

September 16, 2025

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Ronald H. Fithian presiding, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price. The meeting was convened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to observe a moment of silence for the loss of Charles Kirk and for the unrest in Israel, Gaza, and Ukraine. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to keep them in their prayers.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, was also present.

SPECIAL GUEST REQUEST

Daughters of the American Revolution: Susan Pritchett, Bonnie Hill, and Sue Merrill, Members of the Regent of Old Kent Chapter, gave an overview of Constitution Week, celebrated September 17 – 23, 2025. The Commissioners took a picture with the group.

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved all eleven consent items as presented.

1. Regular Session Minutes, September 9, 2025
2. Liquor Minutes, September 9, 2025
3. Public Hearing, September 9, 2025
4. Closed Session Minutes, September 9, 2025
5. Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director of Kent County Local Management Board – FY2026 ENOUGH Capacity Building Grant Application for \$41,618.00
6. Pete Landon, Director of Office of Emergency Management- FY2026 Kent County Police Accountability Community and Transparency Grant PACT-2026-0030 for \$149,045.00
7. Mr. Landon – Police Accountability Board – Accountability Consultant Contract Renewal No. 2026-PAB-001 with a total maximum of \$44,000.00
8. Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer – Fifth Asset, Inc., d/b/a DebtBook Order Form for FY2026 for \$10,000.00; 3-year total of \$30,910.00 for cash management software
9. Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, Environmental Operations – Waterway Improvement Fund Grant Application for FY2027 Bogles Wharf Public Landings, with project funding request of \$400,000.00
10. Main Street Rock Hall, Raffle Only Permit, October 25, 2025
11. Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company, Inc., Multiple Gaming Devices, November 15, 2025

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

For All Seasons – Suicide Prevention Month “No Matter What...You Matter”, September 2025: Jennifer Friedman, Clinician, Social Worker, Registered Play Therapist, and Katie Arend, Clinician Director, For All Seasons, gave an overview of the importance of raising awareness about preventing suicide and recognizing signs of distress. There are seven locations across the mid-shore with telehealth appointments available. For more information, call 410-822-1018. Commissioner

Nickerson read the proclamation into the record, which was presented to representatives of For All Seasons.

Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 – October 15, 2025: John Schratwieser, Director of Kent Cultural Alliance, has worked with Eñe, Alliance of Latino Americans in Kent County, and gave an overview of the importance of recognizing Hispanic Heritage. At the request of the Latino Community, events were not scheduled this year; however, public service announcement posters were distributed around the County. Commissioner Fithian read the proclamation into the record, which was presented to Mr. Schratwieser.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Shelley Heller, County Administrator, summarized actions the Commissioners could consider during the legislative session. The legislative bills scheduled for an introduction and a third reading were presented at this meeting to be passed, rejected, amended, or deferred to a later date. No proposed amendments to either bill were received, and no written comments were received during the comment period. As for the bill scheduled for introduction, the Board can consider it for introduction or defer it to a later date.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to go into a legislative session. The legislative session started at 6:20 p.m.

Introduction and 1st Read – Code Home Rule Bill No. 8-2025 Administration of Government

AN ACT to repeal and reenact with amendments Chapter 3 Administration of Government, of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland. The purpose of this amendment to this chapter is to establish a Compensation Review Commission to undertake a comprehensive study of the rate of the current compensation for the County Commissioners and make recommendations regarding the amount of compensation in accordance with State and local laws. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved introducing Code Home Rule Bill 8-2025 and for the Bill to be scheduled for a Public Hearing.

3rd Read and Vote – Code Home Rule Bill No. 7-2025 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact with amendments Chapter 42, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County.

Ms. Heller briefly overviewed the bill's intent. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Code Home Rule 7-2025 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to adjourn the legislative session. The legislative session ended at 6:22 p.m.

KENT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Mary McComas, Superintendent, Kent County Public Schools (KCPS), Todd Vumanic, Crabtree, Rohrbaugh, and Associates, Dr. David Lever, consultant, and Dawn Saunders, Project Manager, Maryland Stadium Authority, were in attendance. Mr. Vumanic gave a presentation on the proposed new Kent County Middle School project. The Commissioners expressed the need for a new school, the cost of the proposed new school, funding challenges, and the ages of the current school building inventory in Kent County. Discussion took place. Commissioner Price asked staff to schedule a work session with the KCPS and County Finance staff to discuss the costs and the County's intent and obligation.

Dr. McComas and Kreigh Kirby, KCPS's accountant, overviewed three budgetary matters: Unrestricted Funds Budget Amendment #3 for FY2025 and Unrestricted Funds Budget Amendments #1 and #2 for FY2026. A memo and spreadsheet for each budget amendment were submitted. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved all three budget adjustments as presented.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Mr. Landon and Barry Byers, Chair of the Police Accountability Board, presented the 2024 Annual Report to the Commissioners. The report identified trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in Kent County and made recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability. Tara Short, Administrative Specialist, and Frank McGarvey, Consultant, also attended. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the Kent County Police Accountability Board Annual Report for 2024 as presented by the Police Accountability Board.

WICOMICO HUNT CLUB, INC., FOX HUNTING CLUB KENNEL LICENSING

The Commissioners invited Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc., to discuss the foxhounds' current operations and noise factors. In attendance were Genevieve H.R. McFarlane, Esquire, Eden Kloetzli, Professional Huntsman Foxhounds, and Cara Godack, Master of Foxhounds for Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc. Discussion took place regarding the neighbors' correspondence, video submissions, etc., regarding the noise and the status of the permanent structure completion. On a motion made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously requested to schedule a public hearing to allow neighbors to attend and express their concerns regarding the noise coming from the Fox Hunting Club Kennel.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Brad Russum, Chief of Communications for the Office of Emergency Services (OES), requested authorization to proceed with the next steps to allow Betterton Volunteer Fire Company to obtain a used chase unit. OES is currently in the process of replacing four (4) medical chase units. The Betterton Volunteer Fire Company is interested in obtaining one of the 4x4 Tahoes to replace their ageing 2001 Chevrolet Suburban Special Unit. A detailed analysis was provided for the Commissioners' review. OES will coordinate with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to conduct a cost analysis of the current fleet units scheduled for turn-in. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously authorized the Kent County Office of Emergency Services to proceed with the next steps in allowing the Betterton Volunteer Fire Company to obtain a used chase unit, in coordination with the Kent County Department of Public Works, to ensure the most cost-effective allocation of resources.

PUBLIC WORKS

Village of Kennedyville – Intent to Award: Mr. Mattson requested confirmation of the Commissioners' intent to proceed with Lacrosse Homes. Confirmation will reassure the bidder that the project will advance and begin final preparations for property transactions, engineering designs, bonds, etc. Previously discussed follow-up items have been requested from and provided by the project bidder, Lacrosse Homes LLC. This includes detailed financial statements for the past 3 years demonstrating their financial capability to complete the project. County stakeholders have reviewed the additional financial information from Public Works and Finance to the extent of their ability to review and assess it. No issues or concerns were found in this review. In consideration of the fact that this bidder has submitted all requested documentation, to which no defects were found during internal review, and has offered to meet the County's goals in terms of payment of Allocation Fees and complete Project Bonding, it is the collective recommendation of County Staff to proceed in this project with Lacrosse Homes. Due to the status of County Attorney, there will be some delay in preparing the final legal documents memorializing the property transaction. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the Bid Submitted by Lacrosse Homes, LLC, in response to RFP #PW25-08 for Acquisition and Development of Property in the Village of Kennedyville, and to direct County Staff to proceed with preparations of final agreements associated with this project.

Mr. Mattson gave an overview of a meeting with Bill Mackey, Carla Gerber, of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, and Russ Richardson, owner of Millington property that the County is in the process of purchasing to use for the new Water and Wastewater site. The meeting was productive, and a contract will be drafted and ready for review in October 2025.

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

At the September 9th meeting, the Commissioners chose one of the recommended candidates to fill a Local Government Justice Reinvestment Commission vacancy. As instructed, a letter of recommendation addressed to The Honorable Wes Moore, to fill the Kent County seat vacancy on the Commission, was provided for signature.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ms. Heller explained that Legislative Bond Initiatives (LBIs, or formerly called bond bills) are funding requests to the General Assembly from entities that have specific projects and need extra funding. In the past, entities have gone directly to their delegation to submit LBIs, bypassing the County and the County's input altogether. Many counties request that entities submit LBI to the county for prioritization before being submitted to the State. This allows the entity to present its initiative publicly, and permits the county to give input, prioritize, and perhaps even provide a letter of support for the most desired projects.

Kent County Is Accepting State Legislative Proposals Until October 3, 2025 - The Kent County Commissioners have established a timeline in preparation for the County Commissioners' 2026 State Legislative Package. Any member of the public interested in submitting a legislative proposal for a revision or addition to Maryland law or submitting a Legislative Bond Initiative Request is invited to submit a written request and supporting documents to the Board of Kent County Commissioners by October 3, 2025, via email at kentcounty@kentgov.org or by mail.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place. No comments were made.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Commissioners approved participation in the secondary manufacturers' opioid settlements during the meeting on September 9th. Ms. Heller signed the necessary documents and submitted them on the same day.

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 September 9, 2025, is \$340,521.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$13,953.00.

At 8:13 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, September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

September 16, 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, was 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, September 9, 2025.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSES

The Kent County Bar Association submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer and wine on October 2, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Turners Creek Pavilion, 13761 Turners Creek Road, Kennedyville, for a Crab Feast. The Crab Feast is an annual event for the Kent County Bar Association. The application was provided for review. 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 the Kent County Bar Association.

The Sultana Education Foundation (SEF) submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer and wine on October 4, 2025, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at 301 S. Mill Street, Chestertown, for a Community Event/Fundraiser (Harvest Party). The application was provided for review. 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 the Sultana Education Foundation.

SEF submitted a second Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer and wine from October 31 – November 2, 2025. SEF will sell alcohol on Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Chestertown Marina for a Community Event/Fundraiser (Down Rigging). The application was provided for review. 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 the Sultana Education Foundation.

KENT ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT (KATE)

Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk/KATE Manager, provided an update on Washington College's alcohol beverage license. Washington College has submitted a License Modification Application requesting to remove Matthew Criswell and add Mark Bomon Connell as a new member to their liquor license #4816. The application was reviewed and met all the requirements for approval of a license modification. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the license modification application for Washington College.

At 8:13 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price, and the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.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