



**Business Meeting Minutes for April 26, 2023**

**I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum:**

The business meeting was called to order by Chairman, Jim Reilly at 9:00 a.m. at The Chesapeake Heritage & Visitors Center, 425 Piney Narrows Rd., Chester, MD. The meeting was held in-person, with the option to participate via Zoom.

The following Board Members were present and represented a quorum:

Jim Reilly, Chair  
Heather Bacher, Vice Chair  
Lee Bridgman, Secretary  
Jesse Parks  
Todd Wilhoit  
Deayna Ewell  
Shelly Gross-Wade  
Brian DeMoss  
Jeremy Reynolds  
Hazen Arnold  
Larissa Costello  
Jaime Thompson

**Members Not Present:**

Ed Beres, Treasurer  
Todd Wilhoit  
Deayna Ewell

**Staff Present:**

Heather Tinelli, Director, Economic & Tourism Development  
Rebecca Clark, Economic Development Coordinator

**Economic Development Commission:**

Jim Reilly, Chair  
Heather Bacher, Vice Chair  
Ed Beres, Treasurer  
Lee Bridgman, Secretary  
Brian Demoss  
Hazen Arnold  
Jeremy Reynolds  
James P. Reilly  
Larissa Costello  
Lara Wilson  
Deayna Ewell  
Jamie Thompson  
Shelly Gross-Wade  
Jesse Parks  
Todd Wilhoit

**County Commissioners:**

James J. Moran, At Large  
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1  
Patrick McLaughlin, District 2  
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3  
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

Others present:

Jack Wilson, Queen Anne's County Commissioner

Gigi Windley, Director, Kent Narrows Development Foundation (Zoom)

Linda Friday, President, QAC Chamber of Commerce

Steve Johnson, Planner, QAC Planning & Zoning

Connie Dean, Career Technology Liaison, QAC Economic & Tourism Development

Dave Harper, VP of Programs, Chesapeake College

## **II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

On a motion made by Heather Bacher and seconded by Lee Bridgman, the May agenda was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

On a motion made by Heather Bacher and seconded by Jesse Parks, the April meeting minute were approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

## **III. Treasurers Report:** Mr. Beres was not present but provided Ms. Tinelli with the current balance of \$1778.71 in the account managed by Chesapeake Charities.

## **IV. County Commissioners Liaison Update:** County Commissioner, Jack Wilson, provided an update for the Commission Members.

**A.** The Commissioners have completed and submitted the FY24 budget.

**i.** It included a 3.1-million-dollar addition to the Board of Education budget.

**ii.** There will be no increase in taxes.

**B.** New skate park in Stevensville was approved and should be completed in 2 years.

**C.** The turf fields have been completed in both Church Hill and Batts Neck Parks. They have just received pricing to complete the turf field at White Marsh Park, which will give the county a total of 5 turf fields to be utilized for tournaments. The tournaments provide substantial income and economic boost to local hotels, restaurants, and shopping establishments.

Mr. Parks asked Commissioner Wilson, "What is the plan for sewer in regard to upcoming projects?" Commissioner Wilson responded, "There will be a Comprehensive Rezoning process soon, that will remove apartments from commercial and include them in residential. This will reserve the sewer we do have for the true commercial projects."

## **V. Department of Economic & Tourism Development Update:** Heather Tinelli, Director of ED & Tourism Development provided an update for the EDC members and liaisons.

### **A. Economic Development-**

**i.** Ms. Tinelli, Ms. Clark, and Ms. Dean recently attended the MEDA Annual Conference in Cambridge, MD. The theme this year was "Harnessing Education for Economic Development" and staff member, Connie Dean was asked to participate as a speaker for a panel discussion. Ms. Dean shared one of her recently completed videos that educates our students on the opportunities of internships and apprenticeships available in Queen Anne's County. EDC member, Shelly Gross-Wade, was also named the newest member of the MEDA Hall of Fame.

**ii.** Ms. Tinelli and Staff attended the QAC Commissioners meeting to provide the Commissioners with a quarterly department update.

- iii. After the completion of an audit, the Matapeake Grant, which was utilized to develop the Matapeake Business Park in 2011, has officially been closed out.
- iv. The department has received approval to apply for the MD Alcohol Production Grant in which funds will be utilized to promote and market local breweries.
- v. Department request to increase the EDIF Grant funding to 1 million dollars is still on the table for discussion, Ms. Tinelli shared. There is currently 297,000 in grant requests that will be submitted soon. The funding will be a blend of new funding from Commissioners and repurposing unused funds for workforce and business development.
- vi. The department has received the first draw from the Rural Economic Development Fund Grant. Ms. Tinelli anticipates the MOU will be signed within the week, at which time checks will be distributed for projects to begin. She noted that several small projects have already been completed.
- vii. Ms. Clark will be working on RFQ and scope of work for site selection and the department will follow up with an update to the strategic plan.
- viii. Ms. Tinelli and Commissioner Wilson met with the 4-H Board to discuss upgrades and proposed projects.
- ix. The Baltimore Business Journal, through the Gross Domestic Production Growth, established QAC had the largest growth, year over year, compared to all counties in the state.
- x. Ms. Clark shared that the department will be hosting a "Field to Table" event at Godfrey's Farm on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The department has just completed its 3<sup>rd</sup> round of Micro Ag Grants in which funding comes from the Upper Shore Regional Council and is matched by the QAC Commissioners. They have given 140 thousand dollars over 3 rounds of grants to 25 local small Ag Entrepreneurs. The event is by invitation only to local elected officials, members of the EDIF and EDC Commissions. The event will highlight the businesses, their products, and services.
- xi. Ms. Tinelli shared some Commercial real Estate statistics for QAC:
  - a. Average price for commercial real estate sales in 2022 was 496 thousand.
  - b. There were 15.9 in overall commercial sales.
  - c. Spending commercial investment, which includes additions, renovations and new construction totaled 34 million in 2022.

## **B. Tourism-**

- i. MD Tourism contacted our department to share interest from FOX 45 News regarding a story in which a restaurant would prepare crab cakes during a live feature. Libbey's Restaurant was eager to participate, and it provided a great opportunity to highlight the restaurant.
- ii. Fox 45 returned to do a Live Feed focusing on the start of boating season here in QAC. The staff took them to several places and the timing was perfect to share the upcoming Bay Bridge Boat Show details.
- iii. QAC Tourism sponsored the Bay Bridge Boat Show, which was well attended and a great opportunity for the county to showcase its hotels, restaurant, and tourism assets.
- iv. The staff is currently working on the MOU for the Bay Bridge Run which will return on November 12<sup>th</sup> this year. They recently met with Corrigan Sports to discuss the potential economic impact for the county and the inclusion of more local vendors and non-profits that would benefit from the exposure.
- v. MD Tourism referred a group of Canadian Travel Writers and Influencers that requested dinner at Libbey's with the opportunity to watch the sunset on the Bay Bridge. They explored other eastern shore counties and will return on Thursday for a traditional crab feast experience at The Crab Deck.

- vi. MD Tourism will be conducting "Maryland in A Day" and will be stopping by QAC to interview Ms. Plummer and Ms. Tinelli while enjoying lunch in the Kent Narrows.
- vii. Ms. Tinelli and Tourism staff recently learned that MD Counties will not be receiving the larger Marketing Funds that they received for FY 23 (QAC received 236K). Instead, the formula will return to what was used in previous years. Ms. Tinelli projects the total to be near 70 thousand. Ms. Tinelli requested an increase in marketing funds from the QAC Commissioners in the FY24 budget. The increase would bring QAC closer to what the average is for other Maryland counties.
- viii. Construction is planned to begin at the Visitor Center parking lot on May 1<sup>st</sup> and will continue through October. The Visitor Center and Ferry Point Park will be closed but our staff will be allowed to work in the building. Piney Narrows Marina has graciously offered for our staff to utilize parking in their lot. Ms. Tinelli has requested funds in the FY24 budget allowing us to begin a lease at the Queenstown Outlets for a temporary Visitor Center. She is waiting for final approval from QAC Commissioners. EDC meetings will take place at the KI Yacht Club.

## VI. Liaisons Report-

- A. **Kent Narrows Development Foundation:** The Executive Director of Kent Narrows Development Foundation, Gigi Windley, provided information regarding the region.
  - i. The commuter lots located under the Kent Narrows Bridge, will be repaved in May.
  - ii. The Crab Deck and Big Owl's are now open for the season. Red Eye's will open May 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - iii. The Chesapeake Motoring Festival at Kent Island Yacht Club will take place on June 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - iv. Dessert First now has outdoor Adirondack chairs facing the water.
  - v. The Logging Tax that was being introduced in Legislation did not pass.
  - vi. Ms. Windley urged members to check the KNDF website for some new creative.
  - vii. The July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks will take place but will not include the festival. Parking will be allowed at the old outlet center and Food Trucks will be available. There will be no access allowed in the Visitor Center Parking Lot or Ferry Point Park.
- B. **Workforce Development:** Connie Dean, Career Technology Liaison for QAC Economic & Tourism Development, shared a brief statement with EDC members.
  - i. Ms. Dean summarized the videos that she has been creating with QACTV, which highlight local businesses that are offering apprenticeship or internship opportunities. She emphasized how helpful the videos are in allowing students to visualize, hear and imagine themselves in the role. She encouraged any members, or other business owners that they think may be interested, to contact her if they would like to participate in creating a video.
- C. **QAC Planning & Zoning:** Steve Johnson provided a packet containing updates. Some highlights are listed below:
  - i. The next Planning Commission meeting will include the Chesapeake Square major site approval and concept plan approval for 12-unit apartment building located behind Dunkin Donuts on Kent Island.
  - ii. Continuation of new restaurant being introduced in Price.

**D. Chesapeake College:** Dave Harper, VP of Programs, Chesapeake College, shared an update regarding news and projects associated with the college.

- i. Mr. Harper is excited to share that they have a signed contract with the new Manufacturing Coordinator who will start his position on May 1, 2023.
- ii. The annual Program Advisory Board Dinner will take place on April 27<sup>th</sup> and a record amount of 170 attendees is expected. The annual event offers the opportunity for industry leaders, business owners, and CTE instructors to discuss lab space needs and course curriculum with college staff and program directors.
- iii. They will soon begin advertising for a Construction Tech Coordinator.
- iv. The CDL South program in Dorchester will begin in May.
- v. They are in the process of updating the MOU for dual enrollment.

**E. QAC Chamber of Commerce-** Linda Friday, President, QAC Chamber of Commerce provided an update regarding recent activities and future events.

- i. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, the QAC Chamber will be hosting a mixer at the Four Seasons Clubhouse.
- ii. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, the QAC Chamber will be hosting the Regional Mixer to include the five regional Chamber of Commerce at Chesapeake College.
- iii. The ribbon cutting for the new Hyatt in Kent narrows will be on June 21 2013. The event will include a business mixer as well.
- iv. The QAC Chamber will be hosting a webinar regarding Employee Retention Credit.
- v. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 4<sup>th</sup> for Easton Dermatology in Stevensville.

**F. University of MD Extension QAC- Lee** Bridgman provided details regarding upcoming events and happenings.

- i. An AG group from Ohio State toured Queen Anne's and Kent Counties and enjoyed dinner at The Dock House.
- ii. The AG Awareness Days attended by all 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the county at the 4-H Park was a huge success.
- iii. The Master Gardner Plant Sale will be in the Sheriff's Parking lot on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The Garden Club will also be having a plant sale and historic homes will be open to tour.
- iv. The weekly Centreville Farmer's Market will start on Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.

**VII. New Business: UMMS Shore Regional Health Presentation-** EDC member, Lara Wilson, introduced her colleagues Ken Kozel, President and CEO of University of MD Shore Regional Health, and Arvin Singh, Vice President, Strategy & Communications, as they presented the EDC Members with the history of Shore Regional Health, the new hospital in Easton, Urgent Care on Kent Island, and health care needs and opportunities in QAC. Mr. Singh began his presentation by stating that the 5-county health care system is considered a Rural Health Care System. Over the past 10 years, 130 rural hospitals have closed and 500 are at risk for closure due to their financial status. They believe that have put forth strategies that will not only survive but thrive and would like to share their plans and solutions.

**A. Shore Regional Health in relation to UMMS:**

- i. Has been a part of University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) for over a decade
- ii. Have 13 acute facilities across the state
- iii. Largest health care employer in the state with nearly 30K team members
- iv. Five Billion Dollar impact across the state
- v. Next largest health care system John Hopkins with whom they have a great relationship and share the Children's Hospital.
- vi. UMMS Shore Regional Health is 10% of UMMS

**B. UMMS Shore Regional Health:**

- i. Employee 2,000+ staff
- ii. Two Hospitals- Easton and Chestertown
- iii. Two freestanding medical facilities- Cambridge and Queenstown
- iv. 550 Medical Staff and 400 Volunteers
- v. 170 Beds- in both hospitals
- vi. 60,000+ visits across 4 locations yearly

**C. Shore Regional Health- From the Beginning-** Since 1907 the goal has always been to offer as much care as possible to avoid patients traveling the bridge for medical care on the western shore.

- i. Prior to 1999, there was only Easton Hospital and Dorchester Hospital
- ii. In 1999, Easton and Dorchester combined, and Shore Health System was formed
- iii. In 2006, Easton and Dorchester aligned with UMMS
- iv. In 2008, Chester River hospital in Chestertown joined
- v. In 2010, Easton, Dorchester and Chester River joined forces to create what is known today as University of Maryland Shore Regional Health which is a comprehensive system across all 5 counties. The freestanding medical center in Queenstown was opened. Recognized in 2010, the need to expand the vision for what healthcare would look like on the shore in the future. Realized the need to take the Easton facility created in 1907 and expand.
- vi. In 2015, Purchased the property next to Easton Airport that would become the new hospital. As a part of the vision, they evaluated the outpatient needs and co-located many outpatient services to freestanding facilities on throughout Easton.
- vii. In 2018 they realized need in Denton and leased property that is today the Denton Medical Office. They also submitted their first CON for new hospital in Easton and were told by Commissioners they needed to address the fulfillment of needs in all 5 counties which led to the restructure of the hospital in Chestertown.
- viii. In 2021 opened the FMF in Cambridge and settled on the sale of the old Dorchester hospital.
- ix. In 2022, opened the Urgent Care in Queen Anne's County

**C. Rural Challenges:**

- i. Service area is 2% of states population but 20% of the geography
- ii. 2,000 square miles with population of 170,000. Average is 75 people per square mile where state average is 1700 per square mile
- iii. Transportation to meet the needs of the communities
- iv. Barrage of challenges with tele help access
- v. Anne Arundel (Luminas) relinquished OB privileges in Easton hospital so that volume has been absorbed by their programs. Have had to work hard with providers and patients that lost their care due to AA exit.

- vi. Workforce continues to be the biggest challenge- finding nurses, techs, medical lab technicians and pharmacists to fill the need.

**D. Services by County:**

- i. Dorchester County-
  - a. UM Shore Medical Center-ER Helipad and Behavioral Health rooms
  - b. UM Shore Medical Pavilion-Medical Services
- ii. Caroline County-
  - a. Medical pavilion opened 2018
  - b. Urgent care opened 2016
- iii. Kent County-
  - a. Continued plan for expansion and transformation for Chestertown Hospital to include a dedicated aging and wellness center
  - b. Partnered with Choptank Health System (Federally Qualified Health care Center) to expand health services to include primary care, behavioral health, and dental services
- iv. Talbot County-
  - a. Two outpatient facilities
  - b. Easton Hospital
- v. Queen Anne's County-
  - a. Urgent Care in Chester
  - b. Freestanding Emergency Center in Queenstown
  - c. Medical pavilion in Queenstown
  - d. Primary Care Center in Centreville

**E. New Easton Hospital-getting Started:**

- i. September 22, 2022- Applied for Easton Hospital with support of UMMS who has committed to making this project a priority. The Shore Health Board and UMMS Board both unanimously support the vision and next steps.
- ii. Next Steps-
  - a. Submit the certificate of Need to the State- was filed January 2023
  - b. Start working with Health Care Agencies in state to secure funding for the project
  - c. Discuss funding at State and Federal level
  - d. Talk to community members for support

**F. Easton Hospital-Facility Details:**

- i. Located on 236 acres next to the Easton Airport on Rt. 50 East in Easton
- ii. 325,000 sq. ft. of hospital space
- iii. 60,000 sq. ft. Medical Office Building space
- iv. Will transfer everything spread out through Easton to create a medical campus
- v. 122 in patient beds, 25 observation beds
- vi. abundance of parking and a helipad
- vii. ER on one side of hospital and medical building on other
- viii. Built in expansion plan- if 147 beds not originally approved, there is the availability in plans to expand hospital, ER and medical building in the future
- ix. Wider hallways for equipment, all private rooms and extra space for visitors
- x. Facility cost is estimated at 550 million
- xi. Time Frame:
  - a. End of 2023-receive response to CON from State, explore contractors and apply for water, sewer, and utility permits
  - b. Spring 2024-Site work begins
  - c. Spring 2025-Groundbreaking
  - d. Fall 2027- Complete construction

- e. Summer 2028- Open doors
- xii. Old Easton Hospital- will bring in a contractor to survey potential uses, then meet with local elected officials, leaders, agencies to determine best option.

**G. Challenges:**

- i. Transportation Challenges- there is currently only one Ambulatory service, and it is not equipped to handle the volume currently much less for new facility. They are hoping to receive support for a designated ambulatory system to transport patients. Will need bus, Uber, and Lyft services to get patients to Dr. appts., labs and x-rays. Will need to partner with each of the counties to find a solution.  
Currently within 30 minutes of Easton hospital there are 60,000 residents. Located 30 minutes from the new hospital there will be 120,000 residents.
- ii. How do you fix the Primary care issue? Why is it an issue?  
There are not as many students choosing the Primary Care pathway due to Specialized doctors making significantly more in salary. They will offer competitive salary for Primary Care doctors and will not let salary be a barrier. Salary, benefits, and compensation are a top priority. They will offer incentives to primary care students attending U of MD Medical School to entice them to complete their residency on the Eastern Shore. They find that many love the lifestyle and tend to stay.

**XIII.**

**EDC Member Updates:**

- A. Lara Wilson, UMD Shore Regional Health-**Ms. Wilson shared details based on her role as Co-Chair for the Telehealth Work Group for the local Health Improvement Coalition.
  - i. The Work Group recently received a small Grant from Kent County health Dept. that will be utilized to promote the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program that provides discounts on internet for cell phones and computer to low-income families. They will be promoting the program throughout the 5-county region.
- B. Brian Demoss, Local Business Owner, and Representative for the Town of Barclay-**
  - i. Mr. Demoss was excited to share that the town now has plans for sewer and construction will begin in May.
  - ii. Chesapeake Vault is planning an Open House event in August or September 2023.
- C. Jesse Parks, President, KRM Development Corp-**
  - i. Mr. Parks stated that the new building in the Chesapeake Business Park should be complete in June. They anticipate 2 existing tenants will fill the space.
  - ii. KRM Development is in the planning stages for their next building.
- D. Larissa Costello. Founding Partner/Financial Advisor, Ad Astra Wealth-** Ms. Costello explained that she recently attended the Private Wealth Forum in DC and was introduced to a very insightful and vibrant speaker named Cathie Wood. Ms. Wood founded ARK Investment Management to focus solely on disruptive innovation that identify large scale investment opportunities resulting from technological innovations centered around DNA sequencing, robotics, artificial intelligence, energy storage and block chain technology. Ms. Costello shared some of the topics that were discussed which engaged EDC members in conversation.



**E. Heather Bacher, Marketing Director. Sr. Vice President, Shore United Bank-**

- i. Ms. Bacher stated the Regulatory Approval was received and the merger of Shore United with Community Bank of Chesapeake should be complete by September 2023. This is very exciting as it will bring new technology and make Shore United a 6-billion-dollar bank.
- ii. The New Business Committee conducted visits to The Alibi Gastropub, Bayside Pools, and Benson & mangold in Centreville.

**F. Hazen Arnold, President, Hydrasearch-**

- i. Hydrasearch just completed a 30,000 square foot expansion to their plant.
- ii. They have 4 college interns that will be working with them this summer.

**G. Shelly Gross Wade, Bay Crossing Consulting-** Ms. Gross-Wade announced that she recently retired with 35 years of Economic Development experience in both P.G and Arundel counties. She recently launched her independent consulting practice which supports progressive thinking business owners to take their businesses to the next level. Her new business is Bay Crossing Consulting and is headquartered in Queen Anne's County.

**H. Jim Reilly, EDC Chair and Small Business Owner-**

- i. Mr. Reilly wanted to remind members that the EDC meeting will take place at the Kent Island Yacht Club in June.
- ii. Mr. Reilly will work with Ms. Tinelli to schedule the EDC Executive Board Meeting.
- iii. BOE Marine, located in Stevensville on Rt. 50 West, has opened an outdoor dirt RC Car track.
- iv. The Planning Committee, led by Mr. Parks, will be scheduling an in-person meeting with Planning & Zoning staff and Commissioner Wilson.

**Adjournment:** On a motion made by Jesse Parks and seconded by Heather Bacher, the board unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting at 10:58 am.