

July 22, 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 all the individuals lost in Texas and Chase Dolgos (John Dolgos, Security Officer's son), who will receive his last treatment for cancer, and is doing great.

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 nine consent items as presented:

1. Regular Session Minutes, July 15, 2025
2. Liquor Minutes, July 15, 2025
3. Greenwill Consulting Group, LLC – Agreement Renewal July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, in the amount of \$30,000.00, with not-to-exceed reimbursements cost of \$1,000.00
4. Information Technology - FY2026 PC Refresh Devices approvals for Daly Computer as the vendor and the purchase amount of \$149,930.00
5. Kent Family Center – Acceptance of Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Supplemental Funding Award in the amount of \$30,000.00
6. Office of Emergency Services – 9-1-1 Center Kitchen Refresh Project Contingency Funding Request in the amount of \$9,127.54
7. Public Works – Edesville Park Renovations, Playground Specialists Inc., Proposal 32214D in the amount of \$99,796.00
8. Public Works – Worton Park – Baseball Fields Renovations K/C Grounds Maintenance Proposals:
 - a. Orem Field total \$15,350.28
 - b. Other (5) Fields total \$45,750.28
9. Water and Wastewater Division, Water and Sewer Allocation Request and Public Works Agreement, Howard and Robin Bauer

HUMAN RESOURCES

Jennifer White, Business Partner of Human Resources, discussed amendments proposed to the Kent County Employee Handbook as detailed in Resolution 2025-12. The previous Re-Employment policy did not allow rehired employees to have any applicable leave accrual rates reinstated, only during prior years of service. The Human Resources (HR) department has amended this policy to allow individuals rehired within twelve (12) months of leaving County employment to have their prior years of service counted towards their total years of service and any applicable leave accrual rates. The department has also amended the policy to include guidelines for acceptable proper notice when employees separate from the County. The resolution includes a retroactive date effective January 1, 2025. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and

seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the amended Re-Employment policy and adopted Resolution 2025-12.

STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Bryan DiGregory, State's Attorney, and Joanne McNamara, Grants Program Administrator, requested approval to accept Grant No. PIGF-2026-0013 Kent's Tackling Recidivism with Alternatives, Connections, and Knowledge (TRACK) Project in the amount of \$207,890.00. In April, the State's Attorney's Office (SAO) submitted a grant application to reinstate its Recidivism program. It was first established in FY2024 and successfully helped many people, but unfortunately, it lost grant funding in FY2025. The FY2026 grant application PIG-2026-0013 was approved; however, due to limitations on the overall grant funding available at the state level, the state opted to approve the application but did not award the full \$250,000.00 as requested. The total award amount offered by the state is \$207,890.00. To accommodate this reduced award, SAO has adjusted its proposed budget to reduce the number of contracted services for workforce development. However, it has continued to budget grant funding to fully support the salaries of two new hires who would provide case management services for individuals served by the program. The FY2024 Recidivism Grant assisted over 100 individuals in Kent County and achieved positive results for many of the participants, but the loss of grant funding in FY2025 interrupted the positive trajectory of improvement for this program. SAO looks forward to returning this program to individuals within Kent County who could benefit from support in accessing services and workforce development skills to help them avoid future arrests and interactions with the justice system. Incremental new costs to the County are likely to be somewhere lower than the maximum projected, and the County would receive an overall benefit from the addition of nearly \$208,000.00 in grant funding for programs that help constituents obtain gainful employment, reduce arrests, and contribute to improving quality of life in the County. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the acceptance of the grant award, as presented, with a potential request for additional dollars to be requested at a future date.

PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ZONING

Bill Mackey, Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning presented Resolution 2025-13 concerning solar permitting software for adoption. In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly adopted Senate Bill 783, which requires local jurisdictions that issue permits for residential, rooftop solar, and related improvements to utilize a software program for the quick turnaround of permit reviews and issuance. The State's preferred program is Solar APP+, which requires Stripe Billing. Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, stated the terms and conditions favor the vendor and would not be acceptable if there were other alternatives available. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the adoption of Resolution 2025-13, as presented.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Pete Landon, Director, and Brad Russum, Chief of Communications, Office of Emergency Service (OES), discussed a project requiring contingency funds for the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) located in the Transmitter Building at 104 Vickers Drive, which is failing. This UPS provides backup and uninterruptible power to Kent County's Radio System, including connectivity from the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center and critical County Network infrastructure supporting the 9-1-1 Center, Detention Center, and Kent County Sheriff's Office. The existing UPS unit was initially installed in 1989 and has operated 24/7 since its installation. Replacement of this UPS is necessary to ensure the continued operation of the County radio and network systems, maintaining reliable communications and emergency services throughout Kent County. Kent County Information Technology (KCIT) has recommended CPG as the vendor, as they provide State of Maryland Contract Pricing and are the current vendor of the UPS located at 400 High Street. A comparable company (Chesapeake Mission Critical - CMC) was also selected to bid on the project and provided a turn-key quote of \$49,035.95. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the allocation of \$46,751.00 from FY2026 contingency funds and accepted the CPG proposal for the project.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Scott Boone, Director, Sandy Nordhoff, Systems Administrator, of Information Technology, and Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, of Economic and Tourism Development (ETD), showcased the County's new website. In FY2025, the County Commissioners allocated funding to modernize and enhance the County's digital presence through a complete redesign of KentCounty.com and a platform migration to Revize Government Websites, a content management system purpose-built for municipal websites. The project officially launched in September 2024 with a Go Live date in a few weeks. This initiative is a key component of the County's commitment to improving citizen engagement, enhancing public transparency, and ensuring user-friendly access to government services and information. The project was led by a partnership between KCIT and ETD. At the project's outset, individual County departments were invited to provide input through structured feedback sessions. Collaboration among County departments helped shape key priorities, such as streamlined navigation, improved accessibility, and intuitive content organization.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, President of Chesapeake College, submitted documentation regarding the progress of the Queen Anne's County Technical Building and a revised summary of local funding contributions, as reviewed by Shelley L. Heller. Because of refinements and amendments, the new building will cost approximately \$48.5M. With the new cost breakdown, Kent County's share decreased from \$1,566,161.00 to \$1,344,349.00. In FY2026, Kent's share of the design is \$89,744.00, which has been budgeted. The rest is construction and will be funded in the outyears.

Ms. Heller and Ms. McNamara, Grants Program Administrator, discussed that the State of Maryland is holding funds from the National Opioid Settlement Agreement set aside for Kent County based on a state formula. The state will release these funds to Kent County upon submission of a Local Abatement Plan, which describes how the County will implement a process to spend opioid funds in accordance with allowable uses under Maryland law, which Kent County will do under Resolution 2025-09 that was adopted on July 8, 2025. Approval of the Local Abatement Plan for submission to the Maryland Office of Overdose Response is the next step in the process. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Local Abatement Plan, as presented.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Sunday Hunting – Migratory Game Birds - During the July 15, 2025, meeting, the Commissioners stressed the importance of any potential changes to the existing Sunday hunting regulations. They voiced concerns that such alterations could increase hunting pressure, potentially stressing local waterfowl populations. In light of these discussions, Ms. Heller signed letters on July 16, 2025, addressed to Joshua Kurtz, the Department of Natural Resources Secretary, and Delegate Regina T. Boyce. Delegate Jay A. Jacobs to receive a courtesy copy of these letters. Commissioner Price attended the Maryland Department of Natural Resources meeting on July 17, 2025, at Sandy Point State Park on the Western Shore. Several representatives from the Eastern Shore were also present. During the meeting, Commissioner Price represented the Kent County Commissioners. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources was adamant about the importance of allowing Sunday hunting to provide opportunities for youth and individuals who are unable to hunt on other days of the week.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENT

Kent County Middle School Project—This is a follow-up to the Kent County Public School Board of Education meeting held on July 15, 2025. Dr. Mary McComas, Superintendent for Kent County Public Schools; Kreigh Kirby, Accountant; Frank Rhodes, Trish McGee, and John Queen, Kent County Board of Education members, joined the discussion. Commissioner Price stated that information regarding the Middle School project needs to be addressed for clarification. It is essential to express that all three Commissioners support building a new Middle School. The Commissioners sent two Letters of Support for the Middle School project. Both letters were sent to Alex Donahue, Executive Director of the Interagency Commission on School Construction. One letter was sent in October 2023, and the other was sent in November 2024. Both letters expressed the need for additional State funding for a successful project. The County lacks the money for Blueprint funding and a new Middle School. The Commissioners have requested numerous times to change the Blueprint requirements and have attended the Legislative Sessions to do so. The State is unwilling to discuss Kent County's wealth formula. Commissioner Price suggested the following:

- Do nothing.
- Fund the Blueprint for the next 30 years, but the tax increases will burden all Kent County residents.

- The students can be moved to Worton Elementary School; the entire building must be fully renovated.
- Fund the construction and let the following Commissioners figure out the debt and repayments.
- It's time to put the State and Blueprint on notice. The County cannot fund the Blueprint mandates and a new school.
- Draft a letter to the state with the concerns and ask them to reconsider. If they are unwilling to reconsider, notify them that the County will not meet the demand to pay the Blueprint. There may be financial consequences.
- Encourages the Board of Education members to also send a support letter.

Dr. McComas stated that the County has already spent and dedicated so much money to date and thanked the Commissioners for their continued support and collaboration. Dr. McComas gave an overview of student achievements. Ms. McGee and Mr. Queen expressed concerns regarding Commissioner Price's options. Michael Waal, a Kent County resident, expressed concerns with the Board of Education's responses.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved having staff draft a letter of intent to the State of Maryland advising that the County may be forced to put the Blueprint increases on hold due to the County needing a new Middle School.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place. Mr. Waal expressed concerns about the proposed new Kent County Middle School and the Blueprint requirements. Piers Heriz-Smith expressed concerns about the Board of Education writing a letter of support.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICES

Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan Amendment - The purpose of the hearing is to review and receive comments on the proposed Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant Water and Sewerage Comprehensive Plan Amendment. The County has applied for State and Federal funding to design and construct a new County Wastewater Treatment Facility in Millington, replacing the existing facility. This project will provide capacity for existing and new development in Millington and the 301 economic development corridor. The County is proposing an amendment to the 2018 Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan to include the project as a condition of funding.

Code Home Rule Bill No. 5-2025 Ethics - AN ACT to repeal and re-enact with amendments Chapter 29, Ethics of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County.

Code Home Rule Bill No. 6-2025 Administration of Government - AN ACT to amend Chapter 3 Administration of Government, of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland. FOR the purpose of increasing the compensation of the County Commissioners. BY repealing Chapter 3

Administration of Government, Article I, General Provisions §3-2 Terms and Compensation, and reenacting with amendments herein.

Each public notice was duly advertised, and the above-listed hearings will be held on August 5, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland. The agenda for the meeting will be published online 24 hours in advance of the meeting on the County's website. Citizens are encouraged to participate in the public hearing process. For communication assistance, please contact the County Commissioners' Office at (410) 778-4600 and press 4 or visit Maryland Relay at www.mdrelay.org no later than noon on Friday, August 1, 2025.

A complete copy of each proposed legislative bill is available in the Commissioners' Office, 400 High Street, Chestertown, MD, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Department of Planning, Housing, and Zoning prepared the 2024 Annual Report Letter, as required by the State Land Use Article. On July 10, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed and adopted the Annual Report. In this case, no action is required by the County Commissioners. The State Land Use Article requires that Annual Reports be filed with the County Commissioners. File copies were provided.

Herb Cain, Executive Director of Upper Shore Aging, Inc., requested a letter of support for the FY2026 Senior Citizen Activities Center Operating Fund. Ms. Heller signed the letter addressed to Cameron Pollock, MHP, Food & Wellness Programs Coordinator, Maryland Department of Aging, on July 11, 2025. A copy of the letter was provided.

At the July 15, 2025, meeting, the Commissioners delegated signing authority of Enterprise Fleet Management Quotes to Ms. Heller for five vehicle purchases approved in the FY2026 Budget. On July 16, 2025, Ms. Heller signed Enterprise Management Open-End (Equity) Lease Rate Quote No. 9134847 and Quote No. 9135225. Copies of the quotes were provided.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

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

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2026 Contingency Fund balance as of July 15, 2025, is \$396,400.00. The FY2026 use of Fund Balance is \$13,953.00.

CLOSED SESSION

At 12:33 p.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)(7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and (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; Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk/KATE Manager; and Lacey T. Cox, Deputy Clerk II, were also in attendance.

MATTER NO.1: LEGAL ADVICE AND PROPOSAL PROCESS

Topic to be discussed: To discuss proposals received for a project.

Reason for closing: The proposals received for a project, and the remaining process should be shielded; and legal advice from the County Attorney is private to the public.

Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, stated the closed session is a follow-up from the previous closed session held on July 8, 2025. Mr. Mattson stated that the submitted bids for the project have been reviewed and asked the Commissioners for direction on how to move forward. Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, provided additional information for the Commissioners to consider. Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, provided legal guidance.

At 12:59 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: LEGAL ADVICE AND PROPOSAL PROCESS

Commissioner Fithian left the dais at 12:59 p.m. Commissioner Price summarized the closed session discussion regarding a potential land acquisition. The Commissioners advised the Public Works Director to proceed as discussed during the Closed Session.

At 1:01 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, adjourned the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

July 22, 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, July 15, 2025.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSES

Betterton Community Development Corporation has submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) beer, wine, and liquor license application for a two-day event on August 1st from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and August 2nd from 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Betterton Beach during the annual Betterton Days event. Jill Coleman, Director, Parks and Recreation, has been made aware of the application. The beach is open to the public during these days. Lifeguards/staff are scheduled during normal hours of operation, which does not coincide with all the hours of the planned event. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the application for a liquor license for Betterton Community Development Corporation for beer, wine, and liquor for August 1st and 2nd.

Singles on Sailboats has submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer, wine, and liquor during a sailing and party get-together at Lankford Bay Marina, being held from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on August 16, 2025. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application for Singles on Sailboats.

Commissioner Fithian left the dais at 12:59 p.m. At 1:01 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price; the Commissioners, by a majority vote, adjourned the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, August 5, 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