

## Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

May 9, 2017

Madison J. Bunting, Jr., President  
Diana Purnell, Vice President  
Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.  
James C. Church  
Theodore J. Elder  
Merrill W. Lockfaw, Jr.  
Joseph M. Mitrecic

The Commissioners met with Chief Administrative Officer Harold Higgins to discuss issues pertaining to the FY18 Requested Operating Budget.

The Commissioners deliberated on the projected revenues and requested expenditures in the Committee Reviewed FY17 Operating Budget, which currently reflects estimated revenues of \$198,932,675 and expenditures of \$198,926,936, with \$5,739 surplus. Mr. Higgins reviewed additional information requested by the Commissioners during their budget work sessions in March and April along with additional requests that has been included in the requested expenditures by department as follows: Maryland Division of Corrections prison vacancies; State Aid from Highway User Revenues (HUR), Capital Grants, and Local Health Department contractual health insurance funds; Commission on Aging (COA) programs and services; Wor-Wic Community College (WWCC) requested approval for capital repair project plan and contingency fund; Board of Education (BOE) member allowance increase; Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce; and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase of an additional 0.5%; BOE request of 1%.

The Commissioners reviewed requested expenditures by department.

With regard to the County Commissioners, the Commissioners eliminated the \$7,700 in requested funding for Account No. 6100.090 Supplies & Equipment for Computers and Printers, which were proposed to purchase laptops for the Commissioners, with the Commissioners expressing appreciation but noting the funds could be better spent elsewhere.

With regard to the Volunteer Fire Departments, Mr. Higgins advised that funding had been increased within the following accounts: Account No. 7080.010 Fire & Ambulance Grant, establishing a new floor at \$250,000, to increase the minimum payment to each fire company by \$15,000; and Account No. 7080.020 Fire and Ambulance County Grant to Ambulance Companies by \$246,000 based on an adjustment from full-time positions to full-time position equivalents.

With regard to Other Social Services, the Commissioners made the following adjustments:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7090.010 State Pass-Through Grant to Diakonia for \$107,391.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously approved

funding to Account No. 7090.020 State Pass-Through Grant to Samaritan Shelter for \$28,151.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7090.030 State Pass-Through Grant to Social Services for \$40,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Bertino and Bunting voting in opposition, to increase funding to Account No. 7100.010 County Grants to Atlantic General Hospital (AGH) by \$100,000 as a one-time Capital Campaign Grant and to approve the annual grant of \$75,000 for a total grant allocation of \$175,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.017 County Grants to Big Brothers/Big Sisters for \$1,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.020 County Grants to BRAVE Program for \$3,500.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.xxx County Grants to Coastal Hospice at the Ocean for \$10,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.023 County Grants to the Cricket Center for \$10,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.030 County Grants to the Worcester County Developmental Center (WCDC) for \$219,497.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.035 County Grants to Diakonia for \$45,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.040 County Grants to Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council for \$9,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.075 County Grants to Hartley Hall for \$11,250.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Church and Mitrecic voting in opposition, to approve the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.076 County Grants to the Worcester County Humane Society (WCHS) of \$0.00. Commissioner Mitrecic stated that the Commissioners should provide some level of funding to the WCHS, which provides a needed service in northern Worcester, thus reducing funding, staffing, and space demands that would otherwise be placed on Animal Control. Commissioner Bertino stated that allocating funding to the WCHS would amount to duplication of services, as the Animal Control Division of the Sheriff's Office provides these services Countywide. Commissioner Bunting stated that, while he felt that the grants to nonprofit agencies should be cut by 10%, since these agencies should be self-sufficient, the Commissioners as a body had previously agreed not to accept any new nonprofit funding requests.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.077 County Grants to Jessee Klump Memorial Fund, Inc. for \$1,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.085 County Grants to the Life Crisis Center for \$8,500.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with

Commissioners Mitrecic and Purnell voting in opposition to approve funding to Account No. 7100.100 County Grants to the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) for \$1,500. Commissioner Mitrecic stated that the MFB distributed more than 800,000 pounds of food in Worcester County last year, with that food feeding the County's most vulnerable populations, and for that reason the County should increase the grant funding to MFB. Commissioner Purnell concurred.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.120 County Grants to Oasis Ministries for \$9,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously decreased funding to Account No. 7100.155 County Grants to the Salvation Army of the Lower Eastern Shore from \$9,000 to \$2,000. An early motion by Commissioner Elder to decrease funding to this account by \$6,000 failed for lack of a second.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.160 County Grants to the Samaritan Shelter for \$20,000. An earlier motion by Commissioner Lockfaw to increase funding to this account to \$30,000 failed 3-4, with Commissioners Church, Lockfaw, and Mitrecic voting in favor of the motion and Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, Elder, and Purnell voting in opposition.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.165 County Grants to Save the Youth Program for \$18,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.175 County Grants to Social Services Pharmacy Grant for \$15,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.210 County Grants to Worcester County GOLD (Giving Other Lives Dignity) for \$9,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.220 County Grants to Worcester Youth and Family Counseling for \$91,710.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.225 County Grants to Town Cats, Inc. of \$0.00, as this is a new request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7130.005 Matching Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Appropriation for \$28,871.

With regard to Wor-Wic Community College (WWCC), upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7120.040 Other Non-Matching Exp. Appropriation for WWCC for \$2,145,342.

With regard to the Board of Education (BOE), upon a motion by Commissioner Elder the Commissioners unanimously approved the BOE requested budget of \$84,513,676, as proposed in the Committee Reviewed FY18 Operating Budget.

With regard to the Recreation Department, upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$1,075,336.

With regard to the Parks Department, upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$471,161, which includes the reassignment of revenues and expenditures for Boat Ramps from the Maintenance

Division of Public Works.

With regard to the County Library, upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$2,459,087.

With regard to Other Recreation and Culture, the Commissioners made the following adjustments:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.008 Art League of Ocean City for \$20,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.050 Furnace Town for \$30,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.060 Girdletree Foundation for \$0.00 for this new request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.090 Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Foundation for \$0.00 for this new request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.092 Lower Shore Land Trust for \$0.00 for this new request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners voted 4-2-1, with Commissioners Church, Lockfaw, Mitrecic and Purnell voting in favor of the motion, Commissioners Bertino and Bunting voting in opposition, and Commissioner Elder abstaining, to increase the funding to the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.095 to the Marva Theatre from \$0.00 to \$15,000 for this new request to convert existing equipment from 35 millimeter projectors to costly digital projectors to comply with changes in the film industry. Commissioner Lockfaw stated that the Marva Theatre, which generates tourism in Pocomoke, is largely self-sufficient, but that this vital organization could be forced to close without help from the Commissioners now to replace this costly equipment. Commissioner Elder concurred and stated that, if the Commissioners had agreed to make cuts elsewhere, he could have supported this funding request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.115 Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce for \$0.00 for this new request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Committee Reviewed budget for Account No. 7100.116 O.C. Development Corporation for \$0.00, as this funding request is now included within the Grants to Towns.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners voted 4-3, with Commissioners Church, Lockfaw, Mitrecic, and Purnell voting in favor of the motion and Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, and Elder voting in opposition, to approve funding to Account No. 7100.135 Pocomoke Marketing Partnership - Delmarva Discovery Center (DDC) for \$40,500. Commissioner Bertino stated that the DDC leadership has established a pattern of prefacing each year's budget request with the assurance that there will be no future requests for funding, and he stated that the DDC should not continue to rely on County grants to fund operating costs. Commissioner Church stated that, while the south end of the County lacks the financial resources that allow nonprofit organizations in the northern end to thrive, the new DDC

director has made critical facility improvements and has secured long-term donors to help the DDC become self-sufficient in future years, and for those reasons he is willing to support the FY18 grant request.

With regard to Extension Services, upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$176,170.

With regard to Other Natural Resources, upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$503,496.

With regard to Economic Development, upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$408,559.

With regard to Tourism, upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$1,150,213.

With regard to Taxes Shared with Towns, upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Mitrecic voting in opposition, to approve the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$17,335,070.

With regard to Grants to Towns, the Commissioners made the following adjustments:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.028 Ocean Pines Association (OPA) Recreation Conditional Grant for \$10,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.008 OPA Tourism Conditional Grant for \$10,000. A prior motion by Commissioner Purnell to approve the request and a subsequent motion by Commissioner Elder to reduce the request to \$6,000 both failed for lack of seconds.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.065 County Grants to Towns for Police for \$464,500.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.153 County Grants Restricted Fire Grant for \$486,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding to Account No. 7100.192 County Grants for Tourism to Towns for \$50,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Mitrecic voting in opposition, to approve funding to Account No. 7100.193 County Grants Unrestricted to Towns for \$4,794,956. Commissioner Mitrecic urged his fellow Commissioners to increase the unrestricted grant from \$20,000 to the Town of Ocean City's requested increase of \$114,568 to help fund the cost of a master plan to revitalize the Skate Park at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Ocean City.

The Commissioners recessed for five minutes.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to postpone discussions regarding Benefits and Insurance until later that afternoon, following discussions regarding salary and employee hiring considerations.

With regard to Debt Service, upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$12,318,270.

With regard to Interfund, upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners approved the Committee Reviewed FY18 requested budget of \$1,666,323.

The Commissioners reviewed Multi-Year Projections for FY17-FY20, with a modest growth of 2% projected for FY19 and a 1% increase projected for FY20.

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed FY18 salary increase for classified and non-classified employees, which includes a one-step increase beginning July 1, 2017 for eligible classified employees (2.5% increase), an equivalent 2.5% increase for non-classified employees, and longevity bonus for eligible employees, and a 0.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) at a total cost of \$755,692; and an additional 0.5% COLA for a total 1% COLA increase in lieu of additional steps or mid-year steps at a total additional cost of \$124,341.

Commissioner Mitrecic supported the proposed salary and COLA increases, but opposed longevity bonuses, noting that the County should not continue to grant raises to those who have reached the highest levels of the County's pay-scale system. Commissioner Elder concurred, and stated that the Commissioners should review the salary survey to determine how County salaries compare with like jurisdictions before granting further salary increases and longevity bonuses. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Budget Officer Kathy Whited advised that longevity bonuses for FY18 would result in a total cost of \$75,500 for salaries funded by the General Fund. Commissioner Purnell supported the proposed one-step and 1% COLA, but opposed eliminating longevity bonuses.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Purnell voting in opposition, to approve a one-step increase beginning July 1, 2017 for eligible classified employees (2.5% increase), an equivalent 2.5% increase for non-classified employees, and a 1% COLA at a total cost of \$804,533 and includes no longevity bonuses.

The Commissioners reviewed the Committee Reviewed Requests for New Positions for FY17.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved the request for one full-time Document Imager III and one part-time Document Imager II within the Document Imaging Division of the Treasurer's Office.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners voted 4-3, with Commissioners Church, Lockfaw, Mitrecic, and Purnell voting in favor of the motion and Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, and Elder voting in opposition, to approve one new Deputy Sheriff position within the Sheriff's Office, rather than the three new Deputy Sheriff positions requested by Sheriff Reggie Mason.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously denied the request for four new part-time Court Deputy positions within the Sheriff's Office.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously authorized four existing part-time School Resource Officers to serve as Court Deputies during summer 2018, as they have in prior summers.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved one new Information Technology (IT) Database Administrator position within the IT Division of Emergency Services, with an internal candidate from the Department of Liquor Control (DLC) to transfer from the DLC to the new position.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Church and Purnell voting in opposition, to approve one new Roads Worker II position within the Roads Division of Public Works. In response to a question by Commissioner Elder, Mr. Higgins stated that this additional position is needed within the Roads Division to help repair roads, plow snow during winter months, and meet the increased demands of area residents. Commissioner Church stated that the County should approve at least two new Roads Worker II positions to address the unsightly condition of a growing number of rural areas caused by the illegal dumping of trash and furniture on County roads. Commissioner Purnell concurred.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners voted 4-3, with Commissioners Church, Lockfaw, Mitrecic, and Purnell voting in favor of the motion and Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, and Elder voting in opposition, to approve one new full-time Parks Worker II position within Recreation and Parks.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Bertino and Bunting voting in opposition, to approve one new full-time Parks Worker II position to maintain County Boat Ramps within Recreation and Parks.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved one new full-time Library Assistant I for the Berlin Branch Library beginning in May 2018, the final two months of FY18, in anticipation of the opening of the new Berlin Branch Library in summer 2018.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved one new part-time Library Assistant I for the Berlin Branch Library beginning in May 2018, the final two months of FY18, in anticipation of the opening of the new Berlin Branch Library in summer 2018.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously denied the requested full-time Business Development Coordinator position within Economic Development.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Bertino and Lockfaw voting in opposition, to approve two new full-time Maintenance Worker II positions within the Water and Wastewater Division of Public Works. In response to a question by Commissioner Elder, Human Resources Director Stacey Norton advised that in addition to being short-staffed within the Water and Wastewater Division, two of the four Maintenance Workers currently out on medical leave are not expected to return to duty, which will only increase this disparity.

Mr. Higgins stated that expenditures exceed revenues by \$107,870; however, the difference would be reconciled when the salary and benefits are allocated.

The Commissioners adjourn for lunch.

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 1:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to discuss personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(1) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Also present at the closed session were Harold L. Higgins, Chief Administrative Officer; Kathy Whited, Budget Officer; Kim Moses, Public Information Officer; and Stacey Norton, Human Resources

Director. Topics discussed and actions taken included considering individual personnel matters for the FY18 Operating Budget.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on June 6, 2017.