

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

“Special Session”

April 24, 2009

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

The Commissioners met in an emergency special session to discuss the pending hearing before the Maryland State Board of Education on Monday, April 27, 2009 regarding the County’s request for a waiver of the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funding requirement for the Worcester County Board of Education in fiscal year 2010 (FY10). Mr. Mason explained that in preparing for the hearing, staff had reviewed the revised budget projections considering substantial cost-saving measures and budget cuts offered by County Departments and Agencies, with the exception of the Board of Education, final State budget cuts to the County, deferral of capital projects, and the Commissioners’ recent decision to establish the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund, and were now within reach of a balanced budget. Harold Higgins, Finance Officer, explained that once the OPEB Trust Fund is established on June 30, 2009, the obligations for current retirees would be borne by the Trust rather than the General Fund, thereby significantly reducing required General Fund expenditures for OPEB beginning in FY10. Mr. Mason stated that the purpose of today’s emergency meeting is to determine whether to proceed with their request for a MOE Waiver from the State Board of Education. After much discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Busick, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Busick, Church, Cowger, Gulyas and Purnell voting in favor and Commissioners Boggs and Shockley voting in opposition, to withdraw their request for a MOE Waiver from the State Board of Education due to the most recent budget projections. The Commissioners further agreed to issue a joint press release with the Worcester County Board of Education to announce their decision. Commissioners Boggs and Shockley stated that the MOE Waiver would provide the Commissioners with the needed flexibility to balance the budget without placing the entire burden on the backs of County Departments and Agencies with the exception of the Board of Education and therefore could not support the withdraw of the MOE Waiver request.

The board adjourned to meet again on May 5, 2009.