

Western Maryland Food Council
Draft Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2022, 4:00 pm, online

Attending:

Willie Lantz
Cheryl DeBerry
Melissa Bolyard

Lisa McCoy
Theresa Stahl

Rachel Forlifer
Shirley Guinn

1. Welcome
 - a. Chair Lantz welcomed the group
2. Moment of Silence in Memory of Sherry Frick
 - a. Chair Lantz asked for a moment of silence in memory of founding member of the WMFC, Sherry Frick, who passed away recently after a long battle with cancer. Sherry will be missed by all who knew her. The executive committee met recently and suggested doing something in memory of Sherry. Ideas included planting a tree or putting a bench at the Jane Gates House, a project near and dear to Sherry's heart. Theresa will reach out to the Jane Gates House staff to see what they would prefer. Willie will talk to Jennifer Bentlejewski on behalf of Extension, telling her about our plans in case they want to contribute toward the project as well. Sherry's memorial service is October 23. Willie will send out the info.
3. Minutes from June 2022 Meeting
 - a. Lisa McCoy moved, and Theresa Stahl seconded, to approve the June 2022 minutes as presented. The motion was passed by a majority of the vote.
4. Treasurers Report
 - a. Willie Lantz presented the treasurer's report. The treasurer position, previously held by the late Sherry Frick, is open. Chair Lantz appointed Melissa Bolyard to the position until the election of officers can be held at the February meeting.
5. County Reports
 - a. *Allegany*: Theresa reported that the Allegany workgroup members haven't met this summer. Theresa will be recording radio ads on Monday for the Buy Local Allegany Grant, including a three-minute interview and 30-second script. Theresa will pay for it and get reimbursed from Western Maryland RC&D. Theresa asked about putting community gardens on the Buy Local Allegany website. Melissa said if she gets the list, she can add the community gardens to the site. Theresa said Jen Thomas has the information for WMHC's gardens plus WMFC has the list created by the consultant hired from the grant. Theresa will email her to get the updated info.
 - b. *Washington*: Lisa reported the Washington workgroup hasn't met for a while either and they have no report at this time. The members hope to meet this fall to get things organized.
 - c. *Garrett*: Willie reported the Garrett workgroup met to discuss the SPINE grant (report forthcoming). Cheryl reported that the SNAP match at markets is going strong. Willie reported that Garrett Growers had strong sales this year, despite a few hiccups with the Mountaineer Food Bank partnership. Willie and Melissa have been exploring partnerships with multiple USDA Regional Food Business Centers grant applicants, including WVU and University of Kentucky as well as Frostburg. Melissa's been on calls with mid-Atlantic states for proposal too. These are multi-million dollar grants, using multi-state partners to work on improving regional food

systems. Willie reported that Melissa was asked to submit ideas for new grant funding through the Tri County Council of Western Maryland, and she submitted three proposals. One was accepted for full application and it's likely to get funded. The project is \$80,000 for food distribution center upgrades for Garrett Growers, including a cooler, upgrading a facility, etc.

6. State Food System Resiliency Council Report

- a. Theresa reported that the Council held its first in-person meeting since the start in June 2021. See attached report for more information and updates.
- b. Willie reported that at the latest monthly meeting of Extension Educators, Senator Lorig Charkoudian was on. She talked about a bill that passed two years ago that set a goal of 20% of local foods at institutions. In order for farmers to be qualified to receive a 5% price bonus for local foods, farmers have to be certified by filling out info at MD Department of Agriculture and have a nutrient management plan. Very few of small fresh produce farmers have the plans because it's difficult to do the plans when you have small acreages, multiple crops, etc.

7. SPINE Grant Report

- a. Willie reported that the Garrett County Health Department asked if they could apply for funding again this year and were told yes. Last year SPINE funding went to the Garrett County Health Dept. who in turn worked with WMFC and Garrett Growers. There were three objectives: (1) to redo the food resource guide (hungry brochure), (2) create vlogs having to do with local foods, nutrition, SNAP benefits, healthy eating, etc., and (3) pop up markets at two low income underserved communities, Kitzmiller and Friendsville. Both pop up markets went well, and we worked with the Barn Quilt Association of Garrett County to administer Maryland Market Money (MMM) SNAP match at both locations. So far the markets have had 443 customers, 62 SNAP transactions by 28 unique individuals with almost \$600 in SNAP match from MMM. The Friendsville market was especially successful. Kristin Spiker with Extension went to the pop ups three times to do nutrition activities and food giveaways. A total of 14 markets have been held in Kitzmiller and 14 in Friendsville so far. Willie has been on the bimonthly calls with SPINE group and meeting with larger health group. If WMFC were to get a second year of funding, we will need to identify new activities. Other counties may want to look into this opportunity as well.

8. Ag Council Grant Report

- a. Theresa is finishing up the radio spots, then we can finish up the final report. Josh at WMRC&D can help with that.

9. 2023 Conference Discussion

- a. At the last meeting we talked about it, perhaps moving to every other year, and if that were the case, then 2023 would be the year. It's been tough getting folks interested and involved in planning something. Ideas: (1) Speaker series? (2) Doing something that helps fulfill the grant might help (restaurant/grower forum in each county)? Speaker series could link to increasing local food sales to restaurants. Maybe we can combine the two ideas. Maybe each county could be responsible for speaker, doing it quarterly.
- b. Chair Lantz agreed with this approach and is committed to do a restaurant/farmer forum through zoom.
- c. Another idea for the website – connecting farmers and restaurants, including – video blog posts from farmers showing here's what we have and how we grow. Each county's food council

members could contact passionate restaurateurs and ask to record an interview with them to include on the website.

- d. One disadvantage of losing the conference is losing the sponsorships which have funded county projects. Maybe we could have sponsors for the restaurant/grower page too?

10. Frostburg Grows Update

- a. Chair Lantz reported that the Toasted Goat Winery/Restaurant in Frostburg purchased two of the remaining high tunnels and the water collection system and plan to grow food at the site. Originally the owners wanted everything removed but the situation changed so we don't need to move everything. However, RC&D wants to divest the site. The Toasted Goat is leasing land from the landowner in order to keep the high tunnels there. RC&D gave away other equipment and tunnels to schools and Evergreen Heritage Center. The rest of items will be auctioned on 10/26.

11. MOU with WMRC&D

- a. Willie Lantz reported that Josh Smith asked him to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WMRC&D with confirmation of the July 1 to June 30 time period. At this point we haven't progressed with a private nonprofit designation.
- b. Theresa Stahl moved, and Rachel Forlifer seconded, to stay with RC&D and renew the MOU. The motion passed by a majority of the vote.

12. Other business

- a. Theresa reported that the Allegany County WIC representative on the WMFC changed jobs – if WIC wants to appoint another member, they can appoint to finish the term. Theresa will confirm with WIC in Allegany to replace Amanda Riggleman.
- b. Chair Lantz conveyed that the WMFC has gone through recent tough times and we need to recruit more members, supporters and partners. There are lots of upcoming opportunities that we don't want to miss out on. He asked members to think of other people to invite to the meetings. We hope to have the February meeting in-person for the annual meeting.

13. Next Meeting - Feb 2023 - Annual Meeting

- a. February 9 (2nd Thursday) at 4:00 pm. The plan is to have it in person, with a zoom option.

14. Adjourn

- a. Chair Lantz adjourned the meeting at 5:25 pm.