

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

March 21, 2017

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

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, 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 3-305(b)(1), (4), (7), (8), and (10) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions. Also present at the closed session were Harold L. Higgins, Chief Administrative Officer; Kelly Shannahan, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; Interim Attorney Ed Baker who is filling in for County Attorney Maureen Howarth who is out on maternity leave; Kim Moses, Public Information Officer; Stacey Norton, Human Resources Director; Merry Mears, Economic Development Director; Colonel Doug Dods, Deputy Sergeant Nate Passwater, and Lieutenant Ed Schreier. Topics discussed and actions taken included: hiring John Adam Barbely as a Maintenance Worker III and promoting Tyler Hall from Maintenance Worker I to Maintenance Worker II within the Maintenance Division, and transferring Anthony Fuchsluger from Transfer Station Attendant within the Solid Waste Division to Maintenance Worker I within the Maintenance Division of Public Works; promoting Tom Bair from Building, Housing, and Zoning Inspector/Plans Reviewer II (BHZ Inspector II) for Development Review and Permitting (DRP) to Natural Resources Inspector for Environmental Programs; posting to fill a vacancy for a Transfer Station Attendant within the Solid Waste Division of Public Works, a BHZ Inspector II in DRP, a Welcome Center Greeter in Tourism, and a temporary Secretary for Circuit Court; reclassifying the Swim Aid positions to Grade 2/Step 2, with an hourly salary of \$9.30 to comply with minimum wage requirements; discussing a potential business to locate in the County; consulting with counsel about potential litigation; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

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

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the minutes of their March 7, 2017 meeting as presented. Commissioner Bertino expressed concern regarding the comment made by Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan that town officials were disappointed that the County Commissioners voted not to meet with them to discuss their request for a tax differential, since staff had met with Ocean City officials on January 25, 2017 to discuss the tax differential issue. However, the

Commissioners agreed that the minutes were accurate as written.

The Commissioners met with County Engineer Bill Bradshaw, Library Director Jennifer Ranck, and Logan Street and Scott Saxman of Whiting Turner, the construction management team, to review and discuss bid results and request to award the construction contract for the new Berlin Branch Library for a total Gauranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for construction of \$6,250,000. Library Board of Directors Chair Ron Cascio was also in attendance. Mr. Bradshaw stated that the County was able to save \$39,266 by selecting alternate roofing material and other alternates, including abuse resistant drywall in the multipurpose room, HVAC system controls integration and duct/piping. He further advised that, though the bid results came in at roughly 5% above budget, the additional costs accurately reflect the regional construction market, current material pricing, and proposed schedule to complete the building. He further advised that the Town of Berlin recently waived permitting fees up to \$26,727 associated with the construction project, which is expected to begin in June 2017 and be complete by July 2018. He advised that project funding includes \$1,786,900 from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) County Library Capital Grant Program, FY18 State funding of \$50,000 for construction, and \$425,000 from the Worcester County Library Foundation, which funded the cost of architect design services to date and should fund construction administrative services. He advised that the Library has entered a grant reimbursement program for building data/computer cabling. The County share of funding is \$4,413,100 for construction. He advised that the project team will continue to evaluate potential cost savings during the construction phase.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously granted approval to proceed with construction, as presented by Whiting Turner at the GMP of \$6.25 million and a completion date of July 2018. Mr. Cascio thanked the Commissioners for their partnership, past and present, and praised the efforts of County staff to prepare this project for construction.

Pursuant to the request of Heather Barton, Administrative Services Director for the Health Department, and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to waive the standard bid requirement and authorized Commission President Bunting to sign a year round Lease Agreement for an apartment at 12 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Unit No. 5 in Ocean City to be utilized primarily by the Health Department seasonal sanitarians, as well as visiting physicians in the off-season, from May 17, 2017 through May 31, 2018 at a cost of \$15,420, with funds available within the Health Department budget for this expense.

Pursuant to the request of Ms. Barton and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to continue the contract with OC Solutions, LLC of Ocean City for cleaning services for the condominium at 12 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Unit No. 5 in Ocean City utilized by Health Department Environmental Health Specialists and seasonal Sanitarians for the sum of \$60 per cleaning. Ms. Barton explained that OC Solutions has provided satisfactory cleaning services for the County since 2009, and although other vendors offered the same rate, the Health Department preferred to work with the known vendor.

Pursuant to the request of Lieutenant Ed Schreier of the Sheriff's Office and upon a

motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Bunting to sign the Addendum to the FY17 State Highway Safety Grant Terms and Conditions, agreeing not to use any portion of grant funds of \$8,390 to check helmet usage or create checkpoints specifically to target motorcyclists.

Pursuant to the request of Emergency Services Director Fred Webster and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved a change order in the amount of \$96,113.90 to Carousel Industries for the Next Generation 9-1-1 phone system to modify installations in Worcester County Government and purchase additional consoles in Ocean City. Mr. Webster explained that this project is being funded by the Maryland Emergency Numbers System Board, which had approved this change order.

Pursuant to the request of Department of Liquor Control (DLC) Interim Director Laura Burns-Reinhart and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously granted the DLC Committee authorization to set prices on all brands at the levels necessary to ensure the liquidation of all Shore Spirits inventory by June 30, 2017. Commissioner Mitrecic congratulated the DLC Committee for the outstanding job they are doing to wind down DLC operations.

Pursuant to the request of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously approved the reallocation of encumbered funds of \$148,500 within Environmental Programs to purchase six new vehicles to replace aged vehicles within that department. Mr. Mitchell explained that funding was available in the Rural Legacy account, which no longer needs to be encumbered as matching funds for Rural Legacy easement purchases.

The Commissioners met with Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell to schedule a public hearing on a Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan amendment application submitted by Ocean City Public Works Deputy Director Jim Parsons, representing the Town of Ocean City, to include Miscellaneous Technical Data and Capital Plan Information Updates to include revised water system text, revised water system profile figure, revised water storage tank schedule table, and revised water improvement schedules in the capital plan for the town, without changing the previously approved water and sewerage boundaries. Mr. Mitchell advised that the Planning Commission found the proposed amendments to be consistent with the County's Comprehensive Development Plan and granted the application a favorable recommendation.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to schedule a public hearing on April 25, 2017 to receive public comment on the proposed amendments to the Worcester County Water and Sewerage Plan as requested.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Development Review and Permitting Deputy Director Phyllis Wimbrow and upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to schedule a public hearing on Rezoning Case No. 405 for May 2, 2017. This application was submitted by Attorney Joseph E. Moore, on behalf of Joseph J. Balsamo, and seeks to rezone approximately 2.62 acres of land located on the westerly side of MD Rt. 611 and easterly side of

Sinepuxent Road, and more specifically identified on Tax Map 26 as Parcel 211 in the Tenth Tax District of Worcester County, Maryland, from A-2 Agricultural District to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District. Ms. Wimbrow advised that the application received a favorable recommendation from the County Planning Commission.

Pursuant to the request of Warden Garry Mumford and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the proposal from Johnson Controls of Salisbury, Maryland for the emergency replacement of two air handler units at the County Jail at a price per unit of \$13,300 for a total price of \$26,600.

In response to a question by Commissioner Lockfaw, Warden Mumford advised that many of the heating components at the County Jail are more than 30 years old, and he will include a comprehensive plan to replace them within his FY18 budget request for the Jail.

Pursuant to the request of Recreation and Parks Director Paige Hurley and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously approved two proposals to complete the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex Field Irrigation Project at a total cost of \$14,400 as follows: \$4,200 to Oakwood Sod Farm of Delmar, Maryland for the purchase and installation of Bermuda grass; and \$9,595 to Scott Baker to install irrigation on the football field and practice area, with the County to purchase two portable impact irrigation delivery devices and soil amendments at a total cost of \$605. Mr. Hurley advised that Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Program Open Space (POS) funding for this project is included in the FY17 budget and has been approved by the State.

Pursuant to the request of Public Works Director John Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously approved Change Order No. 1 for upgrades to Pump Station A in the Ocean Pines Sanitary Service Area (SSA) for miscellaneous charges and credits, resulting in a net additional cost of \$9,676, which is the final change order for this project.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved Change Order No. 2 for upgrades to Pump Station E in the Ocean Pines SSA that will result in a net additional cost of \$569 to provide a new electrical conduit to the Choptank Electric transformer serving the station. This represents the final change order for this project.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously approved Change Order No. 3 for upgrades to Pump Station F in the Ocean Pines SSA that will result in a net additional contract cost of \$2,598. This is the final change order for this project.

In a related matter and in response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Tustin advised that Maintenance Worker Quincy Blake and Instrument Technician Carl Witt built a portable, trailer-mounted pump that was used to facilitate this project, and this piece of equipment has saved the County significant time and money.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tustin to discuss a proposal from Kerchner Environmental Technologies of Owings Mills, Maryland for the purchase of a refurbished portable mobile belt filter press at a cost of \$173,000, as part of plans to finalize improvements to increase the Riddle Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant Sanitary Service Areas (SSAs) flow to 80,000 gallons per day. Mr. Tustin stated that the mobility of the unit, which has a \$300,000 list price when new, would allow for its use at the Ocean Pines, Landings, and Mystic Harbour WWTPs as needed for supplemental dewatering, increasing the speed of the dewatering process, and preventing future capital expenditures for a thickening tank due to difficulties with solids dewatering, respectively. He advised that funding for this purchase is available from WGC in the amount of \$125,350, which was the budgeted amount for the sludge dewatering equipment they had committed to purchase for the project, with the other three County SSAs to fund the remaining balance of \$47,650, with contributions of \$15,884 from each of the three benefitting SSAs, including Ocean Pines, The Landings, and Mystic Harbour.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to waive the standard bid process and accepted the proposal from Kerchner Environmental Technologies for the purchase of a refurbished portable mobile belt filter press at a total cost of \$173,000 as presented.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for the purchase and installation of 9 replacement overhead doors for the storage building within the Roads Division of Public Works to Beauchamp Construction of Pocomoke, at a total cost of \$73,392. Mr. Tustin advised that \$58,210 is available within the FY17 budget for this purchase, with the remaining balance of \$15,182 available within the Blacktop Overlay operating budget by reducing one-tenth mile of proposed blacktopping.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for the provision of pest control services at 42 County facilities to Delmarva Custom Spraying, Inc. (DCS) of Bivalve, Maryland for a period of two years through March 2019 at a total two-year base bid of \$18,144, with an option to renew at a cost of \$9,072 per year for an additional three years for a total five-year cost of \$45,360. Mr. Tustin advised that DCS has not provided this type of service to the County in the past, but a thorough post-bid vetting process indicates the company is fully capable of performing the base bid work. However, because they are not a full-service company capable of providing services like surveillance and heat treatment for bed bugs, it may be necessary to contract with another company to perform these additional services if needed to mitigate and prevent infestations.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously approved an over-expenditure to provide supplemental funding of \$1,500 for overtime within the Maintenance Division of Public Works resulting from a high level of after-hours call backs for emergency conditions in FY17. Mr. Tustin advised that the current expense for overtime exceeds the \$3,500 approved for overtime in the FY17 Maintenance Division budget by \$880.90, with the possibility that additional overtime will be accrued in the

three months remaining in FY17. He advised that this department will be requesting \$6,500 for FY18 overtime expenses to more accurately reflect the anticipated overtime needed to provide the required support to County facilities after hours in the coming year. In response to a question by Commissioner Elder, Mr. Tustin stated that employees may elect to use compensatory time, but most prefer to be paid for their overtime.

Commissioner Bertino temporarily left the meeting.

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Larry Duffy to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2018, to replace Rodney Belmont who resigned.

Upon a nomination by the Library Board of Trustees and a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Donald “Jamie” Bailey to the Library Board of Trustees for a five-year term expiring December 31, 2021.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to reappoint Mary E. “Liz” Mumford to the Commission for Women for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2019.

Commissioner Bertino returned to the meeting.

The Commissioners met in legislative session.

The Commissioners conducted a public hearing to receive comment on Bill 17-2 (Zoning - Health Care Planned Unit Development District), which was introduced by Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, Church, Elder, Lockfaw, Mitrecic, and Purnell on February 21, 2017. Development Review and Permitting (DRP) Deputy Director Phyllis Wimbrow reviewed the bill, which would amend the Zoning and Subdivision Control Article to create a floating zone district for the provision of health care and certain associated and compatible uses in the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District, C-2 General Commercial District, and C-3 Highway Commercial District, allowing flexibility of design in a health care plan unit development (HCPUD). More specifically, the proposed bill would create a new Section ZS 1-348 to encourage HCPUDs for health care facilities and associated uses to allow for greater flexibility when designing a health care campus, while also requiring unified design within the development and ensuring compatibility with and minimum impact on existing and future development in the surrounding area, with the minimum required lot area of 10 acres and which in no case may be reduced by action of the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). Ms. Wimbrow noted that this floating zone district would allow for the co-location of various specialties, such as cardiology and orthopaedics, as well as needed services, like x-rays and medical labs, in the same building or site to permit the consolidation of compatible medical uses into a single location near a population center. Ms. Wimbrow advised that the Planning Commission felt that the ability to provide a health care campus is appropriate for these commercial districts, while allowing flexibility of design in a unified plan of development.

Commissioner Bunting opened the floor to receive public comment.

Attorney Mark Cropper of Ocean City, who submitted the original text amendment

application, asked the Commissioners to concur with staff and accept the Planning Commission's favorable recommendation of Bill 17-2 as presented, noting that this is simply enabling legislation that would allow an applicant to apply to the BZA for a special exception to create a floating zone district, which is necessary to accommodate rapid advances in the system of health care delivery from provider-centered to person-centered to improve efficiency and convenience while reducing healthcare costs. He stated that a HCPUD allows for the co-mingling of a variety of medical services under one roof, improving healthcare delivery by eliminating the need to construct multiple facilities on separate parcels to provide these same services.

Palmer Gillis, who has developed more than two million square feet of medical space, stated that the existing zoning limits the size of a medical office to 20,000 square feet, which limits the co-mingling of health care services under one roof, while Bill 17-2 would increase that by 25% , allowing for the construction of larger structures to house a variety of services.

Chris Hall, Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at Peninsula Regional Medical Center, stated that consolidating medical services on one campus reduces the time and cost for medical services by allowing medical providers to more quickly and easily communicate with one another about how to develop unified approaches to patient care.

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

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Bill 17-2 (Zoning - Health Care Planned Unit Development District) as presented.

The Commissioners met with Ms. Wimbrow to review the final version of legislation originally drafted by County staff, with input from Harold Scrimgeour of Stockton, to define poultry operations and to establish size and number limitations, enhanced buffering and setback standards for poultry operations. Ms. Wimbrow stated that, since its original presentation on October 18, 2016, the bill had been further revised to address concerns of the Commissioners and local farmers. The Planning Commission gave a favorable recommendation to this draft legislation as amended.

Following some discussion, Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, Church, Elder, Lockfaw, Mitreicic, and Purnell introduced the aforementioned legislation as Bill 17-3 (Zoning - Poultry Operations) and agreed to conduct a public hearing on this legislation during a special legislative session on April 25, 2017.

Commissioner Bunting closed the legislative session.

The Commissioners recessed for five minutes.

The Commissioners met with Human Resources Director Stacey Norton to review medical and prescription plan design recommendations for FY18 from the Health Benefits Review Committee. Ms. Norton stated that dental benefit rates, which are paid 100% by the employees enrolled in this program, will increase by 5.5%, and Sun Life (current Life and Long Term Disability vendor) was scheduled to increase by 27.9% (\$35,083), so PSA Insurance & Financial Services, the County's benefits consultant, is negotiating with other vendors for this service. She advised that Carefirst was projecting a 10.4% increase in medical/prescription costs for FY18 based upon claims submitted through the second quarter; however, PSA negotiated the

administrative fee renewal from a 3% increase to a 0% increase and the stop-loss renewal from 10% down to 8% for a total savings of \$88,000, thus lowering the projected increase down to 10.2%. She further noted that to continue to promote the County's wellness program and encourage covered members (employees/retirees/dependents) to lead healthier lifestyles, the Health Benefits Committee recommends the following changes: increasing the emergency room co-pay for non-emergencies from \$100 to \$200 to discourage employees/retirees from using this service for non-emergencies and to encourage the use of primary care physicians or urgent care centers to reduce costs; and increasing the copays for prescription drugs from \$10/\$20/\$35 (generic/formulary/brand) to \$10/\$30/\$60 for retail fills with one-month supply, from \$20/\$40/\$70 to \$20/\$60/\$120 for retail maintenance with three-month supply, and from \$10/\$20/\$35 to \$10/\$30/\$60 for mail order CVS/Caremark maintenance with three-month supply.

She stated that Human Resources will continue to educate and encourage covered members to utilize generic medications and the CVS/Caremark Mail order option for maintenance medicine to save money for themselves and the County. In closing, Ms. Norton advised that the deadline to notify CareFirst about changes to the existing County health insurance plan is April 1, 2017, and by implementing the proposed changes, the County will be able to further reduce the increase in benefits costs from 10.2% to 5.73%.

In response to questions by Commissioner Church, Ms. Norton stated that the emergency room copay is based on the emergency room diagnosis at the time of the visit and is only assessed to those who visit the emergency room for non-emergencies regardless of whether the visits occur when primary and urgent care offices are closed.

In response to a question by Commissioner Lockfaw, Ms. Norton stated that the County and members recognize greater pharmacy savings when the members select the CVS/Caremark mail order option for maintenance medications.

In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Ms. Norton stated that the proposed emergency room copay increase is projected to save County taxpayers \$117,422, and the proposed prescription drug copay increases are projected to save County taxpayers \$782,782, all of which are costs that will now be borne by plan members.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously approved the FY18 proposed medical and prescription plan program with the design changes as recommended.

The Commissioners met with Chief Administrative Officer Harold Higgins to review a letter from Superintendent of Schools Louis H. Taylor advising that the Board of Education (BOE) Maintenance of Effort (MOE) calculation reflects an increase of \$2,387,012 over the FY17 County MOE level of \$81,193,802, for FY18 County MOE funding of \$83,580,814. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Higgins advised that the Commissioners are required to fund the MOE budget, unless they apply for and are granted a waiver from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Mr. Higgins advised that the increase is due to increased enrollment by 33 students and a 2.4% escalator based on the State formula for local wealth per pupil. Commissioner Bertino stated that the wealth escalator is a despicable formula that unfairly burdens Worcester County.



The Commissioners reviewed a letter from Mr. Taylor advising that the requested FY18 BOE Operating Budget does not include any nonrecurring expenses.

The Commissioners reviewed and concurred with the proposed budget adoption schedule for the FY18 Enterprise Fund Operating Budgets, which includes reviewing the Solid Waste and Water and Wastewater Operating Budgets during their work session on March 28, 2017, and conducting public hearings on these budgets on June 6, with adoption of the budgets to take place on June 20, 2017.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Higgins and Budget Officer Kathy Whited to review the Worcester County Departmental Operating Budget Requests for FY18. Mr. Higgins provided a summary of the requested operating budget, and stressed that this is only the requested budget. He stated that the estimated general fund revenues based on current tax rates are estimated to be \$199,093,761, which is an increase of \$10,221,106 or 5.4% more than the current year. He stated that the requested general fund operating expenditures total \$204,013,601, which leaves a shortfall of \$4,919,840 that must be reconciled by either reductions in expenditures, additional revenues or a combination of the two. Mr. Higgins advised that, based on the current property tax rate of \$0.835 per \$100 of the real property assessment, Net Property Taxes are projected to increase by \$3,148,939, primarily as a result of increased assessments and Homeowner Tax Credits. Income Tax revenues are anticipated to increase by \$4.2 million at the current tax rate of 1.75%, which became effective January 1, 2016. Other Local Taxes are expected to increase by \$2,110,731, which includes an increase of \$250,000 each in Recordation and Transfer Taxes and an increase in Food Taxes of \$107,895 to pass thru to Ocean City and Room Tax of \$1,502,836 to pass thru to the towns. Mr. Higgins advised that major requested expenditure variances from FY17 to FY18 include the following: Sheriff's Office increase of \$781,545, due to additional personnel and equipment requests; Emergency Services increase of \$509,180 to restructure salaries and purchase 800 MHZ radio supplies and additional transmitter tower sites; Jail budget increase of \$711,389, due to salaries for personnel changes and increases in the inmate's medical contract costs; Fire Company Grants increase of \$150,000, based on the request of the Volunteer Fire Companies to increase grants from \$235,000 to \$250,000 each; Ambulance Grants increase of \$236,954 based on the current funding formula; increased Roads Division funding of \$480,368 for new positions and road paving; Taxes Shared with Towns increase of \$1,995,217; Grants to Towns increase of \$768,568; salary, insurance and benefits package for County employees reflects an increase of \$1,653,922, which includes a salary increase of \$786,506 to provide a 2.5% step, 0.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and longevity for those eligible, increased health insurance costs of \$707,870 based on an estimated increase of 6% for health benefits, increased Workers Compensation insurance cost of \$123,812, and increased property and liability insurance cost of \$14,954 due to a 1% premium increase; and Board of Education (BOE) increases of \$3,262,637 to provide payroll increases of 2.8%, bus contractor increases, and increased starting teachers pay by 2% from \$43,384 to \$44,257. Mr. Higgins advised that the BOE operating budget request is \$84,912,776, plus school construction debt of \$10,720,812 paid by the County on behalf of the BOE, which totals \$95,633,588 or 48% of the County's total estimated revenue.

Commissioners Bertino and Elder opposed listing the proposed transfer of budget

stabilization funds as County revenues and felt that such funds should only be considered during budget deliberations and only if needed to balance the approved County Operating Budget. In response to an additional question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Higgins agreed to provide him with a list of all new staff positions requested in the FY18 budget.

Following some discussion, Mr. Higgins informed the audience that the public hearing on the requested budget is scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Snow Hill High School Auditorium, and the upcoming budget work sessions have been scheduled for March 28 and April 11, as well as May 9, 16, and 23 if needed. He advised that these work sessions are open to the public.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on April 4, 2017.