

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

May 4, 2010

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

Following a motion by Commissioner Purnell, 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), (7) and (8) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions. Also present at the closed session were Gerald T. Mason, Chief Administrative Officer; Kelly Shannahan, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; Sonny Bloxom, County Attorney; Kim Moses, Public Information Officer; and George Bradley, Director of Human Resources. Topics discussed and actions taken included: reviewing potential and pending litigation; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

After the closed session, the Commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Church 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 20, 2010 meeting as presented.

The Commissioners presented a proclamation to Worcester County Social Services Director Peter Buesgens and other staff members along with foster parents Jon and Judy Tremellen recognizing May as National Foster Care Month and thanking area foster parents who have opened their hearts and homes to help children involved in crisis situations. Mr. Buesgens stated that the foster care program in Worcester County has grown from an all time low of 9 parents in 2006 to 24 foster families, with a goal of recruiting 27 families. He stated that 95% of children in the foster care system in Worcester County are now living in foster families rather than group homes.

The Commissioners presented a commendation to Jon and Judy Tremellen for being named the 2010 Worcester County Foster Parents of the Year by Social Services for their efforts to help bring support and stability back into the lives of foster children during times of crisis.

The Commissioners presented a commendation to Health Officer Debbie Goeller in

recognition of the Health Department earning the 2009-2010 Maryland Partnership for Prevention H1N1 Immunization Excellence Award for the County's overall response to the H1N1 pandemic, including vaccinating nearly 25% of residents. Also in attendance were Assistant Health Officer Dr. Andrea Mathias and Health Department staff members Debra Stevens, Robyn Tytomi-Dalton, Heather Barton, Marty Pusey and Jane Apson, each of whom served in significant roles in the command structure for the H1N1 response.

Pursuant to the request of Housing Program Administrator Jo Ellen Bynum and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously approved bid specifications for the general rehabilitation of a single family home located in the Stockton area, using State Special Loans Program (SSLP) funds and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Pursuant to the request of Tourism Director Lisa Challenger and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Church to sign the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, Inc. Grant Agreement, awarding grant funds of \$1,000 to Worcester County to be used for website and map design and printing for the soon to be developed Assateague Water Trails at Ayres Creek. Ms. Challenger advised that the total project expenses for the development of the Assateague Water Trails are as follows: \$15,000 for Technical Assistance; \$8,000 for kayak/canoe launch plans; \$15,000 for kayak/canoe launch site survey; \$49,000 for kayak/canoe launch construction; \$3,000 for water trail map and guide design; \$3,000 water trail website design; \$1,000 for a two-to-three-minute video on YouTube and linked to the website to showcase paddling opportunities on the trails; and \$9,000 for the printing of 50,000 copies of the water trail map on waterproof paper. Ms. Challenger advised that the Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources will fund the majority of project costs, and no County cash match is required.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Recreation and Parks Director Sharon DeMar Reilly and the Worcester County Recreation Advisory Board and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended FY2011 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 stated that the County will be awarded \$172,000 for FY11; however, the funds will not be available until FY13. Ms. Reilly stressed that this is only a plan and can be amended accordingly based on available funding. In response to a question by Commissioner Boggs, Ms. Reilly advised that the Town of Ocean City and other towns apply for Community Parks and Playground grant funding and other grants to attempt to secure funding for recreation projects. In response to a question by Commissioner Busick, Ms. Reilly stated that public water and sewer service would be needed to develop a restroom facility at Showell Park. She further confirmed that maintenance issues at that location have been addressed.

Pursuant to the request of Ms. Reilly and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to lend pole vault mats, high jump mats and 20 hurdles to

Snow Hill High School (SHHS) and Stephen Decatur High School (SDHS) to be used for their track and field programs as follows: pole vault and 10 hurdles to SDHS; and high jump mats and 10 hurdles to SHHS. Ms. Reilly stated that the equipment is worn and no longer meets the new recreation standards for use during track and field meets. However, the equipment is still useful for team practices.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Finance Officer Harold Higgins and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Church to sign the Worcester County and Town of Ocean City Property Tax Collection Agreement, in which the County agrees to collect property taxes on behalf of the Town of Ocean City.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Higgins and upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to schedule a public hearing to receive public comment on the Worcester County Solid Waste Enterprise Fund FY2010/2011 Requested Operating Budget on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. and the Worcester County Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund FY2010/2011 Requested Budgets and Assessments on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 at 1:40 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room in Snow Hill.

The Commissioners met with Public Works Director John Tustin and Solid Waste Superintendent George Dix to review the recommendations of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for the proposed FY2011 Solid Waste & Recycling Division budgets as follows: support the proposed budget as submitted; all yard waste be brought to the Central Landfill for processing, thereby eliminating the Berlin and Pocomoke Homeowner Transfer Stations from accepting yard waste; reduce the tipping fee for Yard Waste at the Central Landfill from \$65.00 per ton to \$35.00 per ton; and continue to promote recycling within the County and conduct semi-annual Household Hazardous Waste programs. Mr. Tustin advised that yard waste is currently disposed of at the Berlin rubblefill, which is scheduled to be capped in the near future, and the Pocomoke Transfer Station where a small space dedicated to yard waste makes it difficult to maneuver vehicles safely. For these reasons, Mr. Tustin concurred with the proposed recommendations. Commissioner Church stated that yard waste will be dumped in remote areas of the County and along the roadside if the County ceases to accept such waste at the Berlin and Pocomoke Transfer Stations. Commissioner Cowger concurred, adding that a lot of yard waste would blow off of trailers on their way to the Central Landfill too. Mr. Tustin stated that lawn maintenance contractors must now bring their yard waste to the Central Landfill, but many are dumping at the transfer stations, claiming it's their own personal yard waste and verbally abusing the landfill attendants when questioned about it. Commissioner Cowger stated that such users should be reported to Department of Public Works Administration for action. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Busick, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Boggs voting in opposition, to continue accepting yard waste at the Pocomoke Transfer Station and the Berlin Rubblefill until such time that this location is capped. Mr. Tustin noted that the proposal to lower the tipping fees was contingent upon discontinuing the collection of yard waste at the Berlin Rubblefill and Pocomoke Transfer Station. Following some discussion, the Commissioners agreed to consider the proposed tipping fees during the

budget process.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid which met all specifications for the purchase of a twelve-passenger, two-wheelchair bus with gasoline engine for use by the Health Department to Colonial Equipment of Monrovia, Maryland at a total delivered price of \$45,846 plus the electric controlled and heated exterior mirrors for an additional \$865 for a total cost of \$46,711. Mr. Tustin advised that the vehicle will be delivered within 12 to 16 weeks.

The Commissioners conducted a public hearing in connection with the issuance by the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority of its tax exempt obligations for the benefit of Educational Media Foundation (EMF), a nonprofit organization based in California, in the aggregate principal amount of \$21,000,000 to operate a non-commercial radio station from a tower in Bishopville, Maryland. Economic Development Director Jerry Redden stated that the project will not result in any new jobs locally, but does offer other benefits to the area, including the direct broadcast of educational programs, extensive promotion of cultural and charitable opportunities and sponsorship of and partnership with a wide variety of local and national nonprofit groups to advance community improvements. Mr. Redden advised that EMF will also offer public affairs programming, contemporary Christian music, public service announcements and off-the-air personal counseling by phone to listeners in the surrounding areas of Bishopville and Fenwick Island, Delaware. In response to a question by Commissioner Church, Mr. Redden confirmed that EMF would not be competing with local radio stations for advertising dollars. In accordance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines, the tax-exempt bond application requires local government approval, since the broadcasting tower is located in Worcester County.

Commissioner Church opened the floor to receive public comment.

In response to a question by Ellie Diegelman of Ocean City, Mr. Redden confirmed that support of the proposed resolution does not obligate Worcester County to provide financial support for the project and there is no cost to the County.

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

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Gulyas, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution No. 10-16 giving applicable elected representative approval in connection with the issuance of tax exempt obligations by the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority for the EMF non-commercial radio station.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Busick, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid from Bunting and Murray Construction of Selbyville, Delaware for the construction of water and sewer lines and a pump station to extend water and sewer service from the Ocean Pines Sanitary Service Area (OPSSA) to Showell Elementary School (SES) at a cost of \$1,153,833.51. Mr. Tustin advised the Commissioners that \$1,311,000 has been designated for the extension of sewer service to SES although the initial project was proposed for sewer service only. Adding the construction cost to the cost of engineering, inspections and charges for water and sewer equivalent dwelling units

(EDUs) for capacity brings the total project cost to \$1,837,845.51, resulting in a funding shortfall of approximately \$527,000 since water service was added to the project on June 16, 2009. Mr. Tustin suggested that either the water portion of the project could be postponed or the EDUs, costing \$519,012, could be paid to the OPSSA over time. Commissioner Church stated that it would be best to install both water and sewer at the same time and repay the EDUs over time. The Commissioners concurred.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tustin to review the four timely bids and to consider two late bids for the replacement of roof shingles at the Worcester County Senior Center in Ocean City. Mr. Tustin stated that the apparent low bid from KADE Construction, Inc. of Ocean Pines in the amount of \$22,941.00 did not include specified products and was not based on the correct quantity of materials required to complete the work. He stated that the next low bid was from Munro Building Services, LLC of Berlin, Maryland at a base bid price of \$41,360.00 plus the alternate at \$3,500.00 to cover 100% of the roof with ice and water shield for a combined total price of \$44,860.00, and he recommended award of this bid. In response to a question by Commissioner Busick, Mr. Tustin stated that while KADE later submitted a revised bid, it was submitted after the other bids had been opened and, therefore, could not be accepted. Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Kelly Shannahan advised that two late bids were received for this project. The first was delivered to the Court House and had been time stamped at 11:00 a.m. (2 hours in advance of the bid deadline), but was not delivered to County Administration until after the 1:00 p.m. bid opening. The second was delivered by mail at 1:50 p.m. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shockley, the Commissioners unanimously rejected the late bid received at 1:50 p.m., but authorized staff to open the bid that was delivered to the Court House by 11:00 a.m. Upon opening, the Commissioners noted that the bid was from SGK Contracting of Baltimore, Maryland at a base cost of \$50,000, and an alternate of \$6,000 to cover 100% of the roof with ice and water shield for a combined cost of \$56,000. Upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid which met all specifications for the roof replacement project to Munro Building Services, LLC at a total project cost of \$44,860.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners unanimously recognized Pritchett Controls and Service Manager Don Reynolds, formerly of Absolute Cooling & Heating (ACH), LLC, as the sole source provider for professional services and mechanical repair in his new capacity with Pritchett Controls, Inc. Mr. Tustin advised that during the past several years, Public Works has utilized the professional services and technical expertise of Mr. Reynolds through ACH to troubleshoot recurring HVAC mechanical, electrical and automated control issues that other HVAC service vendors could not resolve. Mr. Tustin advised that by recognizing Pritchett Controls and Mr. Reynolds as the sole source provider the County will not have to pay labor costs to retrain a new vendor who is unfamiliar with County-owned buildings.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tustin to review the recent results of the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) Tonnage Reporting Survey FORM A - County Solid Waste Accounting Form for 2009. Mr. Tustin stated that the report illustrates that Worcester County has a 30.14% recycling rate, which is down slightly from the 2008 rate of 34.1%. He stated that the 2009 rate

is expected to decline by about 3%-4% next year, since the Town of Ocean City has contracted with a private company for the removal of waste (with 72% of the resort's waste proposed to be converted to waste energy and another 27% to be deposited in an out-of-state landfill). In response to a Comment by Commissioner Gulyas, Mr. Tustin confirmed that the recycling station in Ocean City is no longer operating, but resort residents could bring their recyclables to County bins at the WalMart on US Rt. 50 in Berlin. Commissioner Cowger recommended installing a recycling bin at the West Ocean City Park and Ride. Mr. Tustin agreed to inquire as to whether Ocean City officials would approve such use. Commissioner Shockley pointed out that recycled farm products account for a large percentage of the recycled materials in Worcester County.

Liquor Control Board (LCB) Chairman Don Hastings, member Joseph A. Jackson and LCB Executive Director Brian Sturgeon presented the Commissioners with the Fiscal Year 2011 LCB budget. Mr. Hastings thanked the Commissioners for meeting with them. Mr. Jackson reviewed budgeted revenues and expenses, noting the LCB's revenues were projected to increase by \$50,000 in the upcoming fiscal year. He stated that the LCB is operating at a 3% profit margin and projects to generate a net income of \$477,962 in FY11. Mr. Jackson stated that the LCB significantly decreased payroll costs during FY10 and expects to do so again in FY11. Following some discussion, the Commissioners thanked the LCB for their presentation.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Gulyas voting in opposition, to declare their intent to exempt the Mystic Harbour Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) project from the provisions of the Worcester County Zoning and Subdivision Control Article as a County project under the provisions of Section ZS 1-104(d). In accordance with the code, this request will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for comment and returned with the proposed resolution for exemption of this project for the Commissioners' review at a future meeting. Mr. Tustin stated that full compliance with the Code, as it relates to the required setbacks, is not possible because of site constraints, the location of existing utilities and the location of existing buildings constructed under a previous set of regulations. For example, he stated that replacement of the existing Pump Station A is causing problems due to its location at the intersection of two gravity sewer lines on a site where current zoning setbacks cannot be met when constructing the new facility.

The Commissioners met with Development Review and Permitting Director Ed Tudor to review the Nuisance Abatement request for an abandoned property located at 3883 West Hills Drive near Snow Hill and identified on Tax Map 46, Parcel 71, Lot 2. Mr. Tudor stated that the specific conditions found on the property include the overgrowth of rank vegetation, a junk vehicle, accumulation of personal property in excess of 100 square feet and accumulation of household trash or junk causing or threatening to cause inhabitation of rats, mice, snakes, etc., all of which constitutes not only a public health nuisance but a condition prejudicial to property values in the County. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shockley, the Commissioners unanimously declared the property a public nuisance and ordered the abatement of such nuisance by May 21, 2010 pursuant to Section PH 1-102 of the County code.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tudor and upon a motion by Commissioner Busick, the Commissioners unanimously approved the County's match of \$300,000 from the Rural Legacy Program (RLP) Grant for the Maryland Coastal Bays Program's (MCBP) National Estuary Program (NEP) grant for October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011. Mr. Tudor advised that the County has been awarded \$1 million in RLP funds for easement purchases in the Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area (RLA), and the use of these funds to constitute the local match for the NEP grant for MCBP is an accepted practice. Mr. Tudor concluded that the County will not be required to make a cash match.

The Commissioners recessed until 11:30 a.m.

The Commissioners met with Project Manager Jamaica Arnold, Assistant Division Chief Nicole Washington and Project Engineer Kenya Lucas of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) State Highway Administration (SHA) to review the consensus that has been reached between the SHA, Town of Ocean City officials and County Commissioners with regard to Alternative 5A (a north parallel bridge with a 30' high draw span) or 5C (the same design with an 18' high draw span) for replacement of the US Rt. 50 bridge crossing into Ocean City. Ms. Arnold stated that since the Town of Ocean City and County Commissioners have reached a consensus on the proposed replacement bridge, SHA officials would like to cancel the informational workshop that was planned for June 3, 2010. Upon a motion by Commissioner Boggs, the Commissioners unanimously concurred with the SHA's recommendation to cancel the workshop and to apply the funds that would have been spent thereon toward the remaining aspects of this study and design.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to reconvene at 7:00 p.m. for the FY2010/2011 Requested County Operating Budget Public Hearing at Snow Hill High School.

The Commissioners held a public hearing at Snow Hill High School on the FY2010/2011 Requested County Operating Budgets. Commission President Church called the meeting to order. Finance Officer Harold Higgins presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the FY2010/2011 Requested Operating Budgets, which included the following graphs and information: General Fund Estimated Revenues and Expenditures; General Fund Comparison FY09-FY11; General Fund Expenditure Comparison FY09-FY11; County Commissioners' Actions to reduce expenditures in FY2009 and FY2010 Budgets; County Commissioners' Actions to reduce FY2011 Budget Requests; FY09-FY11 Comparison Revenues and Expenditures; FY2010 Real Property and Income Tax Rates; and upcoming Budget Work Sessions. Mr. Higgins explained that the County's estimated revenues are \$160,665,859, and the requested expenditures are \$165,578,241, resulting in a difference (shortfall) of \$4,912,382, which must be reconciled either through reductions in expenditures, the creation of additional revenues, or both. Mr. Higgins explained that the Constant Yield Tax Rate (CYTR) represents the property tax rate that would generate the same amount of revenues the County received in the current fiscal year. He noted that in February the State informed Worcester County that in order

to fully offset the effect of decreasing assessments, the real property tax rate would need to be increased from the current tax rate of \$0.70 per \$100 of assessment to the CYTR of \$0.7348, although the County Commissioners are not proposing such a tax increase.

Commissioner Church opened the floor to receive public comment.

Kevin O’Keeffe, attorney for Meringer, Zois & Quigg of Baltimore, Maryland representing Vendomatic, requested the Commissioners to consider eliminating or reducing the current license fee of \$25.00 for coin operated vending machines selling products between \$0.25 and \$0.49 and the license fee of \$30.00 for each machine selling articles of \$0.50 or more during the upcoming budget cycle. He stated that the machines draw revenues of only \$15 to \$16 per month and the fees account for roughly 17% of the annual revenues. Mr. O’Keeffe further explained that during the 2009 Maryland General Assembly, the legislature repealed the State fee of \$2.50 per bulk vending machine. He thanked the Commissioners for their consideration.

Don Goletz, President of Vendomatic located in Clarksburg, Maryland, stated that vendors supplying food and drink machines are charged only one licensing fee in many counties, while in Worcester County he is charged a per machine fee. He also advised that no other Maryland county charges individual license fees for bulk vending machines, and he asked the Commissioners to repeal the County’s fee during upcoming budget deliberations.

Harold Scrimgeour of Stockton stated that the County spends about \$200,000 to educate each k-12 grade student, but upon graduation there are no jobs to keep these youth in the County. He asked the Commissioners to focus on economic development and job growth to provide the next generation with the means to remain in Worcester County. He thanked the Commissioners for restructuring Development Review and Permitting (DRP), Comprehensive Planning, and Environmental Programs during the last budget cycle, but stated that more changes must be made to make the County more friendly to growth and development.

Ellie Diegelman of Ocean City asked the Commissioners to consider privatizing various aspects of DRP, cut taxes and avoid new taxes.

John Medlin questioned the need for security at the Court House and Government Center and stated that funds to pay Sheriff’s Deputies to guard these two buildings could be spent more wisely elsewhere.

Lorraine Purnell-Ayres of Snow Hill raised questions regarding whether funds for housing federal detainees at the Worcester County Jail could be used to offset operating costs for the new addition to this facility.

Reverend George Tasker of Pocomoke spoke on behalf of the Samaritan Shelter and Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, Inc. (WYFC). He expressed appreciation for the Commissioners’ past dedication to funding non-profits and asked them to continue doing so in the upcoming budget cycle. He advised that County grants are used as matching funds to secure Federal and State grants to help the poor and most vulnerable in the community. He prayed the Commissioners would continue to fund these needed services.

Teresa Fields, Executive Director of Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services (WYFCS), thanked the Commissioners in advance for funding grants to WYFCS in FY11. She stated that last year County funding was used to complete renovations on a 7,000-square-foot Community Connections building that is used for daycare, training and a respite area. She stated that grant funds also helped cover vital programs, including mental health, Strengthening Adolescent Girls with Education and Support (SAGES), Court Appointed Special Advocate

(CASA), in-home support to vulnerable citizens and much more. She further advised that County funding helps WYFCS leverage public and private funding as well to fund these needed programs. She stated that recently WYFCS was notified of State and Federal funding cuts, but that Worcester County has continued to faithfully fund WYFCS programs to protect the most vulnerable in the community, and she asked the Commissioners to continue making this essential investment into the lives of the needy in years to come.

Lori Carson, WYFCS Family Connections Director in Berlin and Pocomoke, stated that WYFCS is a resource center for the impoverished, unemployed and under-educated and provided basic life-sustaining items, such as food and clothing, and helped cover the cost of utilities for over 2,000 families last year. She stated that County funding played a large role in WYFCS's ability to provide these services, and asked the Commissioners to support these programs again this year.

Donna Taylor, WYFCS Systems Navigator in Berlin read a letter of appreciation from a woman whose entire family was assisted by WYFCS with housing, utility assistance, home furnishings, food and clothing. She stated that her children had been temporarily taken from the home due to the inability of her and her husband to provide for them. However, with the assistance of WYFCS Family Connections, the couple was able to meet all the conditions set by the court system to regain custody of their children. In her letter, she asked the Commissioners to continue assisting this lifesaving organization.

Stephanie Taylor, WYFCS Board of Directors member and volunteer stated that WYFCS conducts workshops at Pocomoke Elementary School (PES), where 64% of the student population live at or below the poverty rate. She stated that it would be a travesty to lose this vital program in such a high need area due to a lack of funding.

Katherine Smith, Director of WYFCS SAGES, stated that grant funding allows at-risk girls to participate in a two-year program that provides them with comprehensive, emotional and education support. She read a letter written by a SAGES participant who was physically and sexually abused by her father but is learning to trust again and discover her own self worth thanks to the caring people who head up the program and provide her with counseling. In her letter, the young girl asked God to bless those who helped her to overcome her fears and insecurities. Ms. Smith asked the Commissioners to continue funding SAGES to assure that young girls like this one have a safe place to grow.

Candice Strand, a youth participating in the SAGES program, stated that SAGES has helped her learn to build her character, make wise choices and learn to respect others. She stated that SAGES provides her with a safe place to go after school, and she asked the Commissioners to continue their support of this program.

KC Thomas, a youth participating in the SAGES program, stated that without SAGES she would be sitting home alone after school doing nothing. She stated that it is an honor to be part of a program that helps young girls become smarter and stronger, and she asked the Commissioners to continue funding the program next year.

Brigitte Saulsbury, Director of WYFC CASA stated that funds donated to CASA are used to train volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children in the court system. She stated that the volunteers are then able to help place these children in safe homes, speak for them in court and much more. She stated that 39 volunteers advocated for 48 children last year, and advised that County funding is matched dollar for dollar by the court system. She asked the

Commissioners to provide grant funding to help them continue to provide this service in the upcoming fiscal year.

Megan Kerrigan, WYFCS Administrative Assistant, read a letter from a volunteer asking the Commissioners and those in attendance at the hearing to picture themselves as a child in the court system who has been hustled between 11 different foster homes in six years, hasn't seen her siblings or parents in that same time period and has no friends or stable school because she is constantly on the move. The volunteer letter then went on to explain that CASA volunteers are often the only constant in the life of a child like this one and asked the Commissioners to continue financially supporting this program.

Ed Battisfore, WYFCS CASA volunteer, thanked the Commissioners for taking the time to listen to the requests of WYFCS workers and volunteers. He stated that he is one of the 39 CASA volunteers, and that he would continue to advocate for children even if program funding was discontinued. However, he stated that funding was vital to provide proper training to program volunteers who are tasked with standing in the gap for children who are hurting. He stated that children involved in the CASA program have asked him questions like, "why don't my mommy and daddy love me anymore?" and worse, "why did my mommy and daddy let their friend hurt my body?" He stated that CASA volunteers listen. To hurting children, CASA volunteers represent unconditional acceptance and innocence restored. They are moved by pity and moved to action. They do not back down or give up on the children they represent. He stated that a CASA volunteer's appointment may come from the court, but the calling comes from the heart, and he asked the Commissioners to continue funding this vital program, noting the famous quote by Irish political philosopher Edmond Burke that, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Christy McGurgan, WYFCS Therapist in Berlin, stated that WYFCS provides individual and family therapy for those in need and read a letter written by a 29-year-old woman whose heroin addiction caused her to lose her son for a time. In the letter, she wrote that thanks to WYFCS that relationship is now being restored, and she asked the Commissioners to continue funding WYFCS to give others like her a second chance.

Carolyn Cordial, WYFCS Clinical and Assistant Director, stated that WYFC is able to do amazing things with the available funding. She stated that thanks to the support of the Commissioners, WYFC can say "yes" when a single mom struggling to recover from a heroin addiction calls for help or a struggling family needs assistance for food and utilities. She stated that WYFC counselors work with educators to assist children and their families, and that WYFC represents a safe place where families can become whole. She asked the Commissioners to please do what is right. Please continue to support WYFC and the work that we do.

Joanne Freeding of the Worcester County Developmental Center (WCDC) thanked the Commissioners for their continued support of the WCDC. She stated that State funding to the WCDC decreased by 7% this year. As a result, the staff of WCDC chose to freeze hiring, cut vacant positions and reduce operating costs wherever possible to protect programs to the vulnerable adults they serve. She stated that County funding is a critical need to help them continue to serve these adults.

Brenda Dingwall, Executive Director of Camp Agape in Easton, stated that Camp Agape serves children whose parents are incarcerated, and the cost is \$400 per week, per camper. She stated that children whose parents are incarcerated are 70% more likely than their peers to be

incarcerated within five years. However, Camp Agape provides year-round services, including doctors, social workers, and others, to children from the surrounding counties and has played a large role in dramatically reducing the incarceration rate of the children they serve. She stated that it costs \$400 per week for a child to attend camp, but it costs \$2,300 to keep them in jail. Ms. Dingwall stated that Camp Agape is asking each of the lower Eastern Shore counties to provide a grant of \$10,000 to help fund the program.

Ellie Diegelman of Ocean City stated that the County shouldn't be spending \$354,000 annually on un-manned boat docks and stated that there should be room to dramatically decrease this cost. In response to her comments, Chief Administrative Officer Gerald T. Mason stated that these are grant funds, not County funds, and are secured to cover the cost of repairs at various boat docks throughout the County.

Dr. Jon Andes, Superintendent of Schools for Worcester County, stated that with the support of the Commissioners over the years, Worcester County has become one of the top academically performing schools in Maryland. He announced that U.S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan cited Worcester County as the top performing rural school system in Maryland, which is the top academically performing state in the nation. Dr. Andes concluded that this makes Worcester County one of the top performing school districts in the country. He went on to thank the Commissioners for their past support and reviewed the various achievements of Worcester County public school schools and the students. He asked the Commissioners to fund the BOE at the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) level to help keep schools strong.

Michelle Schachter, of Bishopville and a parent volunteer at Showell Elementary School (SES) and member of the Berlin Intermediate School (BIS) School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC), thanked the Commissioners for their long-standing commitment to the students and asked them to consider funding MOE, while together they all pray for better economic times.

Steven Kremer of Snow Hill Elementary School (SHES) SIAC thanked the Commissioners for going above and beyond MOE in prior years to make education a priority. He stated that, as a NASA employee, it is his goal to inspire the next generation, but that message must be communicated in the schools to support the students. He stated that Worcester County public schools cannot continue to maintain their competitive edge with MOE funding on a long-term basis and looks forward to additional support in the future to maintain exceptional schools.

Terry Springle, representing the 600 members of the Worcester County Teachers Association (WCTA), thanked the Commissioners for their commitment to funding education. He stated that the WCTA members understand the unique economic times the County is facing and realize that everyone must do his or her part, which is why the WCTA agreed to a contract that provides no increase in pay or cost of living adjustment for the second year in a row to avoid furloughs and layoffs. He asked the Commissioners to fund the MOE budget for FY11, and to remember all the patient and dedicated employees when the economy does turn around. He also asked the Commissioners to give BOE flexibility within their own budget to determine how to fund education.

Gerald Shockley of the Snow Hill High School (SHHS) SIAC thanked the Commissioners for supporting Worcester County public schools, which has allowed students to shine in the academic arena. He stated that the Commissioners support of education showed

when US News and World Report recently named SHHS a Silver School. He stated that during these challenging economic times, the school is simply asking the Commissioners to support the proposed MOE budget.

Gary Williams of the Berlin Intermediate School (BIS) SIAC thanked the Commissioners for working together with the BOE to make the educational system work so well for the students. He stated that BIS developed a budget that will help maintain the schools, but in the future MOE funding will not allow Worcester County students to remain competitive in the marketplace and asked the Commissioners to give the students what they need to succeed.

Miriam Price, President of the Cedar Chapel Special School (CCSS) SIAC, thanked the Commissioners for their past support, acknowledged that the County is facing challenging economic times, and asked them to fund the MOE budget this year. She stated that it is her hope that the Commissioners will be able to meet the budgetary needs of the schools in the future.

Marilyn James, of Ocean City, expressed her thanks to the Commissioners for their support of Ocean City Elementary School (OCES), and she asked them to fund the requested MOE budget. She cautioned that in the future Worcester County will not be able to maintain its position as a top academically performing school system on a MOE budget.

Ginger Gillis, of the Worcester Technical High School (WTHS) SIAC stated her thanks to the Commissioners for the future career possibilities that now exist for students thanks to the programs available at the new WTHS. She invited those in attendance to discover for themselves all that the school has to offer, including the new pre-engineering program. She stated that the school needs another math teacher and asked the Commissioners to fund the requested MOE budget.

Lori Trattner of the Stephen Decatur Middle School (SDMS) SIAC asked the Commissioners to fund the requested MOE budget. She stated that SDMS teachers and staff work very hard and strive to live within their means. She stated that the MOE budget would help Worcester County continue to hire the best and brightest in the field of education.

Kevin Kirstein of the Stephen Decatur High School (SDHS) SIAC stated how important education has been to his career as an Ocean City Police Department Captain. He stated that this year he comes to the Commissioners, not with pickets, petitions and banners, but with thanks for everything they have done for the schools over the years. He stated that, hopefully, the Commissioners will find a way to support the BOE's MOE budget this year, and in future years find the funds to cover the growing needs of the schools. He then asked everyone in the audience to rise and show their appreciation to the Commissioners.

Terri Batze of the Snow Hill Middle School (SHMS) SIAC stated that SHMS was named a Maryland Blue Ribbon School of Excellence thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Commissioners, BOE, parents and community, and stated that the Commissioners' future support is needed to maintain outstanding schools.

Karen Prengaman of Buckingham Elementary School (BES) SIAC stated that she understands these are hard economic times, but reminded the Commissioners that their support makes a big difference in the quality of schools in Worcester County. She thanked them for their support and asked them to fund the MOE budget as presented.

Rick Barton of the Showell Elementary School (SES) SIAC thanked the Commissioners for their ongoing support of education. He stated that he is proud to live in Worcester County where education is highly valued, and he asked the Commissioners to fund the BOE's MOE

budget as presented. He concluded by thanking the Commissioners for proceeding with the project to extend public water and sewer service to SES.

Ellie Diegelman of Ocean City stated that she supports the schools but is forced to take the unpopular position of requesting the Commissioners submit a MOE waiver request to the State. In response to Ms. Diegelman, County Attorney Sonny Bloxom stated that the deadline to file for the MOE waiver has already passed. In response to a question by Ms. Diegelman, Chief Administrative Officer Gerald T. Mason stated that the County should be able to fund MOE and, therefore, did not need to file for the waiver. Ms. Diegelman stated that the County should have filed for the waiver, regardless of need, to stand in solidarity with other counties and the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), and she requested the Commissioners proceed with filing the MOE waiver regardless of the deadline. She stated that the Commissioners are elected to represent the taxpayers of Worcester County, not Dr. Andes. She stated that all other County departments and agencies cut their budgets by 10% or more, while the BOE reduced its budget by only 0.6%. She recommended across the board cuts to all departments, including the BOE and requested the County and BOE, implement furlough days and refuse to fund Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), and also cut employee benefits.

Heather Gladding of Pocomoke Elementary School (PES) SIAC thanked the Commissioners for their support of the schools. She stated that PES is thankful for the level funding again this year, and stated that next year the school will need even more. She stated that today PES was named a Panasonic National Change School, and as such has been awarded more than \$5,000 in Panasonic products and will be invited to a ceremony in New York City this July. She stated that PES is the first school in Maryland to receive this recognition.

Tommy Tucker of Snow Hill stated that the Commissioners have done a tremendous job funding education over the past 30 years, and the school system should be commended for doing more with less. However, his primary concern centers on economic development opportunities to assure that career jobs are available on the Eastern Shore to seniors and college graduates.

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

Commissioner Church thanked everyone for their comments, noting that many touched on the fact that the County is facing a difficult budget year, and it is not much fun tackling budget deficits, especially after years in which the biggest dilemma was how to use surplus funds. He stated that the Commissioners will do their best to approve a budget that benefits all, and invited them to attend the Commissioners' budget work session on May 11, 2010.

The board adjourned to meet again on May 18, 2010.