

April 22, 2025

REGULAR SESSION

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 the passing of Pope Francis and everyone around the world.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Code Home Rule 3-2025 Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennel License Process. Commissioner Fithian read the notice into the record. AN ACT to amend the Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland, by revising Chapter 64 Animals, by adding a new Article II, and providing for an effective date. This Article establishes requirements for licensing Fox Hunting Club Dog Kennels in Kent County. It covers only the physical facilities where hounds are kept.

A hearing will be held on May 13, 2025, at 10:00 a.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 at <https://www.kentcounty.com/government>. Citizens are encouraged to participate in the public hearing process. If you require 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, May 9, 2025.

A complete copy of the 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., and on the County's website.

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, April 15, 2025
2. Liquor Minutes, April 15, 2025
3. Public Hearing Minutes, April 15, 2025
4. Main Street Rock Hall, Raffle Permit, May 1-25, 2025
5. Main Street Rock Hall, Raffle Permit, May 16 – August 9, 2025
6. Town of Galena, Combined Gaming Devices Raffle Permit, May 1, 2025
7. April Bitter, Project Manager of Information Technology (IT), Approval of Verizon Wireless GSA Agreement – IT Lines, 4#7QTCA20D00B5 Purchase Order \$41,000.00
8. Ms. Bitter, Approval of Verizon Wireless GSA Agreement – Departmental Lines, #47QTCA20D00B5 Purchase Order \$30,000.00

9. Recognition of 2025 Maryland Green Schools – Certificate of Recognition, Kent County Middle School, Kent School, Radcliffe Creek School
10. Tina Fletcher, Director of Public Works – Environmental Operations Division- Public Landings and Facilities Board Member – Appointment of James Reihl
11. Bill Mackey, Director of Planning, Housing and Zoning – 2025 Maryland Department of Transportation Priority Letter
12. Pete Landon, Director of Emergency Services, Kent County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Proposed Contract Proposed for Services \$36,000.00
13. Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, Design and Construction of Emergency Medical Services Facility and Storage Building Contract #25EGMESDC0625 - Change Order No. 1 \$239,800.00

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Proclamation Kent County Child Abuse Prevention and Child Advocacy Appreciation Month April 2025 – Shelly Neal-Edwards, Director, Department of Social Services, remarked on the importance of protecting vulnerable children. Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation into the record and presented it to representatives from the Department of Social Services and many partner agencies. Ms. Neal-Edwards was accompanied by Nikki Strong, Assistant Director; Kent County Sheriff's Office -Dennis Hickman, Sheriff, Lieutenant Sean Maloney, Sergeant Nathan Blazejak, Corporal David Nolan; Chestertown Police – Corporal Christopher Schwink; Lindsay White; Mattie Meehan; Kathryn McAllister; Margaret Allen; Amanda Plummer; Shannon Temple; Christina Russell; Susan Goldman; Chloe Campbell; and Brad Russum, Chief of Communications, Office of Emergency Services.

Proclamation Sexual Assault Awareness Month: "Together We Act, United We Change" April 2025 – Carly Palmer, Outreach Coordinator, and Veronica Rubio-Garcia, Victim Advocate, For All Seasons, raised awareness about sexual assault and provided information. Commissioner Price read the proclamation into the record and presented it to Ms. Palmer and Ms. Rubio-Garcia.

Proclamation National Travel and Tourism Week May 4-10, 2025 – Shalyn Boulden, Tourism Manager, Economic and Tourism Development, gave a brief overview of the purpose of National Travel and Tourism Week. Established in 1983, National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) is an annual tradition to celebrate the U. S. travel community and travel's essential role in stimulating economic growth, cultivating vibrant communities, creating quality job opportunities, inspiring new businesses, and elevating the quality of life for Americans every day. Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation into the record and presented it to Ms. Boulden.

Proclamation National Emergency Management Week, May 4-10, 2025 – Pete Landon, Director, and Brian Pearsall, Emergency Planner from the Office of Emergency Services, shared insights about National Emergency Management Week. This week is a national initiative focused on raising awareness and encouraging individuals, families, and communities to take proactive measures and prepare for emergencies. Commissioner Fithian read the proclamation into the record and presented it to Mr. Landon and Mr. Pearsall.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Jill Coleman, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Joanna McNamara, Grants Program Administrator, requested approval to submit a grant application. In 2023, the Town of Betterton applied for a grant to buy a Mobility Mat for Betterton Beach. The Mobi-Mat is set up during the beach season and creates an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)- compliant path for residents with mobility challenges, such as people with disabilities and older adults with walkers or wheelchairs, and visitors with strollers. The current mat runs from the boardwalk next to the public parking lot to the waterfront. Users have shared positive feedback. The town is asking for a second Mobi-Mat to create ADA-compliant paths on the eastern side of the beach, extending from the public bathhouses to the waterfront. Discussion occurred. On a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners unanimously approved the submission of a grant application to the Maryland Department of Transportation for funding to purchase a second mobility mat for Betterton Beach.

LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director of the Kent County Local Management Board (KCLMB), and Ms. McNamara discussed a proposal for the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund (CCIF). The proposal does not require signatures. Ms. Ramsey Granillo and Ms. McNamara prepared the proposal, and the KCLMB has voted on funding levels based on our current estimates of the CCIF awards. The proposed programming for FY2026 is as follows: Healthy Families Home Visiting \$147,626.00 (State), Beyond Your Mental \$82,450.00 (State + County), Minary's Dream Academy \$100,500.00 (State), Big Brothers Big Sisters \$20,000.00 (State), Hip Hop Time Capsule (Summer 2026) \$20,000.00 (County), Local Care Team \$103,860.00 (State LCT Fund), Brighter Day \$10,000.00 (Small Grants), and Operating \$197,809.00 (State + County). Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved and authorized KCLMB to submit the proposed FY2026 Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund (CCIF) project narrative as discussed.

PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ZONING

Carla Gerber, Deputy Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, requested approval to match funds and sign a letter to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund (MALPF) for the Fiscal Year 2026 Matching Funds Program. Funding for the Matching Funds Program is derived from the Agricultural Transfer Tax. As a "Certified County" by MALPF and the Maryland Department of Planning, Kent County retains 75% of this transfer tax and remits 25% to the State. Of the 75% retained, the County may utilize 10% of that amount for administrative expenses. All retained funds must be spent or encumbered for land preservation within six years of collection or revert to the MALPF Fund. To maintain its MALPF Certification, the County must allocate from other sources an amount equal to at least nine percent (9%) of the total collected in Agricultural Transfer Taxes in addition to the retained Agricultural Transfer Tax. At the end of FY2024, Kent County's agricultural preservation fund had a balance of \$18,046.00. These funds include the retained Agricultural Transfer Tax and the required percentage of County funds from other sources. While funds are limited, participation shows the County's continued support for the program. This commitment is for the FY2025- FY2026 Easement Acquisition Program cycle, and the funds should be spent in FY2026 or FY2027. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved

committing \$18,046.00 from the County's Agricultural Preservation Fund to be used as matching funds for acquiring agricultural land preservation easements.

HUMAN RESOURCES

James Miller, Director of Human Resources (HR), and Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, requested approval of a consultant agreement. The agreement expires on April 30, 2025, but Mr. Mattson wants to renew it through June 30, 2026. The consultant's rate remains unchanged; however, the project list has been updated. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the renewal of the Consultant Agreement for Public Works.

Mr. Miller and Rachel Morlock, HR Administrative Specialist I, requested approval to fill an Office of Emergency Services 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 for the EMT-B vacancy.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Mr. Mattson requested approval of additional funds for the Courthouse Lobby Alterations Project. This project budget was established in FY2024 with a total budget of \$61,237.00, \$36,237.00 was intended for Construction, and \$25,000.00 was intended for design. The design contract for this project was approved in February 2024 at a total cost of \$16,008.00, \$9,605.00 of that contract was paid in FY2024, leaving a balance of \$6,403.00 of contracted services to be paid in FY2025, and a remainder of \$8,992.00 for the uncontracted design budget that was intended to be converted to the Construction Budget. A total of \$15,395.00 should have been rolled over from FY2024 into the FY2025 budget associated with this project. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the reallocation of \$15,395.00 from the County Contingency Fund to the Courthouse Lobby Alteration Project.

Mr. Mattson requested approval of price quotes for FY2025 vehicle orders. Four (4) vehicle leases are currently proposed. County Roads - Two (2) Ford F250s with Plow package aftermarket equipment. One Ford F150 with a limited aftermarket bedliner. The combined monthly payments for these three (3) vehicles are within their combined budgeted amount. Building Maintenance - One (1) Ford F250 with aftermarket toolboxes. The monthly payment for this vehicle is within the budgeted amount. Discussion took place. Enterprise Fleet Management Open-End Lease Rate Quote Nos. 8452742, 8464002, 8464003, and 8464034 were submitted for the Board's consideration. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the four (4) Open-End Lease Rate Quotes from Enterprise Fleet Management as described.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Heller explained that the recipients proposed for the Ministry in Song Certificate of Appreciation are Peggy L. Brown, Edna Phillips, Melessa Freeman, James Phillips, Alice Demby, and Diana Flakes. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to sign all five certificates.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Ms. Heller recounted that on April 15, 2025, Mr. Mattson discussed the Bayside Landing Improvement Project and presented a grant modification agreement. The Commissioners approved the agreement, and President Fithian signed Modification No. 4 of the Waterway Improvement Fund Grant Agreement MF-1420H-20, totaling \$34,710.00, with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for the project.

LETTERS FOR SIGNATURES

During the April 15, 2025, meeting, the Friends of Eastern Neck Board of Directors requested a letter of support. Following the Board's direction, the staff prepared letters addressing the County's concerns regarding the future budget for the Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge. These letters were sent to the Honorable Andy Harris, Angela Alsobrooks, and Chris Van Hollen.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. Wendy Costa, 9813 Crumpton Road, Millington, MD 21650, commented on vehicles speeding on Route 290 as it crosses the Crumpton Bridge. Commissioner Price suggested preparing a letter to the State Highway Administration asking for an evaluation and contacting the Sheriff and the Centreville barracks to bring this concern to their attention.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Commissioners received a letter dated April 8, 2025, from Brooke E. Lierman—Esq., Comptroller of Maryland. Ms. Lierman shared aspects of the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) of 2025. The BRFA increases the maximum county income tax rate from 3.20% to 3.30% and temporarily modifies the county's timeline for providing written notice of any rate change to the Office of the Comptroller.

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 April 15, 2025, is \$19,604.00. The FY2025 use of Fund Balance is \$680,572.00.

CLOSED SESSION

At 10:59 a.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) (1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; Jamie Williams, Director of Economic and Tourism Development; and Sondra M. Blackiston were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1 PERSONNEL

Topic to be discussed: Appointments and reappointments to a Board(s)/Committee(s).

Reason for closing: Discussion of members and terms are confidential and must be shielded.

Jamie Williams, the Director of Economic and Tourism Development, updated the Commissioners about the Economic and Tourism Development Commission (ETDC). Some members' terms are ending; one member has resigned, creating an immediate vacancy. Ms. Williams discussed her outreach efforts, shared a list of candidates, asked for advice, and received suggestions from the Board.

At 11:19 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson; the Commissioners unanimously adjourned the closed session and reconvened in open session.

OPEN SESSION

MATTER NO. 1 PERSONNEL

Commissioner Price reported that the Commissioners discussed the Economic and Tourism Development Commission (ETDC) and filling a vacancy due to a member's resignation. The Commissioners instructed staff to proceed as discussed.

At 11:20 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, May 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

FY2026 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON APRIL 22, 2025

A budget work session was held on April 22, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., with Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian, Commissioner Albert H. Nickerson, and Commissioner John F. Price. Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Pat Merritt, Chief Financial Officer, Office of Finance, were also present.

During the work session, Robert Baldwin, District Manager, made a budget request accompanied by Charles L. Miller, Board of Supervisors, Kent Soil and Water Conservation District. Dr. Mary Boswell-McComas, Superintendent, and Alleesa Stewart, Director of Finance of Kent County Public Schools (KCPS), engaged in a preliminary FY2026 budget discussion with plans to present a formal budget at a future work session.

At 1:49 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, and carried unanimously to go into a closed session to discuss personnel and public

safety matters. 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, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Staff and the public departed the hearing room. Ms. Heller, Mr. Miller, Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance, and Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk, remained for the closed session.

CLOSED SESSION, PERSONNEL

Topics to be discussed: To discuss individual requests for compensation and the reclassification of certain employees.

Reasons for closing: Personnel matters related to staffing capacity, compensation, performance, and restructuring should be private and confidential.

Ms. Heller, Mr. Miller, and Ms. Merritt explained each personnel request's details and its budgetary consequences.

At 2:53 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adjourned the closed session and reconvened in an open work session. Commissioner Price summarized that in a closed session, the Commissioners discussed personnel matters and deliberated, but no action was taken.

BUDGET WORK SESSION CONTINUED

Ms. Merritt and Ms. Heller continued with the budget overview, funding changes, and other budgetary matters. Mr. Mattson offered input on the capital requests for the Public Works Department. The budget work session ended at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

April 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 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 Susan F. McKeown and Richard S. Fleming, representing Main Wine, LLC, for a Class D, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License on the premises known as Main Wine, 5758 North Main Street, Rock Hall, MD 21661, which shall authorize the holder thereof to keep for sale and to sell Beer, Wine, and Liquor at the place therein described, for on-premises consumption, or elsewhere. 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 May 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., at which 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, April 15, 2025.

SPECIAL CLASS C

The Betterton Volunteer Fire Company (BVFC) has applied for a Beer, Wine, and Liquor Special Class C Multiple Event License to cover twelve (12) events for the 2025 calendar year. The application was reviewed and met the requirements for a multiple-event license approval. Part of those requirements include providing a list of events scheduled throughout the year. This practice helps track the number of permitted events allowed. BVFC provided a partial list of events. Staff recommended approval. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Special Class C Multiple Event liquor license application for the Betterton Volunteer Fire Company.

KENT ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT (KATE)

2025 Alcoholic Beverage License Renewals and License Updates: Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, KATE, presented a request to renew five (5) annual alcoholic beverage licenses. All alcoholic beverage licenses will expire on the last day of April. Staff recommends approval of the five (5) renewal applications with any required changes. These are the last of the renewal applications that require approval. A handful of establishments still need to submit payments for their licenses; they will not be issued a new license until payment has been received. Payments have been processed for the first batch of renewal applications. Inspector Pearsall intends to deliver the new licenses for the 2025/2026 year to each establishment that has been processed and paid thus far. On a motion made by

Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved what had been discussed with Inspector Pearsall.

Alcoholic Beverage License Updates: On April 8, 2025, the Commissioners approved a Class B Beer, Wine, and Liquor License with Caterer's Privilege for The Little Lemon Leaf Diner and El Rancho Mexican Cuisine, both with contingencies that have been satisfied. On April 18, 2025, the applicants paid the prorated fee, and Liquor License Nos. 4917 and 4916 were issued, respectively. These transactions will be recorded in the monthly report of retail license activity required by the Comptroller of Maryland, Field Enforcement Division.

At 11:20 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, May 6, 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