

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

January 6, 2026

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

Following a motion by Commissioner Fiori, seconded by Commissioner Bunting, 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, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, and Human Resources Director Stacey Norton and Deputy Director Pat Walls. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: a personnel update; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions, including discussing potential board appointments

Following a motion by Commissioner Bunting, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:24 a.m.

After the closed session, the commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Elder called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Davida Washington 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 December 16, 2026 meeting as presented.

Commissioner Elder opened the floor to receive public comments.
There being no public comments, Commissioner Elder closed the floor.

The commissioners presented a proclamation recognizing January as National Mentoring Month to Allison Wright of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lower Eastern Shore and encouraged area residents to consider becoming volunteers.

The commissioners presented a years-of-service commendation to Water and Wastewater Shared Facilities Supervisor Gary Serman, who is retiring following 40 years of service.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously approved by consent agenda item numbers 2-3 and 5 as follows: out-of-state travel for two Recreation and

Parks staff to attend the Tri-State CAMP Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey March 10-12, 2026; an updated bidders list of contractors qualified to provide housing rehabilitation services; and scheduling a hearing to obtain public comments on a request to establish the Residential Planned Community (RPC) floating zone as part of the Racetrack Village Step I Concept Plan review.

The commissioners reviewed a request from the Town of Snow Hill for a letter of support for a grant application being submitted to the Maryland Energy Administration's Resilient Maryland Program, with funds to be used for a planning energy infrastructure assessment and improvement plan for battery storage. Commissioner Bertino stated that current fire suppression technology has not yet advanced to a level capable of containing or extinguishing fires involving battery energy storage systems, which pose serious safety hazards for fire fighters. In response to a question from Commissioner Purnell, Commissioner Bertino noted that Town Manager Rick Pollitt was not available to answer questions about the project prior to the meeting, but that this issue could be revisited once the town is able to provide additional information. Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young advised that the deadline to file the grant was at the end of the calendar year, and the town can put forward the request without a letter of support from the County.

Following some discussion, the Commissioners voted 5-2, with Commissioners Mitreic and Purnell voting in opposition, to deny the request to send a letter of support.

Pursuant to the request of Sheriff Matthew Crisafulli and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners voted 6-0-1, with Commissioner Bunting abstaining, to approve out-of-state travel for eight Sheriff's Tactical Armed Response Team (STAR) Team members to take part in Hostage Rescue Training in Moyock, North Carolina April 26-May 1 and for eight additional STAR Team members to take part in that same training May 3-8.

In response to a question from Commissioner Bunting, Sheriff Crisafulli stated that this STAR Team training is State mandated through COMAR. He confirmed that the Sheriff's Office is always identifying opportunities to apply for grant funds to help offset the costs associated with such training.

Pursuant to the request of IT Director Brian Jones and upon a motion by Commissioner Fiori, the commissioners unanimously accepted the proposal from Delmarva Document Solutions to lease a plotter/scanner at a cost of \$359.99 per month for sixty months for use within Development Review and Permitting. This request was approved as an over-expenditure.

Pursuant to the request of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners unanimously approved an over-expenditure of \$13,959.68 in salary, plus \$3,295.88 for benefits to provide additional hours to an intern who is needed to complete additional field services due to the upcoming extended sick leave of an existing full-time employee.

Pursuant to the request of Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously authorized County staff to begin conversations with the Town of Berlin to secure sewer access for the concession stand located on

the east parcel at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex.

Pursuant to the request of Public Works Director Dallas Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Fiori, the commissioners unanimously authorized payment in the amount of \$30,643.68 to EA Engineering, Science, and Technology for groundwater monitoring services at the Central Landfill in FY24. FY24 invoices were submitted to the County late due to EA's transition to a new financial tracking/management software.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously approved an intergovernmental loan of \$618,000 for the Lewis Road sewer project.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously approved the Sunset Avenue Sewer Extra Work Order for \$22,150 for additional work to be completed by JW Salm Engineering. The work is related to connecting the Landings and Assateague Point sewer systems to the West Ocean City sewer system.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved certain over-expenditures within the Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund for needed capital equipment and other expenses.

The commissioners conducted a hearing to receive public comments on the proposed Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund (CRRF) Plan. Mr. Young explained that this is for the distribution and management of grants from cannabis-related revenues that the County has delegated to the Local Management Board (LMB).

LMB Director Shylia Tingle reviewed the grant award process, noting that existing applicants will be able to update and resubmit their applications to match new requirements handed down from the State after the original submission deadline. She further advised that the LMB will develop a committee that will include representation from the commissioners, to evaluate and determine which applicants will receive funds, with grant recipients to be notified on or before April 2026. She then reviewed the ongoing assistance and reporting requirements for awardees.

Commissioner Elder opened the floor to receive public comments.

In response to questions from Lisa Challenger of the Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Ms. Tingle confirmed non-profit entities countywide that serve residents in the 21811 area would be eligible to apply for grant funds.

In response to questions from Frederick Jarmon of Bishopville, Ms. Tingle confirmed that area churches are eligible to apply for grant funding.

In response to a question from Child Advocacy Center Director Lauren Cooper, Mike Trader, the director of planning, quality, and core services for the Health Department, said that awardees will not be required to spend grant funds in the fiscal year in which they are awarded; rather, the expenditure of grant funds would be more closely aligned to project timelines.

In response to questions from Sara Gorfinkel of the Town of Berlin, who asked if grant funding could be used for construction of a new community center or if it is limited to programs, Mr. Trader said that the regulations do not state that funding cannot be applied to construction;

however, he urged the town to include a strong case for how the construction project tackles community-based initiatives when submitting the revised grant application.

There being no further public comments, Commissioner Elder closed the floor.

Ms. Tingle advised that the LMB will finalize the revised CRRF Plan and provide a copy to the commissioners.

Development Review and Permitting Director Jennifer Keener presented a request from the Town of Snow Hill to annex approximately 46.26 acres on the easterly side of MD Rt. 394 to bring the town's domestic groundwater production well and property into the town limits to be eligible for grant funding. The town's proposed R-1 and R-2 zoning classifications are generally consistent with uses within the County's existing R-1 zoning classification. Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously concurred with the rezoning upon annexation of the subject property.

The commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Purnell, the commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Julie Rayne to the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council and Sarah Blackburn to the Commission for Women.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Lynn Duffy to the Housing Review Board.

Pursuant to the request of Fire Marshal Matt Owens and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved an over-expenditure of \$59,559 within the Fire Marshal's Office to replace an emergency response vehicle that was totaled in a vehicle accident.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously directed County staff to develop an option to place speed humps on Gum Point Road, to include potential design and cost estimates, for their consideration at a future meeting. This proposal is to address concerns raised by several individuals residing on this road. In response to questions from the commissioners, Mr. Baker said that speed bumps damage County snow plowing equipment; however, speed humps do not interfere with this equipment.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on January 20, 2026.