

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

May 1, 2007

James L. Purnell, Jr., President
Louise L. Gulyas, Vice President
Judith O. Boggs
Linda C. Busick
James C. Church
Robert L. Cowger, Jr.
Virgil L. Shockley

Following a motion by Commissioner Shockley, seconded by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to discuss legal and personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 10-508(a)(1), (7) and (8) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform executive actions. Also present at the closed session were Gerald T. Mason, Chief Administrative Officer; Kelly Shannahan, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; Edward H. Hammond, Jr., County Attorney; and Kim Moses, Public Information Officer. Topics discussed and actions taken included: reappointing Sherwood Brooks to the Housing Review Board; appointing Douglas A. Slingerland to the Planning Commission; appointing Kara Brower, Mary Mazcko, Keith Spangler, Michelle Wang, Marissa Dean, Clayton Perry, Matthew Smarte, William Bowen, Quavis Hayes and Aaron Marshall to the Worcester County Youth Council; reviewing potential and pending litigation; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing executive actions.

After the closed session, the Commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Purnell called the meeting to order and announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the minutes of their April 17, 2007 meeting, as amended.

Pursuant to the request of Housing Program Administrator Jo Ellen Bynum and upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to schedule a public hearing on May 15, 2007 to obtain the views of citizens on community development and housing needs, and to offer citizens the opportunity to comment on an application the Commissioners propose to submit to the State on or before May 30, 2007 for Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The proposed application calls for CDBG funding of \$300,000 with a matching fund commitment of \$75,000 in-kind services or 25% from the County to continue the Housing Rehabilitation Program, which assists low to moderate income persons and households.

The Commissioners reviewed an invitation to attend the unveiling of the new Henry's

Hotel Interpretive Marker Sign at the Henry Hotel on South Division Street and Baltimore Avenue in Ocean City on May 3, 2007 at 9:15 a.m. Tourism Director Lisa Challenger explained that this is the newest in a series of markers used to identify African American sites of historical significance on the Eastern Shore.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Recreation and Parks Director Sharon Reilly and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to waive the standard bid process and approved the proposal from Mervin L. Blades & Sons, Inc. to construct a 1,950-square-foot addition to the Worcester County Recreation Center to be used for storage at a cost of \$168,185.00, along with \$3,308.00 for the optional metal wall panels. Ms. Reilly further explained that the Maintenance Division of Public Works would install the sub-feed electrical panel and the County would cover the costs for disposal of construction debris and gas connections for a total estimated project cost of \$175,385.00. In response to a question from Commissioner Shockley, Ms. Reilly stated that 90% of the project costs are eligible for reimbursement through the Program Open Space (POS) program.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Ms. Reilly and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously approved bid specifications for the resurfacing of two tennis courts at John Walter Smith Park in Snow Hill and two tennis courts at Showell Park in Showell with Premier Court resilient surface or equivalent. In response to a question from Commissioner Boggs, Ms. Reilly explained that this surface has an estimated 12-year life span and comes highly recommended by area Parks and Recreation Managers, including Ocean City.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Ms. Reilly and the Worcester County Recreation Advisory Board and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously approved the FY2008 Worcester County Program Open Space (POS) Annual Program for Acquisition and Development. Projects included in the report represent requests from the County and each of the incorporated municipalities of Ocean City, Berlin, Snow Hill and Pocomoke. Ms. Reilly explained that the Recreation Advisory Board had met with each of the municipalities to determine their priority projects. She stated that the report serves as a wish list and is not a commitment of funding. She stated that this plan can be amended, but only those items included in the final report would be eligible for POS funds. In response to a question from Commissioner Shockley, Ms. Reilly stated that POS funding regulations allow municipalities to roll over funds from one fiscal year to the next to complete projects that require significant funding.

Pursuant to the request of Public Works Director John Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Shockley, the Commissioners unanimously approved a proposal from Recycling Coordinator Ron Taylor to conduct puppet shows by Kathleen Jacobs & Puppets of Forest Hill, Maryland at area public schools on June 5, 6 and 7, 2007 at a cost of \$2,610. Mr. Tustin stated that these performances are educational and entertaining events that encourage children to recycle.

Pursuant to the request of Jeff Merritt, Assistant Director of the Eastern Shore Chapter Harley Owner's Group, and the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by

Commissioner Shockley, the Commissioners unanimously approved the request of the group to utilize portions of the Public Landing pier parking lot for their annual Summer Splash Poker Run on Sunday, June 24, 2007 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tustin to review a petition from Benjamin Davis and numerous other residents of Nassawango Road requesting the County lower the existing speed limit on Nassawango Road from 50 miles per hour (mph) to 30 mph, post "Slow Children at Play" signs, and install rumble strips to notify drivers of the speed reduction. Mr. Tustin stated that residents are concerned for the safety of children and pets living in the area. Mr. Tustin stated that the area of greatest concern is an open stretch of road where cars are reported to travel in excess of 65 mph. He recommended enforcement of the existing speed limit by the Sheriff's Office on an ongoing basis. Commissioner Shockley stated that the mix of children at play and vehicles traveling at excessive speeds was a recipe for disaster. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Shockley, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to lower the speed limit from 50 mph to 30 mph on the 0.7 mile section of Nassawango Road from the bridge to the woods and further requested the Sheriff's Office to step up enforcement of the posted speed limit.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the proposal from EA Engineering of Sparks, Maryland in the amount of \$35,480 to provide 200 days of construction management services during construction of Phase I of the US Rt. 50 Service Road project.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the proposal for engineering services to plan the sewer routing for the proposed Greater Ocean Pines Sanitary Service Area (GOPSSA) to Barry Isett and Associates of Berlin, Maryland at a cost of \$7,272 and to be completed in 10 weeks. Mr. Tustin explained that following the study, the Commissioners can determine whether or not it is feasible to create the GOPSSA. In response to a question from Commissioner Shockley, Mr. Tustin stated that though Barry Isett and Associates' bid was significantly lower than the other bids, he had spoken with them and feels confident that they are qualified to complete this task at the price offered and in the time allotted.

The Commissioners presented retirement commendations to Captain Bill Brittingham and Lieutenant Linwood P. Donoway for serving the Worcester County Jail for 25 years and 31 years, respectively. Commissioner Purnell thanked the officers for their years of dedication to the County and stated that each man would be dearly missed.

The Commissioners met with Comprehensive Planning Director Sandy Coyman to review the draft Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for the Bishopville Pond/Lizard Hill Restoration Project. Mr. Coyman reviewed the contract provisions, which include the bulk of funds for this project to come from the State Highway Association (SHA) in the amount of \$1,200,000, COE in the amount of \$750,000 and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the amount of \$115,740. Mr. Coyman stated that

the total project budget is \$2,835,740, with the county contributing \$20,000 toward design and \$7,400 for monitoring equipment. He stated that as the local sponsor, the County would be responsible for depositing the local matching funds of \$1,480,000 with the COE before the project is bid, with the County being fully reimbursed except for its original contribution of \$27,400. He stated that construction is expected to begin this fall, and the County should receive reimbursement between October and December, 2007. In response to a question from Commissioner Boggs, Mr. Coyman stated that recent testing reveals that three feet of organic materials exist at the base of the pond in which no hazardous materials were found and which will be beneficial for the tree plantings. Commissioner Boggs expressed concern regarding timely reimbursement of project costs. Chief Administrative Officer Gerald T. Mason stated that the County has the funds to cover the project costs up front and expects timely reimbursed by the SHA and EPA once the project begins. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Busick, the Commissioners conceptually approved the PCA and funding arrangements and unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign the agreement once the COE has completed its review.

Pursuant to the request of Health Officer Debbie Goeller and the recommendation of Sean Fahey, Assistant Project Manager with SPN Construction Managers for the Health Department Construction Project, and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously approved the purchase of a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone system from Telewire of Salisbury, Maryland at a cost of \$75,958.19. Phillip Roberts of the Health Department advised that \$50,000 in grant funding is available to be applied to this purchase in addition to the allocated funding available in the construction budget.

The Commissioners met with Facilities Project Manager Dennis Escher to discuss regional water system costs. Mr. Escher stated that there had been some confusion over the range of costs in the Water Report, which was reviewed by the Commissioners on April 3, 2007. He stated that the Ocean Pines Water System can either be improved as a stand alone system which would include constructing an additional water tank, improved distribution system and two new wells with water treatment at a total cost of \$6.5 million which would result in a quarterly user fee increase of \$12.20, or be improved as part of a regional water system which would result in a quarterly user fee increase of \$11.00. In response to a question from Commissioner Church, Mr. Escher stated that it would be far more cost effective to create a regional water system.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Escher to review the final draft of his study of the Sewerage Systems of Northern Worcester County: Report on North County Regionalization Study for Water and Sewerage Infrastructure. Mr. Escher stated that the report reflects the present condition and capacity of the existing systems along with where growth is occurring and what projects were planned within the 10-year planning period. Mr. Escher reviewed the status of the Ocean Pines, River Run, Riddle Farm, Mystic Harbour, The Landings and Assateague Pointe sewer systems as well as the proposed Showell Growth Area sewer system. He outlined his recommendations for each system, and stated that the existing north County sewerage systems should remain independent.

In response to Commissioner Boggs regarding the changing demographics of Ocean

Pines, Mr. Escher stated that even during peak season, the effluent flow of the Ocean Pines Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) only exceeded its previous limit of 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD) on one occasion. He stated that the plant is now rated for 2.5 MGD, and there appears to be excess capacity in the plant from strictly a flow perspective. Commissioner Boggs stated that the County should continue to plan conservatively based upon equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) allocations rather than current flow as the flow per household may increase in the future due to unit conversions and more year-round residents. Mr. Escher reviewed effluent disposal alternatives for the Ocean Pines WWTP, including spray irrigation estimated to cost \$11 million for the 700-acre site and equipment needed, or pumping to the Ocean City outfall at about half that cost.

Mr. Escher stated that the Mystic Harbour WWTP was built in 1974 and is deteriorating. He recommended either building a new plant at an approximate cost of \$4 million for the same capacity of 1,000 EDUs or \$7.5 million to expand to serve a total of 2,000 EDUs. He stated that if the Mystic Harbour WWTP malfunctions, effluent should temporarily be rerouted to the West Ocean City system through an emergency by-pass connection. Mr. Escher recommended a 5-year plan be developed to address the Mystic Harbour WWTP issues.

In response to a question from Commissioner Boggs, Mr. Escher stated that The Landings WWTP is still under construction and has not yet been turned over to the County.

With regard to the Showell WWTP, Mr. Escher stated that the Planning Commission will be reviewing plans for the plant with the County Commissioners at an upcoming meeting. He stated that it appears that the County will acquire 2,500 EDUs that can be used to remove a number of septic systems from nearby areas close to the St. Martin River.

In closing, Mr. Escher stated that a regional sanitary sewer system was estimated to cost approximately \$60 million when last studied in 1988, but would cost roughly \$100 million today. He further stated that effluent disposal continues to be a major issue. Following some discussion, the Commissioners thanked Mr. Escher for his report.

The Commissioners met with Liquor Control Board (LCB) Chairman Don Hastings and members Alfred Bridgman, Jr. and William L. (Larry) Wilkinson to review the Fiscal Year 2008 LCB budget. Mr. Hastings introduced Brian Sturgeon, the new Executive Director of the LCB. Mr. Sturgeon thanked the Commissioners for meeting with them, and stated that in his brief period as director, he has found the LCB to be well run and in sound financial condition. He supported the LCB request for salary increases for LCB members to \$6,000 with the Chairman earning \$6,500. Mr. Wilkinson reviewed budgeted revenues and expenses, noting that the LCB's sales increased by 7% last year, and are expected to grow by another 7% in FY08 with costs escalating as well due to increases in health insurance, utilities, salaries and other areas. He stated that even with costs escalating, the LCB still anticipates a net income of \$776,623. Commissioner Cowger stated that the LCB is a great asset to the County and commended them for their success. Following some discussion, the Commissioners thanked the LCB for their presentation.

The Commissioners met with County Attorney Edward H. Hammond, Jr. to review the proposed Revised Scenic and Transportation Corridor Plan Language for Billboard Control. Mr. Hammond explained that the current language was too strong and could result in the County

being required to pay for billboard removal, while the proposed new language gave the developer the option to either retain the billboards or remove them if they wish to install an on-premise sign. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to schedule a public hearing on the proposed plan amendment as presented.

Mr. Hammond met with the Commissioners to discuss requests for public information. Mr. Hammond explained that large requests for information, such as that of Goldberg, Pike & Besche dated March 28, 2007 for documents relating to the Riddle Farm Treatment Plant, are extremely comprehensive and time consuming. He stated that by law the County must provide the first two hours of research at no cost. However, he advised that there should be a formally adopted charge for requests that exceed that time period. He reviewed a proposed resolution, which would set fees to be collected for information requests pursuant to the Public Information Act. Following some discussion, the Commissioners stated that the proposed charge of \$0.25 per page seemed low and directed staff to determine the fees that are charged by other jurisdictions for similar requests and return with a revised resolution.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Hammond to discuss pending legislation to regulate Adult Entertainment Businesses. Mr. Hammond stated that past Commissioners have been hesitant to introduce such legislation, fearing that such legislation gives the appearance of promoting these types of activities. Mr. Hammond clarified that these businesses are permitted and cannot be banned outright. However, they can be regulated through legislation. He recommended the Commissioners impose a moratorium on the application for or issuance of permits for adult entertainment businesses in Worcester County, Maryland through December 31, 2007 to allow the County Commissioners time to research regulations regarding adult entertainment businesses and where they may be permitted in the county. Following some discussion, and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution No. 07-8, imposing a moratorium on the establishment of adult entertainment businesses in Worcester County, Maryland. The Commissioners further agreed to introduce temporary regulations at their next legislative session on May 15, 2007 and to meet with legal representatives from Funk and Bolton, P.A. of Baltimore, Maryland at their next meeting to discuss permanent legislation to regulate said businesses.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign a Quit Claim Deed with the Town of Ocean City for property in Ocean City previously owned by the Worcester County Sanitary Commission.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Cowger, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to draft a letter to the state in support of a review of the recent assessment of Trimper Rides in Ocean City and possible tax relief to prevent the business from closing as stated in a recent letter from part-owner Doug Trimper.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to attend the unveiling of the Worcester County Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Plaque in the

lower level atrium of the Government Center in Snow Hill.

The Commissioners adjourned to reconvene at 7:00 p.m. for the FY2007/2008 Requested County Operating Budget Public Hearing at Snow Hill High School.

The Commissioners held a public hearing at Snow Hill High School on the FY2007/2008 Requested County Operating Budgets. The Worcester County Sheriff's Office Color Guard began the hearing with the presentation of colors. Commission President Purnell called the meeting to order. Chief Administrative Officer Gerald T. Mason explained how the budget is developed and what factors influence it. A power point presentation was presented to the audience displaying photographs of Worcester County employees and agencies and outlining Worcester County's Taxpayer's Guide to the FY2007/2008 Requested Operating Budgets. The presentation included graphs of: the County's projected population growth through 2020; U.S. inflation figures; solid waste collection figures; 911 center calls; Sheriff calls; Payments to Towns; Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Crisis; FY07 property tax rates for Eastern Shore counties; Worcester County property tax rates since 2003; property tax rate comparison to neighboring counties; FY07 income tax rates for Eastern Shore counties; income tax comparison to neighboring counties; combined income and property tax comparison to neighboring counties; composition of general fund revenues; and composition of general fund expenditures for FY07. Mr. Mason explained that the constant yield tax rate represents the property tax rate that would generate the same amount of revenues the County received in the current fiscal year. As property assessments increase, the constant yield tax rate decreases. In February, the State informed Worcester County that estimated assessments had increased by 15.8%. Therefore, if the County kept the tax rate at the current rate of \$.70 per \$100 of assessed value, the property tax revenues would also increase by 15.8%. This would mean that the County would receive an additional \$14,872,131 from new real property tax revenues. This year the constant yield rate is \$.605. He explained that the two major factors that account for the increase in the County's Operating Budget are growth in demand for services due to an expanding service population and inflation. Mr. Mason noted that the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 45 requires public sector employers to account differently for certain non-pension benefits that are provided to their employees during retirement, which also requires employers to recognize an Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligation on their balance sheets. He explained that the Commissioners are addressing this issue by budgeting \$17 million for FY08 towards meeting this annual liability.

Commissioner Purnell opened the floor to receive public comments, first on the departmental and agency budget requests and then on the Board of Education budget requests.

Meme Wells Suznavich asked for clarification regarding differences in the graph showing the composition of General Fund Expenditures in the handout and the PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Mason advised that the figures in the PowerPoint presentation were updated to reflect the OPEB obligation and debt service.

Ellie Diegelman, of Ocean City, commended the Commissioners for asking thorough questions during budget deliberations, and asked them to insist departments and agencies submit realistic budgets that will strengthen the government without burdening taxpayers.

Carol Crim, of Ocean City, reviewed duplicate services between the County and Town of

Ocean City, and asked for a tax differential for those living within Ocean City.

Leah Sandifer, Executive Director of Agape Project, advised that this was the first year her organization had requested funding from the County. She stated that the funds would be used to help finance Door of Hope, a Christian ministry offering mental health services to single mothers.

Teresa Fields, Executive Director of Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services (WYFCS), asked the county to support the group's projects. She advised that WYFCS aided 600 youths and adults this past year.

Carolyn Cordial, Director of Programs for WYFCS, also asked the Commissioners to support WYFCS funding request to help keep families together.

June Walker, Executive Director of the Worcester County Developmental Center (WCDC), thanked the Commissioners for their past funding and asked them to fund the WCDCs entire requested budget as presented.

Dot Graves, of Salisbury, avidly supported the WCDC funding requests and stated that the services provided by the WCDC allow her brother, John, to maintain a high quality of life through the provision of medical services and day programs.

Cecil Tull, WCDC Foundation President, asked the Commissioners to approve their request for funding to build a new WCDC facility. He stated that the current facility is 75 years old and is rapidly deteriorating, which makes it increasingly difficult to attract new clients to the program.

Barbara Purnell, of the Germantown School Community Heritage Center, thanked the Commissioners for considering funding for the restoration of the Germantown School. She advised that the State provided a \$150,000 grant, with a dollar for dollar matching grant requirement of \$150,000, of which \$103,539.65 had been raised. She asked the Commissioners and those in attendance to help the school raise the remaining funds so they would not lose the State grant.

Dr. Jon Andes, Superintendent of Schools for the Board of Education (BOE), thanked the Commissioners for their past and continued support and reviewed the various achievements of the County school system. He requested funding for a 5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) and a step increase for teachers, funding for new positions to maintain smaller class sizes and materials of instruction, as well as funding for wireless internet labs in all of the schools; closing the achievement gap; and needed capital requests.

Ernestine Purnell, of the Pocomoke High School (PHS) School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC), thanked the Commissioners for their continued support. She asked them to approve funding for a full time school resource officer; renovations and additions; a school security system; fine arts and drama program, and additional band equipment at PHS.

Terry Springle, President of the Worcester County Teachers Association, thanked the Commissioners on behalf of the 576-member association for working with the BOE and for their consistent support. He stated that there is a national shortage of teachers, and last year more veteran teachers were hired from out of state than in-state. He asked the Commissioners to support the proposed budget to provide a competitive salary, benefits and pension package to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.

Edward Lee, President of the Worcester County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), urged the Commissioners to fully fund the BOE

requested budget. He stated that Worcester County has made more progress in closing the gap between African-American males and white males than any other county in the State. However, a gap also exists between white and other minority students that must continue to be addressed. He stated that the Commissioners funded one Ombudsman position in Pocomoke during FY07, with a promise to fund two additional positions if the program was successful. He stated that it was successful and asked the Commissioners to fund the promised positions. He also asked the Commissioners to support mentor programs in the school, using students from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College. He graded Dr. Andes and the school board an A+ and A respectively for communicating effectively and for community involvement, and he thanked the Commissioners for their leadership.

Eleanor Hodgson, of the Worcester County Support Association (WCSA), stated that the WCSA awarded six \$500 scholarships as a part of their ongoing efforts to support education. She asked the Commissioners to continue their support of education by funding the requested budget, particularly salary increases for support personnel.

Louisa Silloway, of Pocomoke and chair of Special Education Citizens Committee, asked the Commissioners to support the BOE requested budget to continue to hire and retain highly qualified staff through increased salary and benefits packages.

Ginger Gillis, Chair of the Worcester Career and Technology Center (WCTC) School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC), expressed her thanks to the Commissioners for moving forward with plans to build a new WCTC and she asked them to fund one electrical wiring teacher position at WCTC.

Jennie Knapp, of the Stephen Decatur High School (SDHS) SIAC, asked the Commissioners to fund three new teacher positions to help maintain small class sizes at SDHS. She also asked the Commissioners to support the BOE's proposed budget package to attract and retain qualified teachers, and purchase new books and materials.

Patrick Lieb, a seventh grade student at Stephen Decatur Middle School (SDMS) thanked his teacher, Maryland State Teacher of the Year Michelle Hammond, as well as other SDMS teachers for all they do to make school exciting. He asked the Commissioners to fully fund the BOE budget.

Stacey Simpson, of the Berlin Intermediate School (BIS) SIAC, stated that educating area children is a huge responsibility, and she thanked the Commissioners for their past funding. She asked them to approve the proposed increase in teachers salaries; continue 4th and 5th grade after school and summer school programs; fund one educational assistant position, one English language learner (ELL) teacher, and one family to school connections position at BIS.

Ray Robinson, of the Showell Elementary School (SES) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for the new playground equipment and school upgrades and repairs. He asked the Commissioners to fund the proposed budget to keep class sizes small and increase salaries for teachers and support staff; replace two old portable classrooms; and provide one additional portable classroom to be used as a music room at SES.

Amy Bishop, of the SDMS SIAC and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) president, asked the Commissioners to fund a second ELL teacher; four LCD projectors; one mobile lab; and new science and library chairs at SDMS. She also asked the Commissioners to approve the proposed salary package for teachers and support staff.

Terri Batze, of the Snow Hill Elementary School (SHES) SIAC, thanked the

Commissioners for their dedication to supporting the children of Worcester County. She asked them to purchase a security system, and cover funding for one existing kindergarten teaching position, which was previously grant funded at SHES. She asked the Commissioners to approve the requested increase in salaries for teachers and support staff and to maintain small class sizes.

Tom Tyndall and Kim Mumford, of the Buckingham Elementary School (BES) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to come before them and make requests. They thanked the Commissioners for funding new playground equipment and maintaining small class sizes. They asked them to fully support the BOE budget to provide attractive salary packages, hire a new custodian and one new family to school connections position for the northern end of the County.

Linda Johnson, of the Snow Hill Middle School (SHMS) SIAC, reviewed the school's top budget priorities as follows: provide competitive salaries, update technology to add a stationary and mobile computer lab along with funding for a wireless network; upgrade HVAC and resurface tennis courts; and adopt arts immersion program as instituted in Berlin and Pocomoke; and hire one full time art teacher at SHMS.

Barry Mullis, of the Cedar Chapel Special School (CCSS) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for providing funding to bring the CCSS kitchen into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He recommended the Commissioners approved the proposed salary package for teachers and support personnel; maintain small class size, materials of instruction; increase wireless capacity, and purchase a new water heater for the therapy tank.

Marilyn James, of the OCES SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for providing a beautiful, new, state-of-the-art OCES building for students. She asked them to provide funds to increase one part time music instructor position to full time; hire a full time foreign language teacher and one additional classroom teacher to decrease class sizes at OCES; and to approve the proposed salary package for teachers and support staff

Bob Stancil, of the Pocomoke Middle School (PMS) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for their past support and asked them to fund the following positions at PMS: After School Pride Academies; Arts Immersion program; and the proposed salary package.

Laura Powell, of the Pocomoke Elementary School (PES) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for funding a full time art teacher. She asked them to approve the BOE's request to hire one additional special education teacher; provide one additional mobile computer lab; and maintain small class size and competitive salary packages at PES.

Jennie Owen, of the Snow Hill High School (SHHS) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for supporting the education of area youth, which has helped enable them to perform at the highest levels in the State. She asked the Commissioners to continue to provide salary packages that will help attract and retain highly qualified instructors and support staff; continued funding of extended day learning academy, due to the sunset of the grant which previously funded this position; new and replacement student furniture; and new computers.

There being no further public comment, Commissioner Purnell closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Purnell thanked SHHS Principal Tom Davis and his staff for allowing the Commissioners to use the facility to conduct the public hearing. He further thanked Mr. Mason and his staff for their hard work to prepare the presentation, and thanked residents for taking part in the hearing. He advised those in attendance that the Commissioners will take every request into consideration while working to adopt a budget that best reflects the needs of the entire

County. Commissioner Purnell advised that the Commissioners will continue to put the needs of the children first. He thanked the other six Commissioners, the County Attorney and County staff for their efforts, and explained that it takes a team to develop a successful budget and make it work. He wished students and teachers much success in the school year, and wished those in attendance a good night and Godspeed.

The board adjourned to meet again on May 15, 2007.