

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

March 6, 2018

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

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Elder, 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) and (7) 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; Maureen Howarth, County Attorney; Kim Moses, Public Information Officer; and Stacey Norton, Human Resources Director. Topics discussed and actions taken included: reclassifying one Accounting Clerk I position to Accounting Clerk II and agreeing to post to fill the vacant position and promoting Sheila Merritt from Accounting Clerk III to Accounting Clerk IV and Crystal Webster from Accounting Clerk II to Accounting Clerk III in the Treasurer's Office; acknowledging the hiring of Alicia Eddy and Sarah Knaggs as Library Assistant I's within the County Library, and the hiring of Christopher Parr as a Roads Patrol Deputy within the Sheriff's Office; acknowledging the promotion of Diane Karsnitz from Assistant Deputy State's Attorney to Deputy State's Attorney and the hiring of Michael Farlow as an Assistant Deputy State's Attorney, and agreeing to reclassify one Investigator position to an Office Assistant III within the State's Attorney's Office; posting to fill one Natural Resources Planner I position in Environmental Programs; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

After the closed session, the Commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Purnell called the meeting to order and announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session and the afternoon closed session on February 20, 2018.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved their February 20, 2018 open session minutes as presented and closed session minutes as amended.

The Commissioners presented a proclamation recognizing March as Women's History Month to Commission for Women Co-Chairs Michelle Bankert and Liz Mumford and Friends of the Commission for Women Chair Eloise Henry-Gordy in recognition of the contributions of women locally and nationwide to the economic, cultural and social well-being of Worcester County.

Pursuant to the request of Housing Program Administrator Jo Ellen Bynum and upon a

motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for the general rehabilitation of a single family home in the Pocomoke City area to Allstate Renovation & New Homes, Inc. of Trappe, Maryland at a total cost of \$17,555, using heating option 2, which provides for two-zoned heating, with separate thermostats for upstairs and downstairs.

Pursuant to the request of Emergency Services Director Fred Webster and upon a motion by Commissioner Lockfaw, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Purnell to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tri-County Council (TCC) for the Lower Eastern Shore to utilize Shore Transit buses to provide transportation to protect victims from the effects of a disaster, extraordinary event or extreme temperatures.

In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Webster advised that, since similar services are provided to other counties by Shore Transit, services would be provided on a first-come first-served basis.

The Commissioners met with Enterprise Fund Controller Jessica Wilson to review Mystic Harbour effluent disposal project loan documents and the bond resolution. Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution No. 18-8, providing for the issuance and sale of \$2,450,000 Public Facility Bond (Mystic Harbour Effluent Disposal and Reuse Project) Series 2018, and Resolution No. 18-9 Loan Resolution between the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which provided the \$2,450,000 bond and a \$750,000 grant to finance all or a portion of the planning, financing, and supervision of said project.

Pursuant to the request of County Engineer Bill Bradshaw and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners unanimously approved Change Notifications 24, 36.01, and 37, with Whiting-Turner, for the Berlin Branch Library construction project for the following three items: air barrier modifications at window sills to correct issues that could cause long-term water damage at an additional cost of \$12,016; deleting six plantings from the landscape plan for the north property line for a credit of \$660; and a duct work revision to reroute the small duct to serve restroom number 211 at an additional cost of \$705. Mr. Bradshaw advised that the new project cost is \$6,267,918, which is \$17,918 more than the original contract cost.

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon a nomination by the Town of Ocean City and a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to reappoint Steve Brown as the Town of Ocean City's representative on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for an additional four-year term expiring December 31, 2021.

Upon a nomination by the Commission for Women and a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Terri Shockley as an at-large member of the Commission for Women for the Snow Hill area for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2020, to fill the vacancy created by the expiration of the term of Eloise Henry-Gordy.

The Commissioners reviewed a letter from Superintendent of Schools Lou Taylor

advising that the requested FY19 Board of Education (BOE) Operating Budget does not include any nonrecurring expenses.

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 \$1,252,347 over the FY18 County MOE level of \$83,870,125 for FY19 County MOE funding of \$85,122,472. 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). In his letter, Mr. Taylor advised that the MOE funding level would not allow the BOE to provide salary increases and maintain existing instructional programs as requested.

The Commissioners met with representatives from the towns of Pocomoke City, Snow Hill, and Berlin, as well as the Ocean Pines Association (OPA) regarding their Fiscal Year 2019 grant requests from the County, with Ocean City representatives unable to attend due to a prior commitment to attend a hearing in Annapolis. The Commissioners announced that they will meet with Ocean City representatives on March 20, 2018.

The Commissioners met with Pocomoke City Acting Mayor Esther Troast, Councilman George Tasker, and City Manager Bobby Cowger. Mr. Cowger thanked the Commissioners for their ongoing support of Pocomoke City. He then advised that town officials are requesting that the County maintain funding to Pocomoke City in all categories for FY19. These include continued categorical funding and pass-through grants as follows: \$455,000 for an unrestricted grant for police, public works, and future economic development; \$471,769 in support for the city's ambulance services based on the County formula; a restricted fire grant of \$55,000 based on the number of out-of-town fire calls; \$40,500 to the Discovery Center, and \$15,000 to the Marva Theater, both of which provide vital services to the residents and visitors; and continuation of a one-time grant of \$55,000 (previously granted to replace police car radios) to help replace 10,300 lineal feet of water pipes, a project that Mr. Cowger explained is being handled with in-house labor and purchasing of materials to minimize project costs. In addition, Liquor License Fees; fire department funding; marketing/promotional assistance of \$4,500; shared revenues for income and room tax; and state pass-through aid comprise a grand total request of \$1,701,064. In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Cowger stated that the town is applying for a grant and low interest loan from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fund the remainder of the \$2.9 million waterline replacement project.

The Commissioners met with Snow Hill Mayor Charles Dorman and Council member Latoya Purnell. Councilwoman Purnell thanked the Commissioners for their prior support and stated that the town is seeking level funding for FY19, including grant funding of \$455,000 together with payment in lieu of taxes of \$320,210, ambulance and fire department funding and other shared revenues and State aid pass throughs for a total of \$1,757,403 for FY19 to maintain infrastructure and reduce the amount of vacant properties in town. She informed the Commissioners of the commercial growth that has occurred during the past year, to include the addition of Brew's Up Beer and Kits, Tony's Paint and Auto, Olde Town Candy Company, and Chesapeake Health, which will renovate and relocate to the former Oscar Purnell House and provide mental health, therapy, and stress management to area residents. Mayor Dorman stated that upcoming economic development projects include redeveloping Sturgis Park to include a

new butterfly house, continuing talks with the State, Maryland and Delaware Railroad, and Berlin for the excursion train project, and completing needed street repairs to make Snow Hill a fun place to visit.

The Commissioners met with Berlin Mayor Wm. Gee Williams, III and Town Administrator Laura Allen. Mayor Williams thanked the Commissioners for their prior support and asked the County to award the town level funding for FY19, to include an unrestricted grant in the amount of \$455,000. Along with ambulance and fire department funding and other shared revenues and State aid pass throughs, the grand total request for Berlin is \$2,078,335.

The Commissioners met with Ocean Pines Association (OPA) General Manager John S. (JB) Bailey to discuss their FY19 grant requests from the County. Mr. Bailey advised that Ocean Pines contains 8,452 properties with approximately 12,000 year-round residents. He reviewed the services and amenities the OPA provides to the community and all Worcester County residents, including recreation and parks and public safety, and he asked the Commissioners to provide increased funding for four distinct needs as follows: a public safety grant of \$500,000 for police services; passthrough of Highway User Revenues (HUR) as well as additional County funding of \$100,000 for the restoration of roads and bridges, a grant of \$25,000 for tourism to partially offset the cost of executing high-quality events, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks; and \$40,000 for Recreation and Parks programs. In total, including fire and ambulance funding, the OPA requests \$1,436,330 in funding from the County in FY19.

Commission President Purnell thanked the town and OPA officials for taking time to meet with the Commissioners to review their FY19 grant requests.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously approved funding of up to \$5,000 for the purchase of nine bollards to be placed in front of the entrance to Stephen Decatur High School (SDHS), as an additional security measure to prevent vehicular access to the school. Commissioner Bunting explained that he previously met with Board of Education (BOE) and SDHS officials to determine their needs and with representatives from Harkins Construction who have agreed to install the bollards at no cost to the County to meet this public safety need.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet in closed session.

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 10:55 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to perform administrative functions. Also present at the closed session were Harold L. Higgins, Chief Administrative Officer; Kelly Shannahan, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; Maureen Howarth, County Attorney; and Kim Moses, Public Information Officer. Topics discussed and actions taken included performing administrative functions.

The Commissioners adjourned to meet again on March 20, 2018.