

July 8, 2025

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 10:00 a.m., with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, President, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price. The meeting was convened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to remain silent for prayers for Texas residents and their communities.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, were also present.

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners, by unanimous vote, approved all sixteen consent items as presented:

1. Regular Session Minutes, June 24, 2025
2. Liquor Minutes, June 24, 2025
3. Public Hearing Minutes, June 24, 2025
4. Closed Session Minutes, June 24, 2025
5. Rock Hall Yacht Club School of Sailing, Raffle Only, July 24 & July 25, 2025
6. Betterton Community Development Corporation, Combined Gaming Device, August 1 & August 2, 2025
7. Kent County Public Schools – FY2026 Annual Budget Certification Statement
8. Kent County Public Schools – FY2026 Electronic Transfer Request
9. Environmental Operations Division – FY2026 Midshore II Regional Landfill Tipping Fees not to exceed \$140,000.00
10. Environmental Operations Division - FY2026 Landfill Monitoring
 - a. Nicholson Contract #26EONLFM0626 in the amount of \$185,300.00
 - b. Dulin Contract #26EODRLF0626 in the amount of \$39,172.50
11. Kent County Detention Center (KCDC)– FY2026 Correct Rx Pharmacy Services Agreement – Not to Exceed \$70,000.00
12. KCDC – FY2026 Substance Use Disorder Telehealth Services with University of Maryland- \$86,531.000
13. KCDC– Acceptance of FY2026 Medication Assisted Treatment Grant No. 46 for \$198,340.50 from Maryland’s Office of Overdose Response
14. Office of Emergency Services (OES) – Motorola Solutions SUA & Maintenance Proposal Contract #USC000005995 and Contract #USC000006855 – FY2026 expense \$71,701.83
15. OES – Quality Control Program Renewal. Funded by the Maryland 9-1-1 Board for \$41,280.00
16. Planning, Housing, and Zoning – FY2026 Critical Area Grant Contract Agreement No. K00P6600019 for \$5,000.00

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Proclamation – Parks and Recreation Month, July 2025 – Jill Coleman, Director, gave an overview of the Parks and Recreation accomplishments and the importance of County Parks and Facilities. Also in attendance were Sandy Adams, Administrative Assistant II; Haili Walbert Davis, Administrative Assistant I; Michele Morgan, Program Coordinator; Greg Welch, Program Coordinator, Ginny Faust, Facility Monitor, and Michaela Wilson, Facility Monitor. Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation into the record and presented the document to staff.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennel License – Thomas N. Yeager, Attorney, gave an overview of the application and request. On June 10, 2025, the Wicomico Hunt Club applied for a Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennel License related to the property at 12474 Barrett Farm Road. The application responds to the requirements in Chapter 64: Animals, Article II, including a detailed narrative, survey plat, floor plans, aerials with setbacks, and sound-proofing documentation. The application also requests approval of a temporary location while the construction of improvements at the proposed permanent location is undertaken. On June 24, the Kent County Commissioners sitting as the Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennel Licensing Board held a public hearing and held the record open to receive public comments in writing until the close of business on Friday, June 24, 2025. To date, no public comment has been received, and no members of the public spoke at the public hearing. This application is subject to the review outlined in Chapter 64: Animals, Article II, in the Local Public Laws of Kent County, Maryland. As part of its considerations, the Board may, at its discretion, include conditions to address traffic, public services, exterior lighting, landscaping, and any other conditions to address consistency with State and local regulations. The Board may also include conditions on the hours, days, and/or seasons of operations; parking; equipment; accessory vehicles; and any accessory uses. Genevieve MacFarlane, Esquire, Law Offices of Stevens Palmer, LLC, Attorney Representative for Wicomico Hunt Club, was available to answer questions and gave an overview of the temporary housing of the dogs until the fencing and concrete pad are completed. Eden Kloetzli, Master of Foxhounds, provided further information regarding the temporary housing of the dogs and the renovations for the primary kennel that are being done. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners approved the application as presented. The 12-Month Probationary Physical Location License No. 1 was issued for 12474 Barrett Farm Road, Worton.

STATE’S ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

Brian DiGregory, State’s Attorney, requested funds for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Prosecutor by Karpel (PBK) software (case management system) implemented in 2024. The annual maintenance cost is \$8,800.00, which is the total amount requested. This cost was not included in the State’s Attorney’s Office’s FY2026 budget but will be included in future budget requests. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the fund balance expenditure of \$8,800.00 to maintain the case management system for the State’s Attorney’s office.

KENT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Robert Bell, Executive Director, Kent County Public Library (KCPL), discussed the Library's FY2026 funding request. Also in attendance were John Murphy, Treasurer, Library Board of Trustees, and Chris Walmsley, Director of Office Administration. Mr. Bell provided a FY2026 KCPL Budget Request Clarification document for the Commissioners' review. Mr. Bell asked for additional funding. Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer of the Kent County Finance Department, provided further information regarding Mr. Bell's request. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners approved the correction amount of \$5,153.00.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Ms. Coleman and Joanne McNamara, Grants Program Administrator, discussed a grant project. Kent County Parks and Recreation (KCPR) maintains a Community Garden at Turner's Creek Park, which is used for educational and hands-on experiential learning for participants in its youth summer enrichment programming. Wayne Gilchrest maintains the garden through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established between Gilchrest and the County for a term from June 24, 2024, through June 25, 2027. During this period, Mr. Gilchrest will manage and oversee the day-to-day operations of the community garden. To improve the children's educational experiences using the garden via KCPR enrichment and summer programs. The department seeks to install a solar well to provide a continual water source for the garden. This will alleviate the need to physically transport water to the site, which is the current process. A proposal quote received estimates the total cost of this work at approximately \$20,000.00. The Chesapeake Bay Trust has a maximum grant request of \$10,000.00. While this will not fully cover expenses, this grant application will offset the costs. At the same time, supplemental funding can be pursued for the remainder of FY2026, with the hope of finding additional funding to complete this work during FY2027. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners approved staff to proceed with a grant application to the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Scott Boone, Director, Information Technology, requested approval of a grant and authorization to purchase. Kent County Information Technology (KCIT) department applied for four grants under the Maryland Department of Emergency Management in October 2024. The grants were put on hold at the federal level. KCIT received approval from the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program on June 25, 2025, to move forward with the FY2023 Cybersecurity Grants. The projects must be completed by September 30, 2027. KCIT requests approval of the 2023 Sub-Recipient Agreement Award No. 23-SR-8851-03 for \$136,064.00. KCIT is also requesting authorization to piggyback off the government contracts provided. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the 2023 Sub-Recipient Agreement for June 2025, through August 31, 2027. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the vendors associated with each project and approved the piggybacking of the listed government contracts.

The Commissioners commented on Kent County's various projects and efforts to enhance internet access.

LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director, and Vauné Johnson, Human Resources Specialist, requested funding for position reclassification. Kent County Local Management Board's (KCLMB) FY2026 budget included 60% funding for a full-time grade 4 administrative position. KCLMB requests an increase in its budget and funding 100% of the cost to hire a Fiscal Specialist grade 5 position at 32 hours a week (4 days). KCLMB cannot use 40% of the State Local Care Team funds for the reclassified position because the position duties no longer include Local Care Team support duties. The Systems of Care Coordinator can fulfill those duties on their own. An additional amount of \$2,389.00 is needed to cover the position. If the County does not hire anyone before August, the request will not be necessary. Moving forward, KCLMB will also be able to use funds from the ENOUGH LMB Capacity Building grant toward this position, but the State has not yet released the paperwork for those funds. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the additional \$2,389.00 for the reclassified position with the KCLMB from fund balance.

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Granillo Ramsey requested approval to reclassify the current grade 4 position to a grade 5 position to better align with the department's operational needs. This revised role would primarily focus on managing all fiscal functions within the department, including grant funds received. Discussion took place. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the reclassification of the existing position of Administrative Specialist I to Fiscal Compliance Specialist for the Local Management Board.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Ms. Johnson requested the approval of a recommended candidate to fill the Public Works Environmental Operation Division vacancy. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

Rachael Morlock, Human Resources Specialist I, requested approval to fill the Part-time Paramedic vacancy in the Emergency Medical Services. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

Commissioner Price motioned for the County Administrator to be authorized to hire emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, both paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), until the department becomes fully staffed. The Commissioners are to be kept informed before extending the employment offer. Commissioner Nickerson seconded the motion, which the Commissioners unanimously approved.

Ms. Morlock requested approval to fill the Associate Planner vacancy in the Department of Planning, Housing, and Zoning. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

Jennifer White, Human Resources Business Partner, presented a variety of proposed employee appreciation events for the Commissioners to consider. As a part of the FY2026 budget, the Human Resources (HR) Department budgeted \$40,760.00 to hold four employee relations events. The first proposed event is a summer picnic held at Parks and Recreation. This event would be a collaborative effort between Parks and Recreation and the HR Department. The event would be held in July/early August of 2025, and all employees and their families would be invited to attend. The second proposed event is to distribute hams and turkeys to all employees before Thanksgiving. The third event is the annual employee appreciation dinner. Unlike in past years, it will be held in January/February 2026. This was suggested based on the survey results conducted after the 2024 event. Approximately one-third of the employees attended, which was due to the timing of the event and its proximity to the Christmas holiday. Finally, HR proposes an employee service awards luncheon. This event was separated from the annual employee appreciation dinner due to the responses to the survey following the 2024 event. Based on the survey results, employees felt their service to the County was not appropriately recognized at the larger event. This event would be held in March 2026, as March 6, 2026, is nationally recognized as "Employee Appreciation Day". It would be held during the workday, allowing employees and their immediate supervisors to attend the luncheon. Additionally, employees attaining significant milestones, e.g., 25, 30, etc., years of service, would be permitted to invite family members to share their accomplishments. The department asked for feedback from the Commissioners on each proposed event. After much discussion, Commissioner Price made a motion that Commissioner Nickerson seconded, and unanimously approved for staff to form a Committee to organize the following: A summer family picnic to be held at the Community Center on August 3rd from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., plan an Employee Appreciation Dinner in January 2026, an Employee Recognition Luncheon the first week in March in the Commissioners' Office, and schedule a Halloween Event.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Chesapeake College Board of Trustees - Due to Chesapeake College's status as a regional community college supported by five counties, the trustee members (including those who renew) are nominated by the College's council or County Commissioner members. In this case, Brenda Shorter's renewal request (nomination) for her third and final term will be forwarded to Delegate Jay Jacobs, who traditionally formally nominates Kent County's trustee representative to the Governor's Appointment Office. From there, the Governor's Appointment Office handles the nomination for selection and appointment by the Governor. The Maryland Assembly will ultimately confirm the appointment in the next regular session. Ms. Shorter is expected to continue representing Kent County as a member of the Board of Trustees while her renewal process is completed. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Kent County's Chesapeake College Board of Trustees' recommendation and signed the letter as submitted.

Washington College - Dr. Chelsea Peters, Director, Watershed Innovation, Washington College, requested a letter of support for a grant proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resiliency Fund for the Langford Watershed Alliance Project. The proposal is due July 17, 2025. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the letter of support to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resiliency Fund for Washington College.

Resolution 2025-09 - A Resolution To Establish A Special Revenue Fund For Opioid Restitution Fund Settlement Proceeds And To Authorize The County Administrator To Establish And Implement Processes For Distributing And Managing Grants From The Proceeds Of The Fund Pursuant To The Approval Of Such Grants By The County Commissioners And In Accordance With Applicable Laws. The national opioid litigation resulted in a settlement to the State of Maryland in 2022, through which settlement payments from several drug manufacturers and distributors have been allocated to Kent County based on a formula set by the state of Maryland, and which will continue to be allocated to Kent County on an annual basis through 2038. Use of these funds is restricted by law, and the terms of the settlement agreement are to fund programs, services, supports, and resources for substance use disorder prevention, treatment, recovery, and/or harm reduction. Through this Resolution, the County will establish a Special Revenue Fund for the separate accounting and holding of settlement funds received to date. It will continue to receive these funds until 2038, as well as delegating authority to establish a grant program that will allow the County to identify programs and services to bring to the Commissioners for approval and to allow them to direct how the funds should be distributed based on the allowable uses and according to the needs of Kent County. As of June 2025, Kent County has been allocated approximately \$387,097.00 in Targeted Abatement Funds that are waiting to be distributed by the State and has received over \$200,000.00 in additional direct allocations, from which it can begin awarding grants for substance use treatment, prevention, and mitigation. Ms. McNamara gave an overview of the resolution and its provisions for the grant process. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners approved and adopted Resolution 2025-09, as presented.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Planning, Housing, and Zoning: Commissioner Fithian signed the ODP Business Solutions Quote No. 646705 in the amount of \$37,068.82 for the purchase of new office furniture at the June 24, 2025, meeting. The Omnia Contract R240112 pricing was valid through July 3, 2025, and needed approval before the next meeting to eliminate price increases.

Public Service Announcement (PSA): The County Commissioners and Senator Van Hollen will hold a special work session on July 9, 2025, at 12:15 p.m., via a Zoom meeting to discuss Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. Despite this being a Zoom meeting, the Commissioners' hearing room will be open to the public for anyone wishing to attend.

PSA: There will be a joint meeting of the County Commissioners and Kent County Public Schools Board of Education on July 15, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., at Kent County Middle School, 402 East

Campus Avenue, Chestertown, to discuss the Middle School project along with other capital projects.

KCPL FY2026 Transfer Schedule—Commissioner Fithian signed the Library's ACH transfer schedule for FY2026 during the June 24, 2025, meeting. Based on the approved budget action today, a new schedule will be prepared to include \$5,153.00.

LETTER FOR SIGNATURE

Staff received a request to waive property tax late fees and water and sewer interest assessed on a property on Berryman Road, Rock Hall, MD 21661. The Commissioners reviewed the request and submission during the June 24, 2025, meeting and denied the waiver. A letter of response was prepared for the Commissioners' signature.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENT

Commissioner Fithian reported his disappointment with the Kent County Health Department's letter regarding perc tests in Kent County.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place. Mike Waal, a Kent County resident, expressed his opinion about the Kent County Health Department's role in Kent County.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Maryland Department of the Environment, Water, and Science Administration sent a notice of application received for a State Permit and Opportunity for a Hearing. Application KE2025G001/01 was obtained from Lester C. Jones & Sons, Inc., 12667 Massey Road, Massey, MD 21650. The notice was available for review.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

The Commissioners received a copy of the final ARPA Spend Plan report.

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2025 Contingency Fund balance as of June 24, 2025, is \$1,238.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$680,572.00.

The FY2026 Contingency Fund balance as of June 24, 2025, is \$396,400.00. To date, no use of the Fund Balance has been requested.

CLOSED SESSION

At 11:52 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, and carried unanimously to go into a closed session. The meeting was closed under the Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b)(14) Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney; Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works; Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk/KATE Manager; and Lacey T. Cox, Deputy Clerk II, were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1 BID PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Topic to be discussed: The qualitative evaluation of a Request for Proposal regarding the acquisition of land.

Reason for closing: The components being considered for a Request for Proposal regarding the acquisition of land should be shielded, and specific details about the proposed property should be protected.

Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, stated that the bid period for the Request for Proposal (RFP) is scheduled to close. Due to the nature of this RFP, Mr. Mattson asked the Commissioners for input concerning the assessment criteria.

At 12:24 p.m., a motion made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adjourned the closed session and reconvened in an open session.

OPEN SESSION

MATTER NO.1: BID PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Commissioner Price reported that the Board had closed-session discussions involving two situations. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners approved instructions for the Public Works Director to proceed with the criteria and rating form to be used for a project in the near future, when bids are opened, which involves a scoring sheet. Legal advice was sought from the County Attorney regarding future public works initiatives.

At 12:26 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Regular Session Minutes
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Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

Ronald H. Fithian, President,
The County Commissioners
of Kent County, Maryland

July 8, 2025

The Board of License Commissioners met today with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, presiding, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, were also present.

CONSENT ITEM

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Consent Item #2 - Liquor Minutes, June 24, 2025.

KENT ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT (KATE)

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 228 submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) Liquor License Application for approval to sell beer only on July 6, 2025, for Waterman's Day at the Rock Hall Bulkhead. The submission did not provide enough time to place the application on the June 24, 2025, meeting agenda for approval, and the event occurred before this meeting. The Commissioners offered no objection to the issuance of a license. Special Class C (Per Diem) Liquor License No. 2025 PD-27 was issued to the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 228 on June 26, 2025.

At 12:26 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price; the Commissioners unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk/KATE Manager

Approved:

Ronald H. Fithian, President
The County Commissioners
of Kent County, Maryland