

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

April 8, 2025

### **Work Session**

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

The commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. with Budget Officer Kim Reynolds to conduct a work session to review the Worcester County Departmental Operating Budget Requests for FY26, as presented to the commissioners during their March 19, 2024 meeting. The requested FY26 Operating Budget currently reflects estimated revenues of \$284,579,909 and requested expenditures of \$286,835,734, leaving a shortfall of \$2,260,825, which must be reconciled either with reductions in expenditures, additional revenues, or a combination of the two.

Board of Education (BOE) Superintendent Louis H. Taylor, Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert, and Chief Safety & Academic Officer Annette Wallace reviewed the proposed FY26 Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) Operating Budget of \$126,182,685, representing an increase of \$11,128,285 or 10%.

The commissioners recessed for 10 minutes.

Sheriff Matt Crisafulli reviewed the proposed FY26 Sheriff's Office Budget of \$20,385,451, representing an increase of \$3,104,586 or 18%.

Fire Marshal Matt Owens reviewed the proposed FY26 Fire Marshal's Office Budget of \$1,469,304, representing a decrease of (\$2,355) or 0%; FY26 Fire Training Center budget request of \$96,900, representing a decrease of (\$21,372) or -18%; and FY26 Emergency Services Operating Budget of \$5,865,456, representing an increase of \$1,324,635 or 29%.

State's Attorney Kris Heiser reviewed the proposed FY26 State's Attorney's Office Budget of \$4,609,821, representing a decrease of (\$145,353) or -3%. Ms. Heiser advised that this reduction reflects the elimination of all previously grant-funded positions when the grants ended.

Information Technology Director Brian Jones reviewed the proposed FY26 Information Technology Budget of \$1,708,149, representing an increase of \$82,341 or 5%; Other General Government – MIS (Document Imaging) of \$1,842,580, representing an increase of \$871,963 or 90% (this increase includes the purchase and installation of permitting software for use within Development Review and Permitting).

Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados and Parks Superintendent Jacob Stephens reviewed the proposed FY26 Recreation Budget of \$3,334,288, representing an increase of \$500,380 or 18%; Parks Budget of \$1,757,866, representing a decrease of (\$766,461) or -30%; and Boat Landings Budget of \$406,513, representing an increase of \$352,075 or 647%. Commissioner Fiori thanked Recreation and Parks staff for a job well done bringing on new playground equipment to improve parks and taking over the County Fair.

Human Resources Director Stacey Norton reviewed the proposed FY26 Human Resources Budget of \$838,243, representing an increase of \$53,068 or 7%.

Deputy Finance Officer Jessica Wilson reviewed the proposed FY26 Treasurer's Office Budget of \$1,946,020, representing an increase of \$3,181 or 0%; and Debt Service of \$10,080,635, representing a decrease of (\$3,121,808) or -23.7%.

Library Director Jennifer Ranck reviewed the proposed FY26 Library Budget of \$4,805,729, representing an increase of \$519,313 or 12%.

Development Review and Permitting (DRP) Director Jennifer Keener reviewed the proposed FY26 DRP Budget of \$3,300,568 representing an increase of \$158,430 or 5%.

Warden Tim Mulligan reviewed the proposed FY26 County Jail Budget of \$15,798,670, representing an increase of \$1,558,101 or 11%.

The commissioners recessed for lunch.

After lunch, the commissioners resumed their budget discussions.

Representatives from the fire services reviewed the proposed FY26 EMS and Fire Department Budget of \$13,720,627, representing an increase of \$1,530,711 or 13%.

Lower Shore Area Extension Director Kathy Decker reviewed the FY26 University of Maryland Extension Agency Budget of \$282,741, representing an increase of \$15,247 or 6%.

Ms. Reynolds reviewed the proposed FY26 County Administration Budget of \$2,050,614, representing an increase of \$190,310 or 10%; Orphan's Court Budget of \$80,199, representing a decrease of (\$201) or 0%; Other General Government Budget of \$6,292,540, representing an increase of \$1,749,441 or 39%; Wor-Wic Community College Budget of \$2,707,168, representing an increase of \$89,168 or 3%; Other Natural Resources Budget of \$615,800, representing a decrease of (\$10,135) or -2%; Taxes Shared with Towns Budget of \$4,068,096, representing an increase of \$437,982 or 12%; Grants to Towns of \$8,627,048, representing an increase of \$2,009,420 or 30%; Interfund Budget of \$6,356,736, representing a decrease of (\$3,582,425) or -36%; Other Social Services Budget of \$967,940, representing an increase of \$331,313 or 52%, as outlined in the requests from the County nonprofit organizations; and Other Recreation and Culture Budget of \$95,001, representing an increase of \$15,001 or 19%.

In response to a question by Commissioner Mitrecic, Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young stated that raising the room tax by 1% would raise an additional \$400,000 in revenues in the unincorporated areas of the County, plus an administrative fee that is charged to the Town of Ocean City. M how much more would it be if we raised room tax 1% for unincorporated areas, plus admin fee charged to OC? WY another \$400k.

The commissioners adjourned at 1:41 p.m. to meet again on May 6, 2025.