

February 25, 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 requested that everyone remain silent for Jim Miller and Jen White, who recently lost family members. Please keep both families in your prayers.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, was also in attendance.

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, February 11, 2025
2. Liquor Minutes, February 11, 2025
3. Tina Fletcher, Environmental Operations and Public Landings - Tipping Fee Waiver – Rebuilding Together
4. Jill Coleman, Director of Parks and Recreation, requested approval to purchase a Memorial Bench in honor of Vanessa Maddox
5. Rosemary Ramsey-Granillo, Director of the Local Management Board, requested approval of the Contract with Washington College's Kohl Gallery for a Place-based Innovation Partnership (ENOUGH)
6. Kent Agricultural Center, Inc., Raffle Only, March 9, 2025
7. Washington College Trap & Skeet, Raffle Only, June 1-June 30, 2025

KENT COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

Roland Sheppard, Director of Operations, Kent County Detention Center (KCDC), and Joanne McNamara, Grants Specialist, requested approval to submit a grant application. The proposed grant application requests funding for a telemedicine treatment provider and telecounseling support (\$86,531.00), nursing support (\$55,980.00), and purchase of medications including buprenorphine and methadone as well as drug testing (\$16,100.00). Support is requested for program administration and oversight of KCDC, and indirect costs are permitted under the grant. The total of all items requested above is \$189,717.00. In 2019, Maryland passed legislation (HB 116, 2019) requiring the provision of treatment for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) at detention centers and jails throughout the state of Maryland to decrease post-release overdose deaths and improve post-release social functioning and recidivism. Since the passage of HB 116, KCDC has established a telehealth program for the screening, evaluation, and treatment of opioid use disorder for Incarcerated Individuals in compliance with legislative requirements. Kent County has also received grant funding to support the delivery of these services. The current grant funding for the OUD treatment program expires June 30, 2025; this grant application seeks funding to continue to support the program through FY2026. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the submission of a grant application to the Maryland Office of Opioid Response in the amount of \$189,717.00 to fund the provision of opioid use disorder treatment and counseling at the Kent County Detention Center.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Jim Miller, Director, and Rachel Morlock, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources, requested to fill the 911 Specialist vacancy. Discussion took place. 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 at the proposed rate for the identified vacant position.

PUBLIC WORKS

Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, on behalf of the Water and Wastewater Division, requested preliminary approval for the terms of a proposed lease agreement. Verizon Wireless (VZW) proposes using the Worton Water Tower to place a cell tower on it. Verizon has proposed the following:

- Rent: \$2,000.00/month
- Escalation: 2.5% annual
- Rent Commencement: Start of construction
- Access: 24/7
- Term: 5-year initial term with (4) 5-year automatic renewals
- Use: VZW has the right to replace, repair, add, or otherwise modify equipment within their leased space
- Leased Area: Approximately 15' x 25' ground space, (3) separate areas, each approximately 12' width x 10' height, on top of the tank for antennas and associated equipment (exact dimensions to be finalized later)

Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the terms presented for the lease of Worton Water Tower to Verizon Wireless for the purpose of installing cell tower equipment and authorizing the County Administrator to execute an agreement based on these terms, after legal review and approval.

Mr. Mattson gave an overview of the following:

- The Town of Rock Hall's support letter to submit with Rock Hall's Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) Treatment Upgrade Funding application. Mr. Mattson reviewed agreements between Kent County and the Town of Rock Hall regarding the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The most formal recent agreement was July 2003, which was a twenty-year term that expired June 30, 2023, but extended for one year to expire July 1, 2024. Within the agreement, charges are discussed, as well as the cost-sharing of maintenance responsibilities. There is no language stating Kent County is responsible for fees other than paying the Town of Rock Hall for the allocations used by the County and some maintenance. Upgrades to the plant are not discussed in the agreement. Commissioner Fithian asked staff to set up a meeting with the Town of Rock Hall to discuss this further.

- Village of Kennedyville: An agreement has been written and reviewed by Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney. The final agreement will be presented for review and final approval at the March 4, 2025, meeting.

The Board requested Bill Mackey, Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, to join the meeting to discuss a parcel that is zoned Crossroads Commercial that is surrounded by Village Zoning and approximately 100 acres located in the South part of the County zoned Village. Mr. Mackey stated he was vaguely familiar with the inquiries and that the Board would receive the final Text and Zoning Map proposal for adoption, and at that time, the Board could change the zoning of the properties without going through the Text Amendment process. Mr. Mackey will consult with Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, and research the properties in length.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Public Service Announcement: Shelley Heller, County Administrator, advised residents that the Anne Arundel Government has suffered a substantial cyber-attack, and services are locked down. Ms. Heller asked everyone to stay vigilant and on high alert. If you receive an email and it is not from someone you know, contact the sender for verification via a method other than responding to the email or opening attachments. When in doubt, forward the email to the Informational Technology Department or delete the email altogether.

The Emergency Services Board requested to reappoint a member. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously appointed Phil Russum to serve on the Emergency Services Board as Emergency Medical Services Council Liaison for a one-year term ending January 31, 2026.

The Ethics Commission requested to reappoint a member. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously appointed Mary Ann Ruehrmund to the Ethics Commission to serve another three-year term until March 31, 2028.

Every year, the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) requires Commissioners to designate a Member and an Alternate Member as representatives of each county. The Board has expressed the need for redesignation. Discussion took place. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners unanimously chose Commissioner Nickerson to represent Kent County at the MACo Legislative Committee meetings.

Senate Bill 0931 – House Bill 1036 Public Utilities – Generating Stations – Generation and Siting (Renewable Energy Certainty Act): Dominic J. Butchko, Director of Intergovernmental Relations Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), requested an opposition letter from Kent County and for representation from Kent County at the bill hearing. Commissioners Fithian and Nickerson will attend the Legislative Session on Friday, February 28, 2025, and a draft letter of opposition was prepared for review and signature. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved and signed the letter as drafted.

Commissioner Nickerson stated that Caroline County sent letters to residents advising farmers to seek legal counsel before signing lease agreements with solar companies. The Board asked staff to offer something similar for Kent County residents.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

The Commissioners approved Enterprise Fleet Management Open End Equity Lease Rate Quote 8518161 for Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) during the February 4, 2025, meeting. However, this contract is invalid because the vehicle is no longer available. A new Quote, No. 8643940, was presented and signed at the February 11, 2025, meeting. This new quote is less expensive than the original.

The Kent County State's Attorney's Office is applying for a \$5,000.00 grant for a software upgrade. Commissioner Fithian signed the Case Management System Enhancement Project documents on February 13, 2025, to meet the grant application deadline of February 14, 2025.

As mentioned in today's meeting, Robert Resele, the Town Manager of Rock Hall, requested a letter of support to submit with its water and wastewater treatment plant funding application. The Commissioners approved the support letter, which was signed on February 13, 2025.

Commissioner Nickerson shared that he testified on House Bill 0736 (Senate Bill 0843)—School Construction—Local Cost Share—Alterations, along with Dr. McComas and Laura McKenzie of the KCPS Board and Delegate Jeff Ghrist. During his attendance at the Taste of Eastern Shore, Commissioner Nickerson received positive feedback from a few committee members. Further discussions occurred regarding cost-sharing concerns. The County's taxpayer base cannot support the current financial obligations. The maximum percentage the County can afford is still under review.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. Paula Reeder and Frank Rhodes, both in the capacity of Kent County Residents, offered comments. Ms. Reeder opposed the opposition letter drafted for Senate Bill 0931 and House Bill 1036, Public Utilities—Generating Stations—Generation and Siting (Renewable Energy Certainty Act). Mr. Rhodes favored the opposition letter.

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 February 11, 2025, is \$123,264.00. The FY2025 use of Fund Balance is \$499,902.00.

At 11:28 a.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, March 4, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

February 25, 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 Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, Kent Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, were also present.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Commissioner Fithian read a public notice into the record. Notice an application has been made by Members Marshall D. Owings, Jaye A. Owings, and Casey C. Owings, representing Northpoint Marina, LLC, for a Class A, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License on the premises known as North Point Marina, 5639 Walnut Street, Rock Hall, MD 21661, which shall authorize the holder thereof to sell Beer, Wine, and Liquor at retail, at the place therein described, for off-premises consumption. A hearing on the application will be held in the County Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr. Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, MD, on March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. At that time, any exceptions to the application will be heard.

CONSENT ITEM

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Consent Item #2 - Liquor Minutes, February 11, 2025.

SPECIAL CLASS C

Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, Kent Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (KATE), gave an overview of a Multiple Event Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application. The Galena Volunteer Fire Company (GVFC), Inc. chose to apply for a twelve (12) event per year license for \$200.00. This license will allow GVFC to hold no more than twelve (12) events from February 25, 2025 – December 31, 2025. A list of events was provided (as required) for the Commissioners review. GVFC will update the list as more events are scheduled. Discussion took place. There were no objections to the application. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Multiple Event Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application for the Galena Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

Commissioner Price mentioned that last year, the Commissioners allocated \$400.00 to each Volunteer Fire Company to help offset their fundraising expenses and expressed an intent to do the same this year. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the allocation of \$400.00 to each Volunteer Fire Company to help offset the cost of their expenses. The allocation would come from County contingency funds.

Washington College (WAC) has decided to open a Pub on campus. The college aims to create a safe and secure environment for students who are twenty-one years of age or older to enjoy alcoholic beverages. WAC has submitted a request for approval to modify the existing licensed premises to accommodate the Pub. The KATE staff has reservations regarding this endeavor. Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, was consulted and provided feedback regarding the issue. Mr. Yeager made a few suggestions that included placing/posting signs stating that no one under the age

of twenty-one would be allowed to sit or place orders at the bar, no alcoholic beverages are permitted to be brought into or carried out, and a designated area specifically for those who are of age to drink. WAC has provided copies of signs that will be placed throughout the Pub and a sketch of the Pub's layout; both were provided for the Commissioners to review. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the addition of a Pub area to the existing licensed premises, subject to specified restrictions for under twenty-one.

Inspector Pearsall reported that License No. 4801 for North Point Marina was surrendered on February 3, 2025. A refund will be issued upon receiving the required paperwork. The marina is under new ownership. The new owners have applied for a liquor license, which is scheduled for a public hearing. The license surrendered is a transaction that will be recorded in the monthly report of retail license activity required by the Comptroller of Maryland, Field Enforcement Division.

At 11:28 a.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, March 4, 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