

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

October 5, 2021

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

Following a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting 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, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, Human Resources Director Stacey Norton, and Superintendent of Schools Louis H. Taylor. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: hiring Davida Washington as the housing rehabilitation program coordinator within Development Review and Permitting, Cordont'e Ayres and Lamont Marshal as correctional officer trainees within the County Jail, Tyler Bradford and Joshua Webb as plant operator trainees within the Water and Wastewater Division; hiring Michael Lowe as maintenance supervisor and transferring and promoting George Lawrence from grounds crew leader within Recreation and Parks to mosquito control foreman within the Maintenance Division of Public Works; and transferring and promoting Kristina Prout from office assistant V within County Administration to accountant within the Treasurer's Office, and certain personnel matters; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions, including discussing potential board appointments.

Following a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:30 a.m.

After the closed session, the commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Mitrecic called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Pastor Dale Brown of the Community Church at Ocean Pines and pledge of allegiance, announced the topics discussed during the September 21, 2021 afternoon closed session and the October 5 morning closed session.

The commissioners reviewed and approved the open and closed session minutes of their September 21 meeting as presented.

The commissioners joined with Patty Behr, president of the Eastern Shore Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland, to proclaim October 15, 2021 as White Caine Awareness Day in Worcester County and to encourage area residents and employers to value the

white cane as a tool of independence for the blind in both public spaces and businesses.

The commissioners joined with Tourism and Economic Development Director Melanie Pursel, Anne Neely of Shore Craft Beer, and Paul Carlotta of Sinepuxent Brewing to recognize October as Shore Craft Beer Month in Worcester County and to encourage residents and visitors to take part in the many local craft beer centered events this month, including the 7<sup>th</sup> annual autumn Shore Craft Beer Fest in Ocean City's scenic Sunset Park on October 23.

The commissioners joined with Fire Marshal Jeff McMahon to proclaim October 3-9, 2021 as Worcester County Fire Prevention Week and October as Fire Prevention Month, with the theme "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety: What is Your Alarm Telling You?"

The commissioners met with Nancy Howard and other area residents and business leaders to proclaim October 10-16, 2021 as Worcester County History Week and to urge residents to take part in events taking place Countywide that celebrate the area's rich heritage. To view the full lineup of events taking place throughout the county, visit <https://www.ocmuseum.org/history-week>.

The commissioners met with Bubba Almony and other local, state, and national officials to retroactively proclaim Saturday, August 28, 2021, as Bubba's Celebrity Charity Basketball Game Day in Worcester County.

Pursuant to the request of Superintendent of Schools Louis H. Taylor and the recommendation of Whiting-Turner, the Board of Education (BOE) construction manager, and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously approved project costs and awarded 23 construction bids totaling \$11,093,860 for the 25,000-square-foot Stephen Decatur Middle School (SDMS) addition project. In response to concerns raised by Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young regarding anticipated supply-chain delays and rising costs and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously authorized the pre-ordering of technology-related purchases, with said costs to be repaid to the County's General Fund upon receipt of bond funds for this project.

Following questions by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Taylor advised that the project is slated to begin November 1, with the steel to arrive in March 2022. In response to a question by Commissioner Mitrecic, Mr. Taylor advised that this project would have cost a little over \$1 million if it had been approved as part of the original SDMS construction project.

The commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Nathaniel Passwaters to the Board of Education to fill the remainder of a four-year term through November 2022. This vacancy was created by the sudden passing of former BOE President Eric W. Cropper, Sr.

Pursuant to the request of Public Works Director Dallas Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners agreed to schedule the next Household Hazardous

Waste Day on Saturday, November 27, 2021, at the West Ocean City Park and Ride, with funding of \$20,000 available within the FY22 budget for this event.

Pursuant to the request of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously approved an over-expenditure of roughly \$24,800 to be allocated toward the approximately \$34,000 cost to replace a vehicle in Environmental Programs that was involved in an accident. Mr. Mitchell advised that the other driver, not the County, was found to be at fault and that the County would apply the settlement cost of \$9,192.80 toward the purchase as well.

Pursuant to the request of Information Technology Director Brian Jones and upon a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, the commissioners unanimously agreed to waive the standard bid process and to accept the \$132,592.26 proposal from CAS Severn of Laurel, Maryland to purchase a Nutanix file server. This will replace the County's existing file server, which has reached the end of its usable life and hardware support.

The commissioners met with Emergency Services Director Billy Birch to discuss options to replace all of the emergency notification sirens Countywide with one of the following: a fire siren system; or a fire siren and emergency notification system combined. Mr. Birch advised that the placement of the current sirens is lacking, that there are no sirens in vulnerable areas, such as campgrounds, and that shortage makes it impossible to provide Countywide notification in the event of an emergency.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, the commissioners unanimously agreed to table further discussion on the matter until the three commissioner representatives can discuss the available replacement options with representatives from the County fire companies in October.

Pursuant to the request of Development Review and Permitting Director Jennifer Keener and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for the general rehabilitation and lead remediation project for a single-family home in the Snow Hill area to Unique Styles Custom Home Builders, LLC of Delmar, Maryland at a cost of \$34,214.

Pursuant to the request of Ms. Keener and upon a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, the commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for the general rehabilitation and lead remediation of a single-family home in the Pocomoke City area to Shoreman Construction Co., Inc. of Delmar, Maryland at a cost of \$36,844.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Ms. Keener and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously rejected the sole bid of \$15,383.83 from Poseidon Plumbing and Home Services of Ocean City, Maryland for the general rehabilitation of a bathroom in a single-family home in the Pocomoke City area and to rebid the project, as the proposed bid exceeds the scope of work for this project.

In response to a July 6, 2021 request from the commissioners, Ms. Keener presented a

proposal to reduce the fees established in Resolution No. 19-36 for bed and breakfast rental license fees from \$400 to \$250 per establishment, consistent with the base fee for a hotel, motel, and campground use (\$5 per room, with a minimum fee of \$250).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom the commissioners unanimously agreed to reduce the annual bed and breakfast rental license fees from \$400 to \$200 per establishment and adopted Resolution No. 21-22 establishing rental license fees, which reflects this reduced rate.

Pursuant to the request of Library Director Jennifer Ranck and upon a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, the commissioners unanimously approved the use of encumbered FY21 funds of \$75,000 to offset the cost of \$175,000 to purchase a mobile library unit. Ms. Ranck explained that the Library was awarded a \$100,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Maryland State Library to purchase the mobile unit, which will serve as a branch on wheels to carry a small collection, issue library cards, and serve as a wifi hotspot to those who cannot easily visit their local library branch and participate. The mobile unit will also be on location at local festivals and community celebrations.

Pursuant to the request of Budget Officer Candace Savage and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously approved FY21 year-end budget transfers totaling \$398,958.

Pursuant to the request of Ms. Savage and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously approved the FY21 Reserve for Assigned Encumbrances of \$3,199,401.

Berlin Fire Company (BFC) President David Fitzgerald met with the commissioners to request that the County declare an 18' x 223' County-owned parcel located on the easterly side of Harrison Avenue across from the Berlin Branch Library to be surplus property and donate said property to the BFC. Public Works Director Dallas Baker stated that staff have no objections to this request.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the commissioners unanimously declared the County-owned parcel to be surplus property and agreed to schedule a hearing to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on their intention to dispose of the surplus property by donating it to the BFC.

Commissioner Bertino congratulated Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan, area law enforcement, first responders, and the Fire Marshal's Office for their coordinated efforts to protect public safety during the unsanctioned H20i pop-up rally.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on October 19, 2021.