

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

April 7, 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 Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Fiori, 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; hiring Cole Jarman and Jason Kopp as plant operator trainees within the Water and Wastewater Division and other matters with Human Resources; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions, including discussing potential board appointments.

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:56 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 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 March 17, 2026 meeting as presented.

The commissioners presented a proclamation to Housing Program Coordinator Davida Washington recognizing April as Fair Housing Month.

The commissioners presented a proclamation to Health Department officials recognizing April 6-12, 2026 as Public Health Week.

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

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved by consent agenda item numbers 2-21 as follows: filing an FY27 Gun Violence Reduction grant application for \$30,000 and an FY27 Police Recruitment and Retention grant application for \$37,424 for use within the Sheriff's Office; signing the Local Government Energy Modernization grant agreement for \$171,507 to plan and execute energy efficiency projects at various County-owned facilities; amending the Plumbing Poverty Program grant agreement; accepting a CDBG Housing Grant for \$300,000 to conduct housing rehabilitation activities to benefit low and moderate income homeowners; irrevocably transferring the County's annual Housing Bond totaling \$2,567,423 to the Community Development Administration, for use in issuing housing bonds or mortgage credit certificates on behalf of this jurisdiction; authorizing out-of-state travel for three staff within County Administration to attend the Association of Government Accountants Professional Development Training in Washington, D.C. July 20-23, 2026; out-of-state travel for one staff member within Tourism and Economic Development to attend the 34<sup>th</sup> annual Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College May 31 through June 5, 2026; a camera system project change order for an additional \$9,106.62 to add cameras to the Homeowner Convenience Center at 9636 Mill Haven Road in Berlin; scheduling a public hearing on the proposed FY26 budget amendment; scheduling a public hearing on the Gum Point Road speed hump pilot project; a change order for an additional \$1,986.35 to cover increased parts costs for Ocean Pines Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) repairs; an over-expenditure of \$3,845 for the Cove Road pipe project; awarding the bid for the purchase of corrugated metal and plastic pipe for the Roads Division to Lane Enterprises, LLC for \$94,057.90; awarding the bid for the overhead pipe corrosion protection project at the Ocean Pines WWTP to Pro-Coat for \$46,290; awarding the bid for blacktop resurfacing at the Public Works administration building to Surface Solutions for \$31,202; awarding the bid for blacktop resurfacing at the recreation center to Surface Solutions for \$85,905; awarding the bid for the John Walter Smith Park perimeter trail project to Marshall's Professional Property Management for \$156,459; an estimated over-expenditure of \$2,600 for water usage at the Showell Park concession stand; granting special use of the Isle of Wight to the Town of Ocean City June 12-14, 2026 as a landing zone for a military helicopter during the Ocean City Air Show; granting special use of the South Point Boat Ramp to the Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) the week of April 7 to launch their artificial nesting platform to benefit state-listed endangered birds; and approving an in-kind match for the MCBP of \$425,000 for the National Estuary Program grant of \$850,000.

The Commissioners met with Procurement Officer Ed Welch to review bids for the renovation of the Snow Hill Branch Library. While Oak submitted the lowest responsive bid at \$2,178,005, Commissioner Bunting recommended awarding the contract to Harkins Contracting, a Salisbury-based local firm, which submitted the second-lowest responsive bid of \$2,190,710. The commissioners expressed a preference to support local contractors when bids are comparable in price, emphasizing the importance of keeping local businesses working and reinvesting in the community.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Mitrecic voting in opposition, to award the bid to Harkins.

Pursuant to the request of Emergency Services Director Chris Shaffer and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved an over-expenditure of \$1,556.73 to cover funds expended for cleanup, snow and debris removal, and lodging for National Guards who helped respond to 2026 Winter Storm Hernando. Commissioner Fiori thanked County staff for their outstanding storm response.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Shaffer and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously authorized Emergency Services to acquire, at no cost, two Site on Wheels mobile communications trailers from the State of Delaware Division of Communications to enhance emergency response and radio coverage capabilities for Worcester County and the region.

The commissioners conducted a public hearing on a Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan amendment application submitted by Attorney Hugh Cropper on behalf of multiple property owners to expand the water and sewer planning areas for the Riddle Farm Sanitary Service Area (SSA) to include multiple commercial properties on the south side of Route 50 (Ocean Gateway), west of Herring Creek, specifically identified on Tax Map 26 as Parcels 133, 136, 137, 383, 471, and 256. Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell advised that the Planning Commission found the proposed amendment to be consistent with the County's Comprehensive Development Plan

Commissioner Elder opened the floor to receive public comment.

Mr. Cropper concurred with the findings of the Planning Commission and asked the commissioners to accept the findings and staff testimony as his testimony as well.

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

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution amending the Worcester County Water and Sewerage Plan and expansion of the Riddle Farm SSA as requested.

Enterprise Fund Controller Quinn Dittrich met with the commissioners to discuss options to resolve a long-standing Landings intergovernmental loan of \$188,000. Mr. Dittrich explained that the County used General Fund dollars nearly two decades ago to cover additional infrastructure work tied to the Toll Brothers project, creating a liability owed by the service area. The debt had remained on the County's books without repayment and was recently flagged by auditors, prompting the need for action. The commissioners questioned the origin and fairness of the charge, particularly whether the improvements directly benefited Landings ratepayers, and they expressed concern about imposing significant new costs on residents through a surcharge. Several commissioners noted the age of the debt, the financial hardship of the service area, and the lack of prior collection efforts.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously agreed to forgive the full outstanding balance of \$188,000.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Welch and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously awarded the low bid for FY26 paving projects for the Roads Division to Allan Myers for \$922,374.93.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Welch and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously awarded the contract to develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan to Chloeta Holdings, LLC for \$89,887. 29.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Human Resources Officer Stacey Norton and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved the FY27 CareFirst final medical and pharmacy renewal for active employees and retirees under 65, which reflects an increase of 16.8% or \$5,844,791. Commissioner Mitrecic stressed the need to remember these increases to the employees at budget time, when the commissioners consider Step and Cost of Living Adjustments.

Pursuant to the request of Public Works Director Dallas Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners voted 6-0, with Commissioner Bertino temporarily out of the room, to approve the contract from Alpha Space Control for FY26 road stripping at \$0.095 cents per foot up to \$70,000.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously agreed to send a letter to the Sussex County Council urging them to pursue all available legal avenues to challenge the recent Delaware Court ruling on Senate Bill 159, which requires the permitting of an electric substation as an allowed conditional use, an act that undermined the council's ability to make land use decisions that reflect the needs and priorities of its communities.

Commissioner Mitrecic also discussed the need for memorandums of understanding to ensure the County is prepared to provide shelters during mass emergencies. In response to a question by Commissioner Mitrecic, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Candace Savage advised that the Board of Elections is meeting April 16 to discuss a request from the commissioners to utilize the Ocean City Senior Center as the polling location during the Primary Election and the Convention Center during the General Election, to avoid any confusion that could be caused by utilizing the Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort.

Commissioner Fiori recognized the need for the County to have agreements in place with all of the major utilities to ensure that County officials are informed of where work is being completed to clear downed lines during storms and other events.

In response to a request from Commissioner Abbott, Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young agreed to provide the commissioners with the after action report issued following the recent snowstorms.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on April 21, 2026.