



**REDI Board of Directors Meeting
MINUTES
February 24, 2022, 7:30 a.m.
VIA Zoom**

Board attendees: Richard Alvarez, Rob DiSpirito, Marji Graf, Jennifer Hester, Kimberly Kelley, Bei Ma, Dan Mallon, Carla Merritt, Bridget Newton, Suzanne Osborn, Todd Pearson, Susan Prince, Nancy Regelin, Michael Scott, Morgan Sullivan, Bill Tompkins.

Absent: Ahmed Ali, Ben Anstrom, Nikhil Bijlani, Becky Briggs, Angela Chaney, Dale Cyr, Carla Merritt

Other attendees:

Staff: Cindy Rivarde, Richelle Wilson, Morgan Wortham, Rachele Williams, Amanda Bosland, Karen Kalantzis,

Other: Anthony Featherstone (WorkSource Montgomery), Cynthia Grissom (WorkSource Montgomery) Rhonda Devan (Vault), Walter Mannherz (Vault), Mark Pierzchala (City of Rockville), David Levy (City of Rockville)

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Remarks – Susan Prince

- a. Susan Prince called the meeting to order at 7:35 am.
- b. Ms. Prince informed the board that the Board Strategic Session will be held on a Saturday, April 30th from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

2. Operational Items

- a. Approval of Minutes – Susan Prince

ACTION: Morgan Sullivan made a motion to accept the January 24th minutes, which was seconded by Nancy Regelin and passed unanimously.

- b. Treasurer's Report – Todd Pearson and Rhonda Devan/Walt Mannherz

Mr. Pearson went over the financial highlights noting that REDI remains in a strong cash position. REDI has about nine months operating funds. Mr. Pearson noted programmatic expenses are in line with prior years at 14% administrative and 86% programmatic. Revised finance policies and procedures will come to the Board in March after review by the Finance Committee. Ms. Devan stated that the SBA acknowledged receipt of audit materials. Ms. Devan also went over the budget timeline noting that budget will be prepared after the Board working session in April for Finance Committee and Board approvals in either May or June. The 990 will come to the Board in March for approval.

3. Presentations - Anthony Featherstone of WorkSource Montgomery

Mr. Featherstone went over the Worksource Montgomery Local Area Workforce Plan 2020-2024, a copy of which is in the Board packet. Worksource Montgomery receives much of its funding from the Federal Government through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. The Plan includes an economic analysis section that outlines the top job sectors in the region and highlights trends in job growth. The largest sector in the County is government with almost 100,000 jobs. Next are Professional, Scientific and Technical services and then Health Care and Social Assistance.

Worksource Montgomery will be focusing on the following key industries:

- Professional, Scientific and Technical (including Cybersecurity/IT)
- Biotechnology/Life Sciences
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Hospitality (including retail, accommodation and food service)
- Construction

A key benchmark for success is whether earning capacity of Marylanders increases and to achieve at least a 70% sustainable employment placement rate. Mr. Featherstone noted that 33.8% of households in the County earn less than \$75,000 in an area with a high cost of living. Unemployment rates spiked during the pandemic and are expected to return to pre-pandemic numbers around 2025. In 2020, there were 853,114 people of working age in the County, with 33,777 individuals who were unemployed and making efforts to find employment.

Mr. Featherstone noted that Worksource Montgomery is providing mobile services to reach communities that may not come to their offices. He also noted there are over 100 providers in workforce support, and that they will be mapping the ecosystem. Worksource Montgomery has a strong program in helping ex-offenders return to the workforce.

He and Ms. Grissom indicated they are seeking feedback on the plan from stakeholders and employers – especially with regard to the Industry-Led Career Pathways they are developing to support local business needs. Mr. Tompkins noted that MCEDC has partnered with Worksource Montgomery to create a shared staff position, and John Sparico was recently hired as the Strategic Workforce Engagement Manager.

The Board discussed the barriers of housing and transportation for workers, especially those at lower pay rates. Mr. Sullivan noted that a strength of Rockville is that there is available housing and jobs at all price points, and that housing costs are lower than surrounding communities.

4. CEO Report – Cindy Rivarde

a. Economic Development – Richelle Wilson

Ms. Wilson reported that she and Ms. Rivarde met with Boston Properties architects, leasing and marketing teams. They are branding the 30+ acres life/sciences project as

the Shady Grove Innovation District. The site currently contains seven buildings totaling 435,000 square feet, and 2094 Gaither Road will be the first building completed with spec suites. Boston Properties' strategy is to capitalize on their existing tenants in markets that are experiencing a shortage of available inventory like Boston. They feel Rockville is uniquely positioned to provide inventory at competitive prices.

Ms. Wilson and Ms. Bosland are working closely with the Boston Properties marketing team. We have provided materials about the benefits of Rockville and information on incentives for them to use with prospective tenants. Being able to assist developers and property owners with these kinds of marketing materials is a key tactic REDI is using in its business attraction, retention and expansion services.

b. MWBC – Morgan Wortham

1. SBA support– MWBC has an opportunity to apply for an additional grant from SBA for the Bowie location, as Bowie State is a historically black college/university. This will provide another \$150,000 matching grant to MWBC and will allow us to solidify our operations. The SBA OWBO Assistant Administrator is making a site visit to the Bowie location of MWBC today, and Ms. Wortham and her team as well as Ms. Rivarde will be there to provide a tour and discuss programming. Ms. Wortham is also serving on the advocacy committee for the AWBC and will be attending meetings with U.S. Congresspersons and Senators to discuss increasing funding to WBC's.
2. VetBizLady – The VetBizLady program held its graduation with its first cohort. The was a successful program that certified women veterans so that they can engage in federal procurement opportunities. The program also used GrowthWheel. Ms. Wortham stated that she hopes to continue to work with the new VBOC office to offer additional veteran trainings.
3. SHE Pitch- Planning for this year's SHE Pitch in Frederick starts in March. They are hoping to have \$20,000 in prize giveaways, and the information on sponsorship opportunities was in the Board packet. The competition finals will be in August.
4. Grant reporting- Ms. Wortham reported that all grant reporting due at the end of January for the SBA and other funders was completed.
5. Partnerships – Ms. Wortham has renewed conversations with SCORE, which has requested occasional use of the REDI office when they move back to in-person sessions. This will be a nice way to coordinate with them, and we have an available touch down office. In addition, MWBC is working with SCORE on creating seminars for women entrepreneurs. Ms. Wortham is also presented on a panel for MCEDC March 2nd.

5. Strategic Items

- a. Workforce Education Committee – Dr. Kim Kelley
Dr. Kelley reported no new updates beyond Mr. Featherstone's presentation.
- b. Incentive Review Committee – Dan Mallon

Mr. Mallon reported the Incentive Review Committee will be meeting soon and will discuss any changes to grant making strategy and approach. Efforts to get the word out about the incentive programs has been successful, and several applications for the April 30th deadline have been received.

c. Marketing Committee - Becky Briggs

Ms. Briggs was not present - Ms. Rivarde mentioned the tourism website being created in partnership with Visit Montgomery should be launching in March.

d. MWBC Advisory Board – Nancy Regelin

Ms. Regelin noted that the first and second MWBC Advisory Board meetings on strategic planning were very successful. She commented that the impressive area leaders who comprise the board have brought helpful and impactful perspectives to the group. Their third and last planning session is being scheduled and will hopefully be in person.

6. Brief Partner Updates:

a. Rockville Chamber of Commerce – Marji Graf

Ms. Graf reported that the Chamber is planning for this year's Hometown Holidays, which will be held in RedGate Park over Memorial Day weekend. She asked for any restaurant contacts or leads to help put together the Taste of Rockville component. She also noted that the Public Safety awards will be held on June 8th at the Lakewood Country Club, and the golf tournament is scheduled for July 18th. She has been working with her Board on creating value-based dues, which will hopefully encourage membership growth and retention. Please see the Chamber website for more details.

b. The City of Rockville – Mayor Newton/Rob DiSpirito

Mr. DiSpirito noted that his draft budget has been published and will be discussed by Mayor and Council at upcoming meetings. There will also be a discussion regarding implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as Reimagining RedGate Park when a consultant will be presenting various options that the Board may want to watch. The city continues to work with WMATA on the metro stations. It was noted that there are several County items of interest that are upcoming. In particular an amendment to the County Municipal Revenue Program may return significant funding for the city, which has asserted that Rockville is paying double for certain services. In addition, The City is supporting the Safe Access for all Roads Act of 2022 and will hear a briefing by the County on its proposal to make changes to the County Detention Center off Seven Locks Road, which will include a bus depot for MCPS. Mayor and Council will also be briefed on an application at the Twinbrook Metro Station for a 440-unit multifamily project with 5,870 square feet of ground floor retail. Please see the City Report in the Board packet for more details.

c. MCEDC

Mr. Tompkins reported that MCEDC participates in the Equity Cohort of the IEDC and has been designated as a model equity organization. This will provide some access to capital. He will work with Ms. Wortham on understanding how we can leverage this program to assist Montgomery County, including through MWBC services. He also noted that MCEDC filed a grant application for the VLT program. The County is working on its 2050 Thrive plan, which will address housing, transportation and other resource needs.

d. Maryland Department of Commerce – Carla Merritt
Ms. Merritt was not present.

The meeting adjourned at: 9:02 a.m.

Upcoming Important Dates:

- MWBC Advisory Board Meeting** TBD
- Incentive Review Committee Meeting** TBD
- Executive Committee Meeting**..... Tuesday, March 8, 4:30 pm
- Finance Committee Meeting**..... Tuesday, March 8, 5:30 pm
- REDI Board Meeting** Thursday, March 24, 7:30 am
- Board Working Session** Saturday, April 30, 7:30 am- noon