



Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2020
MCEDC
Via Conference Call

The following Committee members were present:

Robby Brewer, Lerch, Early & Brewer – Chair
Ola Sage, CyberRx – Vice Chair
Angela Graham, Quality Biological – Secretary
Carmen Larsen, Aquas, Inc. – Treasurer (*departed at 9:56 am*)

The following attendees were present, consistent with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act and in accordance with the Corporation's Bylaws:

Ben Wu, President & CEO
Bill Tompkins, Executive Vice President & COO
Sarah Miller, VP of Strategy
Stacey Hardy, VP of Operations
Brad Stewart, Senior Vice President of Business Development
Kristin O'Keefe, VP of Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 am. A quorum of the Committee members was present. Stacey Hardy was designated to take minutes.

Ms. Graham moved to approve the minutes from the March 2 meeting. Ms. Sage seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The Committee discussed the minutes from the March 17 meeting and suggested edits. Ms. Sage moved to approve the minutes from the March 17 meeting as amended. Ms. Graham seconded the motion. The motion passed.

President & CEO Report

Update on COVID-19 Response

Mr. Wu reported that the staff has entered into its third week of remote operations and discussed the possibility of an extended period of remote work.

Mr. Wu discussed the staff's efforts to engage and update the Board and the business community regarding important local, state and federal opportunities for business assistance. Mr. Wu noted that information is now available on the MCEDC website in multiple languages and that informational webinars are being conducted in Spanish.

Mr. Wu noted that the staff has been engaged with local, state and federal partners on a range of activities tied to the COVID-19 response. Such activities include:

- Regular meetings with Congressman David Trone
- Conversations with Senator Ben Cardin and Senator Chris Van Hollen regarding the Small Business package
- Working with the Department of Commerce to provide information in support of state programs
- Working with the County Council and County Executive to develop package for Montgomery County small businesses and nonprofits
- Participation in Councilmember outreach to constituents (e.g. webinars)
- Weekly meetings with regional economic development organizations

Mr. Stewart noted that he has been working closely with the Maryland Tech Council and the life sciences community to explore opportunities to increase access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing. Mr. Stewart discussed possible methods to make PPE reusable through sterilization. Ms. Graham suggested that staff look into the possibility of bulk radiation of PPE at the Dickerson facility.

Ms. Miller discussed her interactions with a variety of makers and manufacturers who may have the ability to produce PPE and hand sanitizer. Ms. Miller noted that staff is working to connect makers and manufacturers to the County's Office of Procurement and local hospitals. Staff is also working to identify sources of capital to enable the production of needed supplies.

Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC is working with Councilmember Reimer to draft an outline of the ecosystem needed to support small and large businesses that are able to produce PPE and expand testing for COVID-19 (e.g. funding the cost of raw materials; access to procurement opportunities; federal reimbursement opportunities).

Mr. Brewer encouraged the staff to employ a variety of techniques to support local manufacturers and to promote those that are producing hand sanitizer and PPE.

Mr. Wu discussed the County's legislative initiatives. The Committee discussed possible opportunities for MCEDC to support the Department of Finance with the administration of the grant programs. Mr. Wu noted that while the administration and disbursement of funds will be handled by the Department of Finance, MCEDC is prepared to widely communicate information regarding the County's programs and will assist business owners with resources.

Ms. Graham emphasized the importance of continued engagement with companies that are new to the county and the need to focus on the retention and expansion of existing businesses. Mr. Wu agreed and noted that MCEDC will be implementing a more aggressive retention strategy.

The Committee members shared anecdotal information about the impact of COVID-19 on their respective businesses/industries.

Regional Collaboration

Mr. Wu noted that a press release announcing the Maryland National Capital Region Economic Development Alliance will be released today.

COVID-19 Study

Mr. Wu reported that MCEDC will conduct a multi-year longitudinal survey to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the local business community. The study would track the recipients of County business assistance funds and the impact of such funds on business operations and survivability. MCEDC has reached out to potential partners such as the University of Maryland College Park and the Department of Planning. Mr. Wu noted that there is also interest amongst the regional EDO's to broaden the study.

Mr. Wu noted that an RFP will be issued to conduct the study. Mr. Wu noted that MCEDC would own the survey, but would allow other jurisdictions to participate at a cost. Mr. Brewer requested that the scope of the study be presented to the Executive Committee for review and comment.

County Contract and Budget Update

Mr. Tompkins reported that the amendment to MCEDC's contract with the County has been completed and is awaiting final signature. Mr. Tompkins noted that MCEDC is scheduled to appear before the PHED Committee to discuss the FY21 appropriation on April 24, however, the schedule and budget process may change due to the focus on COVID-19 efforts.

Governance Committee Report

Ms. Graham reported that the Governance Committee will meet within the next two weeks to discuss the reappointment of Board members with expiring terms.

Ms. Graham noted that the members of the Committee have agreed to nominate an existing Board member to serve as Vice-Chair for the balance of the fiscal year. A formal recommendation will be presented at the April Board meeting.

WorkSource Montgomery/Workforce Development Update

Mr. Tompkins noted that MCEDC is participating with in weekly meetings with WorkSource Montgomery and the County Council and County Executive to ensure that workforce development efforts are coordinated.

April Board Meeting Agenda

The Committee discussed the draft agenda and provided comments. Mr. Brewer noted that the Board meeting will be conducted via video conference. Mr. Brewer noted that the Board will take action on the election of a Vice-Chair.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 am.

Minutes submitted by Stacey Hardy