

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

August 15, 2023

Anthony W. Bertino, Jr., president
Madison J. Bunting, Jr., vice president
Caryn G. Abbott
Theodore J. Elder
Eric J. Fiori (Absent)
Joseph M. Mitrecic
Diana Purnell

Following a motion by Commissioner Elder, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, with Commissioner Fiori absent, 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 (GP) Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions permitted under the provisions of Section GP 3-104. Also present at the closed session were Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Candace Savage, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Procurement Officer Nicholas Rice, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, Human Resources Director Stacey Norton, and Deputy Director Pat Walls. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

Commissioner Fiori was absent from the meeting.

Following a motion by Commissioner Bunting, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 10:05 a.m.

After the closed session, the commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Bertino called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Reverend Eloise Henry Gordy of Zoar United Methodist Church and pledge of allegiance, announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session.

The commissioners reviewed and approved the open and closed session minutes of their August 1, 2023 meeting as presented.

The commissioners presented years-of-service commendations to retiring Sergeant David Smith of the County Jail (20 years) and Parks Worker IV Phillip McCary (10 years) for their outstanding service to the County.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously approved by consent agenda item numbers 2-5 and 7 as follows: a \$20,000 FY24 PRAR grant; Triple Crown Phase II Small Project Agreement; scheduling Citizen Scrap Tire Day for October 7, 2023; bid specifications for the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex parking lot; and the low bid from D.W. Burt Concrete Construction, Inc. of \$48,878 for the Bishopville Recycling Center concrete

pad project.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Procurement Officer Nicholas Rice and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved bid specifications for phase I and phase II of the South Point bulkhead replacement project.

Colonel Doug Dods of the Sheriff's Office presented a request to purchase a used, thirty-two-foot, enclosed trailer at a cost of \$25,000 for use within the Sheriff's Office. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the commissioners agreed to table the request until Colonel Dods provides them with information on the weight of the trailer and the towing capacity of the truck that will be used to transport it.

The commissioners conducted a public hearing to provide information on the progress of Housing Rehabilitation Grant MD-23-CD-25, which was funded under the Maryland Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program in the amount of \$300,000 to rehabilitate 18 owner-occupied homes. Housing Program Coordinator Davida Washington reviewed the program, noted that six home projects have been completed, another five are currently under construction, and bid packages are being prepared for another five homes. To date \$265,148.66 of the combined CDBG grant and program income funding has been committed. Commissioner Purnell thanked Ms. Washington and noted that this program has been lifechanging for those served through this County program.

Commissioner Bertino opened the floor to receive public comments.

There being no public comments, Commissioner Bertino closed the public hearing. Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously concurred with the scheduled expenditure of Housing Rehabilitation Grant MD-23-CD-25 as presented.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Emergency Services Deputy Director James Hamilton in response to a request from the Pocomoke City Police Department (PCPD) and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously authorized Emergency Services to perform dispatch operations for the PCPD from midnight to 8 a.m. daily. Mr. Hamilton reviewed the request, advised that there are typically only two calls daily to the PCPD during this time period, and advised that the County currently provides this same daily service, 24 hours per day to the Snow Hill Police Department.

Pursuant to the request of Procurement Officer Nicholas Rice and Public Works Director Dallas Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously agreed to piggyback off Howard County's contract with Slurry Pavers for slurry seal on County roads at \$3.08 per square yard for a one-year period, with five, one-year renewal options.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Rice and Mr. Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners unanimously accepted the best proposal for the Ocean Pines biosolids dewatering equipment and building design to Davis, Bowen, & Friedel, Inc. at a cost of \$426,942.96.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Rice and Recreation and Parks Director Kelly

Rados and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the commissioners unanimously accepted the best proposal for Public Landing Engineering Services to J. Stacy Hart & Associates, Inc. at a cost of \$18,000.

Pursuant to the request of Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Candace Savage and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously approved the purchase of two additional software modules to the County's current financial software at a total cost of \$63,370, with recurring fees of \$8,563, with funding from the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund to cover the one-time fees and FY24 recurring fees.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Human Resources Director Stacey Norton and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously authorized retired Board of Education (BOE) and County staff to utilize the fitness room at the Worcester County Recreation Center at no cost in conjunction with the County's wellness program. Ms. Norton advised that this service is already provided the current BOE and County staff.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Ms. Norton and upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the commissioners unanimously approved the 2024 Medicare Advantage Recommendation to remain with CareFirst Medicare Advantage Plan in partnership with Retiree First under a one-year contract, as the rate will remain flat.

County Attorney Roscoe Leslie reviewed a written request from Attorney Hugh Cropper, IV to quitclaim any interest that the County may have in a portion of an unimproved platted road known as Seventh Street o Giovanni Paolo Goseco David and Jennifer M. David, as tenants by the entireties, their heirs, personal representatives and assigns. In response to concerns raised by Commissioner Bunting, Mr. Leslie confirmed that, regardless of whether surrounding residents have been using this road, the County does not have any rights on this property and could not require the owner to allow public access to this road as a condition of the quitclaim.

Following some discussion, a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic to move forward with the requested quitclaim failed 3-3, with Commissioners Elder, Mitrecic, and Purnell voting in favor and Commissioners Abbott, Bertino, and Bunting voting in opposition.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Mr. Leslie and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners voted 4-2, with Commissioners Bertino and Bunting voting in opposition, to adopt revised Bill 23-06 amending the County ordinance regulating activity at County landings to allow commercial use and to relegate commercial users to two parking spots, provided such uses does not interfere with recreational use.

At the request of Colonel Dods and upon a motion by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners agreed to table further discussions on the request to purchase a used trailer for use within the Sheriff's Office until their next meeting on September 5, 2023.

The commissioners met with Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados to review a request from Tony Morris of Pop Warner Football to accept the donation of the Stephen Decatur High School (SDHS) scoreboard and to reinstall it at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex

for Pop Warner programs during home games. Ms. Rados advised that it would cost approximately \$17,500, plus additional costs for electrical work to ready the scoreboard for use.

Following some discussion, a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic to accept the donation of the SDHS scoreboard and to relocate and install it at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex as requested failed 3-3, with Commissioners Elder, Mitrecic, and Purnell voting in favor and Commissioners Abbott, Bertino, and Bunting voting in opposition. Following further discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners unanimously authorized staff to research the costs to purchase and install a new scoreboard at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex for use by Pop Warner.

Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young advised that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), serving as lead Federal agency under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to determine whether the issuance of commercial leases within the Central Atlantic Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) would lead to reasonably foreseeable significant impacts on the environment and, thus, whether an environmental impact statement should be prepared before leases are issued; and the County has been invited to serve as a consulting party to this project.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously agreed to participate as a consulting party in this study.

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

Following a motion by Commissioner Purnell, seconded by Commissioner Bunting, with Commissioner Fiori absent, the commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 11:21 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 (GP) Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions permitted under the provisions of Section GP 3-104. Also present at the closed session were Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Candace Savage, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, Human Resources Director Stacey Norton, and Deputy Director Pat Walls. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: receiving a personnel update, hiring Kyle Jarmon as a recreation program manager II within Recreation and Parks, Gilbert Gaxiola as a GIS analyst I/technician within Development Review and Permitting, Carol Birmingham as an office assistant IV within Human Resources, Lineya Amaya as an emergency communications specialist trainee within Emergency Services, and Felix Paradis as a correctional officer trainee within the County Jail; promoting Davion J. Ayres from transfer station attendant to Utility Mechanic II within the Solid Waste Division, receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

Following a motion by Commissioner Bunting, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, the commissioners unanimously adjourned their closed session at 11:57 a.m. to meet again on September 5, 2023.