

February 4, 2025

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, President, and John F. Price. The meeting was convened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to remain silent to honor the late Vanessa Maddox. Ms. Maddox was a valuable employee of the Kent County After School Program at H.H. Garnet Elementary School and the Kent County Parks and Recreation Summer Kiddie Camp Program. Ms. Maddox served as a public figure for over twenty years.

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

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved all six consent items as presented:

1. Regular Session Minutes, January 28, 2024
2. Liquor Minutes, January 28, 2024
3. Closed Session Minutes, January 28, 2024
4. Jim Miller, Director of Human Resources – Employment Contract
5. Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company, Combined Multiple Gaming Device/Raffle, March 15, 2025
6. Chestertown Garden Club, Raffle Only, April 1 – May 2, 2025

PUBLIC HEARINGS – CODE HOME RULE BILL NO. 9-2024 FOX HUNTING CLUB DOG KENNEL AND 10-2024 CONSTRUCTION TRADES BOARD

Public hearings were held on Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024, Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennel, and Code Home Rule Bill No. 10-2024 Construction Trades Board. Public information regarding the above-mentioned hearings and minutes is posted on the County's website at <https://www.kentcounty.com/government>

KENT COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

Harris Murphy, Judge for the Kent County Circuit Court, requested approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Security Goods and Services. The MOU outlines the security grant awarded to the Kent County Circuit Court, which will reimburse the County for the requested funds. This grant has awarded funds for security enhancements that include the updated access control system, upgrading the current camera system, barriers for vulnerable areas identified by our security assessment, and upgrading to bullet-resistant barriers in the Clerk's office. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved the Memorandum of Understanding for Security Goods and Services Over \$100,000.00 and up to \$500,000.00 By and Between the Administrative Office of the Courts on behalf of the Circuit Court for Kent County, and County Commissioners of Kent County for security enhancements to the Kent County Courthouse not to exceed \$106,659.90.

KENT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Shelley Heller, County Administrator, on behalf of Joseph Wheeler, Director of Transportation, Food Services, and Operations for Kent County Public Schools (KCPS), requested approval of the proposed quote to purchase a new 2025 Chevrolet Equinox. This approval is required as the purchase will be made under the County's current agreement with Enterprise and is consistent with recent vehicle purchases made by KCPS. KCPS has fully approved the purchase, and funding is available for the proposed payments. The purchase is to replace a 2022 Ford Edge that was recently totaled. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved Enterprise Quote number 8518161 for the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Equinox by Kent County Public Schools.

Commissioner Price stated he emailed Dr. Mary Boswell-McComas requesting more information about the proposed electric school buses due to concerns about maintenance costs.

TOWN OF ROCK HALL

James Cook, Mayor, and Robert S. Resele, Town Manager of Rock Hall, requested \$394,595.00 for the emergency replacement of the water plant filtration project. This request was first discussed on November 6, 2024. Commissioner Price asked if there was time for this request to be tabled and reviewed when Commissioner Nickerson was in attendance. Mayor Cook stated there is time. The request will be considered at the February 11, 2025, meeting.

PROCLAMATION

Vietnam Veterans Day celebration on March 29, 2025: Peter Sweetser, Principal Organizer of the Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration, requested a proclamation for the Vietnam Veterans Day. Last year, Mr. Sweetser requested \$1,000.00 to help fund the celebration and has asked for the same to be considered for this year. The celebration will be hosted on Saturday, March 29th, and is scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. There will be special guests at the celebration. Commissioner Fithian read the proclamation into the record. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved the request for \$1,000.00 for the costs of the Celebration and to be from the Contingency Funds.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Jim Miller, Director of Human Resources (HR), requested approval to promote the recommended candidate to fill the vacant Chief Code Enforcement Officer position in the Planning, Housing, and Zoning Department. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved the recommended candidate at the proposed rate for the identified vacant position.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Heller presented the following items for consideration:

Local House Bill (HB) 0736 and Senate Bill (SB)0843 - School Construction - Local Cost-Share Alterations will be heard on February 11, 2025, and March 3, 2025. This bill would help increase State funding for a new middle school. Due to a scheduling conflict between the House meeting and the Kent County Commissioners' regular meeting and work session, Ms. Heller requested approval to send a letter of support on behalf of the Commissioners. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved sending a letter of support for HB0736 and SB0843.

Commissioner Price is concerned about a couple of proposed bills relating to energy, the Public Service Commission overriding local laws, and the nuclear energy proposal.

Certificate of Appreciation – Illustrious Thomas C. Napper, The Boumi Shriners, Shriners International: The Boumi Shriners, Shriners International requested a Citation for Illustrious Thomas C. Napper. A Testimonial Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, March 2, 2025, at the Boumi Shrine Center, where he will be honored for his service. Commissioner Price read the certificate into the record. Commissioner Nickerson was able to sign the certificate prior to the meeting.

Resolution 2025-01 Comprehensive Upper Chesapeake Bay Sediment Management Plan: During the Commissioners' meeting on January 9, 2025, Commissioner Fithian requested a resolution to support sediment dredging of the Conowingo Dam. Ms. Heller explained that the intent is to support a plan to address the accumulated sediments and pollutants in Conowingo Pond. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved Resolution 2025-01 Comprehensive Upper Chesapeake Bay Sediment Management Plan as presented.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

A notification dated January 23, 2025, was received from the Maryland Department of the Environment Water and Science Administration. KE2023G002/01—John A. Moritz of 3681 Harris Road, Townsend, DE 19734, has applied to appropriate and use an annual average of 78,000 gallons of groundwater per day and 317,000 gallons per day during the month of maximum use for crop irrigation. The project is located at 34351 Cypress Lane, Millington. The notification was available for review.

Andy Fish, senior director of the Office of Finance Programs at the Maryland Department of Commerce, sent a letter dated January 13, 2025. The department announced the Private Activity Bond 2025 Initial Allocation for Maryland Jurisdictions. The letter was available for review, and the Department of Economic and Tourism Development received a courtesy copy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. No one in the audience offered comments.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

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

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2025 Contingency balance as of January 28, 2025, is \$124,264.00. The FY2025 use of Fund Balance is \$105,307.00.

At 8:07 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners adjourned the meeting by a majority vote. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

February 4, 2025

PUBLIC HEARINGS

County Commissioners Ronald H. Fithian and John F. Price were in attendance, as were Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Carla Gerber, Deputy Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning.

Both hearings were duly advertised, and Commissioner Fithian read the public hearing notices into the record. The rules for a public hearing were in effect.

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, agreed to go into a Public Hearing.

CODE HOME RULE BILL NO. 9-2024, FOX HUNTING CLUB DOG KENNEL

The first of two public hearings commenced at 6:03 p.m. in the County Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, MD. A public hearing to discuss Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024, Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennel, AN ACT to amend Chapter 222, Zoning, of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland, also known as the Kent County Land Use Ordinance, in order to add a new land use and to permit said new land use in a single district as an accessory use: (1) by adding "10. Dog Kennel, Fox Hunting Club" to Article V. District Regulations, Section 2. Resource Conservation District, §2.4 A. Accessory Uses; (2) by adding a definition for "Dog Kennel, Fox Hunting Club" to Article XI. Definitions, Section 2. Definitions; (3) by including one non-codified provision; and (4) by providing for an effective date related to the required Critical Area Commission review and approval of the zoning text, per Md. Code Ann., Natural Resources § 8-1809, as the same may be amended from time to time.

Carla Gerber, Deputy Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, provided a summary and further details of the legislation's intent. Ms. Gerber informed the Commissioners that the Planning Commission and the Agriculture Advisory Commission both provided letters with favorable recommendations for Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024. The letters were read into the record. Discussion took place.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

During the public hearing, citizens had the opportunity to sign the testimony log and provide feedback on the proposed legislation.

The following audience members provided comments during the public hearing in support of Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024: Genevieve MacFarlane, Esquire, Law Offices of Stevens Palmer, LLC, Attorney Representative for the applicant (Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc.), provided information and testimony for her client; Ed Fry, Master of Foxhounds, Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc. (Mr. Fry provided comment virtually via TEAMS); Ms. Eden Kloetzli, Master of Foxhounds, Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc., provided testimony and further information on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Kloetzli will

be housing the foxhounds on her property located at 12474 Barrett Farm Road, Worton, MD 21678, and will be transporting them to where they will hunt/chase; Cara Godack, Associate Master of Foxhounds, Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc.; and Jeremy Rothwell, Member, Wicomico Hunt Club, Inc.

The following audience members provided comments during the public hearing in opposition to Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024: Sean Maloney (provided research documents for review) and Ryan Glenn (provided documents for review).

George Lees, Homestead View Road, Worton Resident, did not offer any objections or support of Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024. Mr. Lees had questions he raised and offered things to consider when voting for this bill.

Ms. MacFarlane rebutted the opposition statements, and Ms. Kloetzli provided further information about the opposing comments.

WRITTEN COMMENTS

The following written comments were received prior to the start of the public hearing: a Concerned Citizen (Anonymous) was received via email and opposed Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2024.

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, agreed to close the public hearing at 7:21 p.m. for Code Home Rule Bill 9-2024 and for the record to remain open until the close of business on Friday, February 7, 2025. The legislative bill is scheduled to be considered for a vote on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

CODE HOME RULE BILL NO. 10-2024, KENT COUNTY CONSTRUCTION TRADES BOARD

The second hearing commenced at 7:24 p.m. A public hearing to discuss Code Home Rule Bill No. 10-2024, Kent County Construction Trades Board, AN ACT to amend the Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland, by revising Chapter 73, Building Construction; Chapter 192, Housing Standards; and Chapter 210, (Reserved), in order to create a new board in Kent County, Maryland, specifically, the Construction Trades Board, which will incorporate the existing Board of Electrical Examiners and its members, while adding additional members to represent other trades and industry sectors, and to provide membership for the Board of Building Appeals as may be needed, when an appeal is filed pursuant to the International Building Code.

Ms. Gerber provided a summary and further details of the legislation's intent. Discussion took place.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

During the public hearing, citizens had the opportunity to sign the testimony log and provide feedback on the proposed legislation. There were no comments offered

WRITTEN COMMENTS

No written comments were received at the time of the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, agreed to close the public hearing for Code Home Rule Bill 10-2024 at 7:26 p.m. and for the record to remain open until the close of business on Friday, February 7, 2025. The legislative bill is scheduled to be considered for a vote on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk/ KATE Manager

Approved:

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

February 4, 2025

The Board of License Commissioners met today with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, presiding, 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 Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, approved Consent Item #2 - Liquor Minutes, January 28, 2025.

At 8:07 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Fithian; the Commissioners, by a majority vote, agreed to adjourn the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, February 11, 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