



Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2020
MCEDC
Via Zoom

The following Committee members were present:

Robby Brewer, Lerch, Early & Brewer – Chair
Kevin Beverly, Vice Chair – Social Scientific Systems
Elana Fine, Secretary - VWG Wealth Management
Carmen Larsen, Aquas, Inc. – Treasurer

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, SVP of Business Development
Kristin O'Keefe, VP of Communications and Marketing
Ron Daversa, Member of the public
Dr. Sanjay Rai – Board member

*Mr. Brewer called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. A quorum of the Committee members was present.
Ms. Hardy was designated to take minutes.*

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Larsen moved to approve the minutes from the October 5 meeting. Mr. Beverly seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Maryland Women's Business Center Partnership Request

Mr. Brewer discussed the Maryland Women's Business Center's \$50,000 partnership request for FY21 operating and programming support. Mr. Brewer noted that while he has the authority to approve expenditures between \$25,000 and \$100,000 (per the Financial Management Policies) he encouraged the members of the committee to share any comments.

Ms. Fine suggested that additional documentation be requested from MWBC that illustrates its impact as well as MCEDC's return on investment. Ms. Fine inquired about volunteer opportunities and offered to make connections to the USG Entrepreneurs Initiative. Ms. Fine also suggested that a standard questionnaire could be utilized in order to standardize the responses.

Mr. Brewer requested that Mr. Tompkins circulate WMBC's annual report to the Committee and inquire about volunteer opportunities and events that the Committee may want to attend.

MCEDC Reauthorization: County Council Legislative Hearing

Mr. Brewer discussed the history of MCEDC's five-year designation as the County's Economic Development Organization and noted that the designation is set to expire on December 31, 2020. Mr. Brewer noted that the Council will go through a formal process to reauthorize MCEDC for another five-year period. MCEDC will appear before the PHED Committee on November 16 to discuss and address any questions regarding its economic development efforts. Mr. Brewer invited the members of the Executive Committee to attend the hearing if they are available.

Mr. Brewer invited the Committee to participate in the review of the responses to the questions from Council staff. Mr. Beverly and Ms. Fine volunteered to review the document.

Mr. Beverly inquired about the relationship between economic development and workforce development and suggested that it be a part of the dialogue with the PHED Committee. Mr. Wu discussed the recent Council session on workforce development and updated the committee on the status of recruitment efforts for the WorkSource Montgomery leadership position.

Finance & Audit Committee Report

Ms. Larsen reported that MCEDC received an unmodified opinion and that no internal control deficiencies were identified or considered material. The statements were reviewed and approved by the Finance & Audit Committee at the October meeting. Ms. Larsen noted that the audited statements and required communications letter will be provided to the Board at the November 16 meeting. CohnReznick will not brief the Board this year. Ms. Larsen highlighted key elements of the audit report including the ratio of expenses across functional area.

Ms. Larsen noted that a draft of the IRS 990 form is being prepared and is due on November 15. An extension will be filed if necessary. Ms. Larsen plans to convene the Finance & Audit Committee before the Thanksgiving holiday to revisit the Committee's self-evaluation tool.

President & CEO Report

Novavax Expansion Announcement

Mr. Wu reported that Novavax just announced plans that morning to expand into a new R&D, manufacturing and office facility and is planning to take 122,000 square feet of space at 700 Quince Orchard Road. As part of the expansion, Novavax will add 400 new local jobs to its more than 450 employees worldwide. Mr. Stewart discussed the project and the role that MCEDC played in the expansion.

Dr. Rai noted that Montgomery County had provided Novavax a \$100,000 loan at the early stages of the company that was critical to its initial success over ten years ago.

Research University Project Update

Mr. Wu indicated that MCEDC briefed the PHED Committee on the research university reports after the last Board meeting. A briefing with the County Executive is being rescheduled. Mr. Wu noted that attracting a research university would be a long-term proposition (five to ten years). In the near term, MCEDC will continue to support the future possibility of attracting a research presence by engaging in activities such as: 1) exploring connections between the Institute for Bioscience and Biotechnology Research (IBBR) and the Universities at Shady Grove, 2) focusing on workforce development and the talent pipeline, 3) promoting greater engagement with post-docs and graduate students, and 4) facilitating tech transfer/commercialization.

Ms. Fine inquired about whether the recommendations from the Reach Advisors study have been formally adopted as MCEDC's strategy. She also requested clarification as to where the research

university initiative falls within MCEDC's existing priorities. Mr. Brewer noted that the Board has not yet had a concerted discussion about which of the recommendations MCEDC will proceed with but plans to do so.

Mr. Tompkins noted that MCEDC is combining recommendations from the County Executive's Task Forces, the Reach Advisors study, and other reports to help inform opportunities and priorities.

Ms. Fine cautioned the staff against focusing too much of its efforts on the research university initiative as opposed to efforts that are more likely to attract businesses to the county.

Ms. Miller suggested that the research university initiative could be positioned not as an attraction project, but as an opportunity to have better industry engagement and partnerships.

Restaurant Relief Fund

Mr. Wu reported that Governor Hogan has announced a \$50M Restaurant Relief fund. MCEDC has been asked to administer a portion of the fund (\$8M) on behalf of the County administration. Mr. Brewer suggested that MCEDC could seek outside third party support to review the expected large number of applications.

Commerce Cabinet

The Commerce Cabinet will meet on November 13 to discuss five key initiatives: 1) a customer service initiative for procurement, planning, and permitting, among others; 2) Regulatory reform; 3) A public-private marketing partnership; 4) Interagency execution of economic recovery strategies; and 5) Creating a transformative showcase location (Silver Spring).

General Assembly

A presentation of upcoming legislative issues will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Maryland Video Lottery Terminal Fund Manager Application

MCEDC is applying to be a Fund Manager for the Maryland Video Lottery Terminal Fund. If approved, MCEDC will be able to disburse funds to small and minority-owned businesses to address their access to capital issues. The application is due on November 9. A decision is expected by the end of the year.

Academic Institutions Partnership: Memorandum of Cooperation

Mr. Wu reported that MCEDC is in the process of entering into a Memorandum of Cooperation with USG and Montgomery College to address topics such as: IBBR, engagement with the National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (NCCoE), and supporting workforce development especially with quantum and life sciences.

November Board Meeting Agenda

Mr. Brewer reviewed the agenda for the November Board meeting and suggested that it be amended to include a discussion about the research university initiative and industry engagement. Mr. Brewer will work with Mr. Wu to make other minor adjustments to the agenda.

Ms. Fine commented on the structure of the meeting and suggested that the Board should have more time to substantively address the topics brought before it.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 am.