



## Washington County Economic Development Commission Board

March 10, 2016

The regular meeting of the Washington County Economic Development Commission Board (EDC) was held at 100 West Washington Street, Room 255. The following members were present: Hugh Breslin (Chair), Julie Rohm (Vice Chair), Ed Lough (Secretary), Jef Bohn, Bob Jeffers, Joshua Martin, Michael Reyka, and Janet Stiles Fulton. Ex-Officio members in attendance included Council Members Kristin Aleshire and Don Munson, Jill Frick, and Greg Snook.

Others in attendance were Dawn Hatzer of the Western Maryland Consortium and Andrew Sargent of the MD Department of Commerce. County staff in attendance included Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Kassie Lewis, Tabitha Porterfield, Linda Spence and Sarah Sprecher.

*Call to Order* – Hugh Breslin called the meeting to order. He reported that Paul Crampton and Jim Herbert were excused from the meeting.

*Approval of the Agenda* – A motion to approve the meeting agenda for March 10 was made by Ed Lough, seconded by Jef Bohn and unanimously approved.

*Approval of Minutes* – Ed Lough motioned to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded by Julie Rohm and approved unanimously.

*Elected Officials' Comments* – Council Member Don Munson noted the Mayor is actively seeking a candidate to fill the vacant City of Hagerstown representative's position on the EDC Board. Ed Lough stated that Mike Fitzgerald, who expressed a desire to fill that vacancy, has reiterated his strong interest in a letter addressed to the City. Council Member Munson was unaware a letter had been received at this time.

*Director's Report* – Kassie Lewis reminded members the Manufacturers Roundtable event will be held on March 31, 2016. The event will be hosted at Hub Labels and breakfast is being catered by the Rhubarb House. RSVPs are requested to be sent to Carmen Harbaugh.

*Executive Committee* – Ed Lough announced he appeared before the Board of County Commissioners on March 1 to recommend the appointment of Dawn Hatzer to fill a vacant At Large position. The BOCC, while not opposed to Ms. Hatzer's appointment have requested all County Boards to submit three candidates for consideration in filling all At Large positions. Three candidates have been determined by electronic vote of the EDC Board voting members and will be presented to the BOCC on March 22.

*Education and Workforce Development Committee* – Bob Jeffers reported the committee is working with the WCPS to develop a Career Fair to be held by the end of the current school year. With more than 8,000 high school students in Washington County, they felt a pilot event should be focused at one school. Dr. Wilcox suggested discussions be held with the Principal of North Hagerstown High School first. Students would be presented with opportunities existing in various industries and what is needed to pursue and/or secure those opportunities. The committee is also targeting programs aimed at assisting and serving unemployed and under-employed adults. There are many facets to education and workforce development and it's often hard to pinpoint one area of focus without touching on numerous other areas of need, Bob Jeffers commented. Ed Lough mentioned the State of Maine instituted a law stipulating that single citizens, without dependents, who receive State funding such as unemployment benefits, welfare payments, etc. are required to perform community hours or attend job training to regain employment or lose their benefits. In nearly 80% of the cases, the recipient

chooses to discontinue their benefits. Sarah Sprecher noted that Delegate Neil Parrott introduced a similar bill for Maryland. Dawn Hatzler gave an overview of the *Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP-2)* program. On behalf of the Western MD Consortium and members of the Workforce Investment Board, she has applied for a grant to provide incarcerated individuals with workforce services prior to release and linking them to a continuum of services. This program is voluntary and will enable transitioning offenders to be prepared to meet the needs of the local labor markets and have the skills valued by employers. This is an integrated approach that will allow the public workforce system and detention center to leverage resources and services to improve employability for this population. Ms. Hatzler noted the Washington County Detention Center is home to more than 2,300 inmates at any given time and of that population approximately 75% are Washington County, MD residents, which increases the demand on workforce development providers and can go a long way to filling employment shortages for local employers. Some members felt that identifying smaller companies willing to hire ex-offenders may be the best option. Ms. Hatzler stated once the offenders enter the program and gain employment, the Western MD Consortium will then follow them for two years to ensure their continued success in the workforce.

*Marketing and Communications Committee* – Julie Rohm explained the committee is scheduled to meet on March 30. The committee will begin planning this year’s Economic Development Week celebrations. Economic Development Week is typically held the last week in September or in October, scheduled by the Maryland Economic Development Association each year. We will continue to kick off the week with the *Love My Business* campaign and Prize Patrol-style business visits however we will end the week with a *Celebration of Business* breakfast event. Not only will the DBD/EDC recognize local businesses but we are proposing to showcase Washington County’s locally grown agricultural products at this event.

*Water and Sewer Infrastructure Committee* – Nothing to report this month.

*Old Business* – Greg Snook reported that after a brief winter hiatus, Yale Drive construction is back in action and is expected to be completed late Fall.

*New Business* – Kassie Lewis announced that HCC is hosting a Federal Lab Forum on April 12. The event is for businesses to learn about the technologies, research capacities, and how to partner with federal laboratories and to secure federal contracts. For more information, please contact Janice Riley at the TIC.

*Closed Session* – Janet Stiles Fulton motioned to go into Closed Session to consider a matter concerning the proposal of a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State; or any personnel matters in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland. The motion was seconded by Bob Jeffers. Hearing no discussion the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

*Open Session* – On a motion made by Jef Bohn to return to Open Session and seconded by Janet Stiles Fulton, the motion was unanimously approved. Present during Closed Session were Kristin Aleshire, Jef Bohn, Hugh Breslin, Jill Frick, Carmen Harbaugh, Leslie Hart, Bob Jeffers, Kassie Lewis, Ed Lough, Joshua Martin, Donald Munson, Tabitha Porterfield, Michael Reyka, Julie Rohm, Andrew Sargent, Greg Snook, Linda Spence, Sarah Sprecher, and Janet Stiles Fulton.

*Adjournment* – Ed Lough made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Julie Rohm. Hearing no discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Linda Spence, Business Support Specialist  
Washington County Department of Business Development  
and  
Recording Clerk for the Washington County Economic  
Development Commission Board