and awareness to support military installations; land use technical assistance and guidance; renewable energy siting compatibility and legislative tools and policy updates.

Mr. Michael Siers concluded the topic of Regionalism by reviewing data collected on the potential continuation of remote working by industry sector and region and highlighting the benefits. He noted that remote working would lead to more life work balances and potentially draw more workers to Southern and Western Maryland. He emphasized the disparity of broadband access and the impacts to remote workers, education and telemedicine.

Mr. Jayson Knott presented a number of recent project wins reflecting over 200 new jobs. He described pending announcements that could generate 1,700+ jobs. He reviewed new opportunities with a focus on data centers, and ongoing open attraction and expansion opportunities.

Ms. Allyson Redpath presented an overview of the creation of the new Office of Entrepreneurship and Small Business. The focus of the Office will include building the ecosystem universe of high growth startups, low growth small businesses and businesses in the middle. The universe will also include investors, incubators/accelerators, trade and technology organizations and technology transfer offices. Ms. Redpath proceeded to describe a number of initiatives in progress and the development of an ecosystem database in collaboration with TEDCO and the University System of Maryland.

All presentations are on file.

IV. Department of Labor Update

Secretary Tiffany Robinson provided an update on unemployment noting that since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has paid out over \$45.2B in benefits. She reported that the Department in partnership with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the State, uncovered a massive and sophisticated criminal enterprise involving over 47,500 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims totaling over \$501M. Secretary Robinson described the deployment and promotion of the Layoff

Aversion Fund that supplements the Work Share Program – all in support of keeping workers employed. She provided details of the Work Share Program and benefits to both the employer and employee. Presentation on file.

Commissioner Feldman inquired on the length of time needed by the Department of Labor to distribute funds to individuals if additional Federal funds are received. Secretary Robinson indicated that depending on the variables and amounts, the Department is in a good position to disburse the funds.

V. Review and approval of the May 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the May 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes approved.

VI. TEDCO FY20 Quarterly Report and Updates

Chairman Basu recognized the contributions and thanked Interim Executive Director and CEO Linda Singh, noting that this is her last meeting. She announced that Troy LeMaile-Stovall would be joining TEDCO in September as Executive Director and CEO. Ms. Singh also reported that several other leadership roles are to be announced in the near future.

Ms. Singh referenced the FY20 Q2 quarterly report noting 14 investments in businesses that reflect 24 Maryland employees and a total investment of \$1.75M. She thanked the Commission for supporting TEDCO.

VII. Good of the Order

Chairman Basu thanked all of the presenters for excellent content and opened the floor for discussion. Among the areas of discussion included broadband expansion and the importance for telework, education and medicine and potential solutions related to taxing internet service providers; alternative providers of service in Baltimore City; the number of grants and loans reviewed; and assistance with matchmaking of manufacturing suppliers and buyers.

VIII. 2020 Meetings: Chairman Basu announced the upcoming meeting date of December 14, 2020.

IX. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 1:48pm.