

September 23, 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 passing of a past Administrator, Eddie Robinson, and his family; and for the families of recent fatalities that have happened on the highways, keep them all in our prayers.

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

CONSENT ITEMS

Commissioner Fithian announced that Consent Item No. 6 was removed at the request of the applicant's agency. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved all five consent items as listed.

1. Regular Session Minutes, September 16, 2025
2. Liquor Minutes, September 16, 2025
3. Kent County Public Library – Certification for Cooperative Local-State Library Aid Programs FY2026; County Funding \$847,844.00
4. Certification of Satisfaction/Release – David W. Townsend and Patricia L. Townsend
5. Dogwood Festival of Galena, Maryland, Raffle Only, October 11, 2025
6. Kent County Master Gardeners, Raffle Only, September 26, 2025

In summary, all consent items were approved except for Item No. 6.

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (MACo)

The President of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), Queen Anne's County Commissioner Jack Wilson, and MACo's Executive Director, Michael Sanderson, discussed various issues and concerns related to state policies, MACo's conferences and events, and other relevant matters. Documentation was submitted for the Commissioners' review. The Commissioners were also updated on state legislative and budget issues (including Blueprint concerns) and looked ahead at the upcoming General Assembly session. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Sanderson mentioned solar panel projects and their impact on local jurisdictions. The Commissioners voiced their concerns regarding the wealth formula and local concerns. Discussion took place.

PUBLIC WORKS

Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant Project - Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, and Dan String, Senior Project Manager, with KCI Technologies, Inc., formally updated the Commissioners regarding the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Design project in Millington. This included a summary of the design status, permitting timeline, property subdivision status, and "off-site" improvements (i.e., conveyance from old plant, and discharge line). Mr. String stated that construction is estimated to start in late spring or early summer of 2026, and also noted that this project's critical path is funding. Mr. Mattson provided further updates regarding the

project's funding. Additional updates on related efforts, such as the Millington Water System Expansion, the preliminary engineering water study conducted, and the study's findings, were provided. Mr. String submitted a status update and graphic map for the Commissioners' review. Discussion took place.

Mr. Mattson provided an update on the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) building project. Construction of the new EMS building should be completed by the end of this week. A walk-through inspection will be conducted within the next week. Furnishings for the space are forthcoming. Mr. Mattson stated that there is an additional project that he would like approval from the Commissioners to move forward with. A small piece of the existing parking lot uses gravel/stone, and Mr. Mattson suggested having it paved. The additional cost to have this done would be \$9,800.00. Mr. Mattson provided a summary of where things are with the project's budget and stated that an additional \$9,400.00 for the portico was not originally part of the project's estimated cost. This was not factored in because the County was waiting to see if the Town of Chestertown would waive the permit fees involved in the project. The Town of Chestertown did not waive the permit fees, but they are considering making a financial contribution (of an unknown amount) to the project. The project incurred additional fees from Chestertown water and sewer fees and connection fees (start-up costs) from ThinkBig and Delmarva Power. With the cost of the portico, these fees add up to \$15,811.45 for a total amount needed of \$25,611.45 in additional funds. Discussion took place. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to authorize Dan to move forward with the paving of the parking area in the amount of \$9,800.00. Commissioner Price asked about installing a flagpole on the property so the County, State, and American flags can be flown.

Mr. Mattson provided an update on the speeding issue on Reese's Corner Road. Traffic has been reduced by 50% since the speed limit signs were posted. Posting the speed limit has substantially reduced the average speed of most cars; however, the speeding cars are traveling at a higher rate of speed. Mr. Mattson plans to share his findings with the Sheriff's Office.

PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ZONING

Bill Mackey, Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, gave an update on the 2025 Nuisance Flood Plan. In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly adopted legislation that requires local jurisdictions that experience nuisance flooding to develop a mitigation plan. In addition, a local jurisdiction must update the plan every five years, publish the plan on the local jurisdiction's website, and submit a copy to the Maryland Department of Planning. In the plan, local jurisdictions set flood thresholds at which different decisions and actions are required. Courtesy of a grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the County was able to contract with Smith Planning & Design, LLC, at no cost to the County, to prepare a plan update in consultation with the five Towns, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, University of Maryland, Kent Soil & Water Conservation District, and County Departments. This work group provided input and recommended decisions and actions to be taken at different flood thresholds. Mr. Mackey thanked all those involved in seeing this project completed. A letter dated September 4, 2025, addressed to President

Fithian from Joe Hickman, Chair, Kent County Planning Commission, was provided. A resolution to adopt the plan submitted for the Commissioners to consider. The resolution and revised plan must be sent to the Maryland Department of Planning to meet State requirements, as outlined in Maryland Senate Bill 1006, adopted in 2019. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution 2025-16, a resolution to adopt the Nuisance Flood Plan for the County.

ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Jamie Williams, Director, and Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager, of Economic and Tourism Development, reported on the 2024 Economic Impact of Tourism in Maryland and gave a departmental update. Each year, as part of the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) Grant Agreement states that each DMO shall participate in the Tourism Impact Report for the State of Maryland and Maryland's DMOs. The annual cost for participation is eligible for reimbursement through the grant. Tourism crosses many classification codes such as lodging, food and beverage, recreation, retail, transportation, etc., therefore, it is not easily measured through traditional data sources. Tourism is always a part of Economic Development. Tourism brings new dollars into the local economy, which has more weight than recirculating dollars. Studies show that those dollars will then get spent again at least three to seven times by local community members. Ms. Williams shared videos that showcased Kent County and some of the attractions that continue to help promote it as a tourist destination.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Rachel Morelock, Human Resources Administrative Specialist I, requested approval to promote the recommended candidate for a vacancy in the Office of Emergency Services. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the promotion of the recommended candidate to the 9-1-1 supervisor.

Vauné Johnson, Human Resources Specialist, requested the promotion of a recommended candidate to fill the Public Works Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Worker II vacancy. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended candidate for the promotion.

Ms. Johnson requested approval of a recommended candidate to fill the Public Works Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Worker I vacancy. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved a conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Code Home Rule Bill No. 8-2025 Administration of Government

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, gave a brief overview of Code Home Rule Bill No. 8-2025 and read the public hearing notice into the record. Code Home Rule Bill No. 8-2025 was introduced on September 16, 2025. The Public Hearing is scheduled for September 30, 2025. 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place. Mike Waal, a Kent County resident, provided comment on the Kirwan Blueprint and wealth formula.

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 16, 2025, is \$340,521.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$13,953.00.

CLOSED SESSION

At 11:58 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, and the Commissioners, by a majority vote, agreed to go into a closed session to discuss a personnel matter. The meeting was closed under the Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b)(1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. Two separate personnel matters were discussed.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk/KATE Manager, also attended.

MATTER NO. 1: PERSONNEL

Topic to be discussed: Qualifications and job performance of candidates related to a specific vacancy.

Reason for closing: The qualifications of certain individuals to fill personnel vacancies are confidential and should be protected.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, announced that a nomination has been received for consideration. A discussion followed concerning each candidate's qualifications.

MATTER NO. 2: PERSONNEL

Topic to be discussed: Qualifications and job performance of candidates related to a specific vacancy.

Reason for closing: The qualifications of a certain individual to fill a personnel vacancy are confidential and should be protected.

At 12:16 p.m., Jennifer White, Human Resources Business Partner, Human Resources, joined the closed session. Ms. Heller and Ms. White asked the Commissioners for guidance on how they would like to proceed with staffing a vacancy. A recommendation was discussed.

At 12:26 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

Upon returning to the open session, Commissioner Price summarized both matters discussed during the closed session.

Matter No. 1 Personnel – The Commissioners directed the County Administrator to forward a letter of recommendation on the candidate discussed.

Matter No. 2 Personnel – The Commissioners directed the HR team to proceed with the Commissioners' desires.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved having the County Administrator draft a letter of support and send it regarding the candidate discussed. At the end of the meeting, signatures were obtained for a letter conveying the Board's nomination to Meena Seshamani, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health.

At 12:29 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 30, 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 23, 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 16, 2025.

At 12:29 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, September 30, 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