

February 24, 2026

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 10:00 a.m., with Ronald H. Fithian presiding, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to observe a moment of silence to keep people across this great country in our prayers

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, were also present.

CONSENT ITEMS

Commissioner Fithian announced that Consent Item No. 7 was removed as a consent item from the agenda. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved item Nos. 1 through 6 as presented.

1. Regular Session Minutes, February 10, 2026
2. Liquor Minutes, February 10, 2026
3. Closed Session, Minutes, February 10, 2026
4. Kent County High School Clay Target Team, Raffle Only Permit, April 12, 2026
5. Jill Coleman, Director, Parks and Recreation – Approval to reallocate \$2,100.00 departmental funds for emergency phones
6. Joanne McNamara, Director of Grants and Contracts, Resolution 2026-03 - A resolution to designate the Director of Public Works as the County's representative related to the "Representative-signature-certify" security role on behalf of the County Commissioners of Kent County.
7. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, Contract Change Order - Beltway International Trucks LLC, increase for added tariffs of \$7,000.00; Contract amount changes from \$193,313.56 to \$200,313.56 by way of change order.

ROLAND SHEPPARD, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, KENT COUNTY DETENTION CENTER (KCDC)

Mr. Sheppard announced that KCDC received recognition on January 29, 2026, from the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards for achieving 100% compliance with the standards for Adult Correctional Facilities. Director Sheppard shared that Laciasha Scarborough, Corporal, Audit Coordinator, and Programs, was unable to attend but deserves much of the credit for the successful standards. Director Sheppard expressed his desire to recognize Corporal Scarborough for her hard work on the audit. The Commissioners congratulated KCDC on this achievement.

MICHAEL SUTTON, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation to fill a program/facilities manager vacancy in the Parks and Recreation department. This candidate is an internal applicant. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved an offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation for an accountability officer consultant position with the Police Accountability Board. Discussion took place. Pete Landon, Director of the Office of Emergency Services, stated that the candidate will be a strong partner within the law enforcement community. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved a conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

DAN MATTSON, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS

Road Division: Mr. Mattson discussed the Contract Change Order with Beltway International Trucks LLC due to an increase in added tariffs of \$7,000.00. The contract amount changes from \$193,313.56 to \$200,313.56. This relates to the FY2026 ordered truck, which will be delivered in FY2027. Staff recommends approval of the increase. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the surcharge that may or may not be coming to the County in the future for the truck purchase.

Water and Wastewater Division: Mr. Mattson discussed an Agreement Between Kent County and the Town of Millington – Sewer Allocations. This item was previously discussed at the September 30, 2025, County Commissioners meeting, and the provided staff report summary remains valid. Execution of the Agreement was delayed due to Millington’s process of securing a Town Attorney, followed by additional delays because the selected attorney had previously served as the County’s interim attorney and reviewed the Agreement on behalf of Kent County. The review is now complete, and the Town of Millington has approved the Agreement. Changes since the prior presentation are minimal and primarily involve wording adjustments (e.g., “intermunicipal” changed to “interjurisdictional,” addition of “in good faith” where appropriate). The Agreement will serve, among other purposes, as a de facto reservation of EDUs for the Everton Warehouse project, Millington Senior Village, and Elementary School Redevelopment. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the agreement, as presented.

Water and Wastewater Division: Mr. Mattson informed the Commissioners that \$2,971,500.00 had been allocated for twelve water and wastewater capital improvement projects. While several projects have been completed under budget, others are delayed by design requirements, permitting, and equipment procurement. To meet project completion timelines, the department requests approval to reallocate capital funds to complete the remaining projects, expand the scope of select FY2026 projects, and fund projects in the capital improvement plan that could not be completed with FY2025 funds. A reallocation summary and supporting spreadsheet were submitted for the Commissioners’ review. With four months left in the FY2026 budget year, the department seeks authorization to make further adjustments to these projects as needed. Discussion took place. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the reallocation of FY2026 funding for water and wastewater capital projects as requested and authorized the Public Works Director to further reallocate these funds as needed for the designated projects to meet contractual requirements.

Mr. Mattson briefed the Commissioners on departmental operations and projects.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Heller, on behalf of Mr. Landon, presented a request to appoint a member to the Police Accountability Board (PAB). In addition to appointing a new member to the Board, Ms. Heller also requested that the Commissioners appoint a new Chairperson. The current Chairperson was appointed as the PAB's Accountability Officer Consultant. It is the Commissioners' responsibility to appoint the Chair. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the appointment of the recommended candidate as Chairperson of the Police Accountability Board and also approved the appointment of the recommended candidate to fill an unexpired term ending on December 31, 2026. As a result of the vote, Lamonte Cooke was appointed as Chair of the PAB, and Lisa Doyle fills the unexpired term as stated.

Mr. Heller proposed a discussion regarding House Bill 1063/Senate Bill 0643, Natural Resources – Hunting – Management. If the Board wishes to discuss this, a motion to amend the agenda is appropriate. On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to amend the agenda to discuss HB1063, with comments due by Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Heller references specific parts of the bill regarding migratory birds and their local impact. Commissioner Price explained why he is opposed to waterfowl hunting on Sundays. Commissioner Fithian stated he opposes the bill. Commissioner Nickerson has received feedback from the community, and the widely held opinion of constituents is against Sunday waterfowl hunting. Ms. Heller requested further clarification on the Board's position on the legislative bill with amendments: the portion of the bill relating to deer management practices of the bill is not objectionable; however, there are objections to migratory game bird hunting on Sundays. This is not the first legislative session where the Commissioners have opposed Sunday hunting of migratory birds. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to send a letter of opposition with amendments to address the Sunday waterfowl hunting issue. The letter will outline the Board's objections and request for amendments to the current bill.

Commissioner's Discussion Item: Commissioner Fithian planned to discuss the Chester River Hospital Center Site (Shore Regional Health), heating oil spill, and the Town of Chestertown's efforts for groundwater monitoring. Mr. Mowell and Mr. Mattson provided information. The Mayor of Chestertown is scheduled to appear at a future Commissioners meeting, and it was determined that the conversation is best suited for that meeting.

Ms. Heller presented a request for a letter of support initiated by Commissioner Fithian for Senate Bill 0755 - Natural Resources - Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations. A support letter was drafted to the Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, and provided for review, along with a copy of the legislation. This emergency legislation addresses critical conservation and community concerns regarding the future of striped bass in Maryland's fishing industry. SB0755 safeguards striped bass sustainability while maintaining robust recreational and charter fishing opportunities. It supports our local economy from fishing charters and gear shops to tourism, while demanding accountability from regulatory agencies. Discussion took place. Robert Newberry, Chair of the

Delmarva Fisheries Association, expressed his support for SB0755. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the support letter as submitted.

Courtesy copy recipients are as follows:

The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

The Honorable C. Anthony Muse

The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs

The Honorable Steven J. Arentz

The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

At the request of Natalie Hagan, Director of the Kent County Public Library, two certificates of recognition have been prepared to honor Michael Sampson and Annie Woodall for their many years of dedicated service to Kent County through the library. The certificates were submitted for review and signature.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Code Home Rule Bill No. 9-2025 Cannabis Processor in the Commercial District (C)
Adoption Notice: A summary of the bill must be published in at least one newspaper three times, with each publication occurring once a week over a four-week period. This legislation was adopted on February 3, 2026, without amendments. This bill took effect on February 13, 2026.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Notices were received regarding applications for Permits to Appropriate and Use Waters of the State. Rich Levels Grain, Inc. (Permit No. KE2025G004/01) proposes to draw water from four wells in the Monmouth aquifer at 33960 Sassafras Caldwell Road, Galena, Kent County, MD. Floyd and Terri Price (Permit No. KE2025G005/01) propose to draw water from two wells in the Aquia aquifer at 33821 Sassafras Caldwell Road, Massey, Kent County, MD. Both notices were provided for review.

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 February 10, 2026, is \$259,186.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$94,826.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place, and no comments were offered.

CLOSED SESSION

G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, read a statement regarding the proposed agenda items of a closed session, including the topics and reasons for the session. At 11:07 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; (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto; and (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, respectively. There were three matters discussed.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney; Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk/KATE Manager; and Lacey Townsend, Deputy Clerk II, were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1: PERSONNEL

At 11:08 a.m., Michael Sutton, Director, and Vauné Johnson, HR Specialist, Human Resources, joined the closed session.

Topic to be discussed: The applicants for Warden for the Kent County Detention Center.

Reason for closing: The discussion of the qualifications of specific individuals should be safeguarded.

Mr. Sutton discussed the recruitment efforts for the Warden position at the Kent County Detention Center (KCDC). The panel's recommendations and each candidate's qualifications were reviewed, leading to a lengthy discussion.

At 11:46 a.m., Mr. Sutton and Ms. Johnson departed the closed session. All other persons remained.

MATTER NO. 2: PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND LEGAL ADVICE

At 11:48 a.m., Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, joined the closed session.

Topic to be discussed: Property transactions related to the Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Reason for closing: Legal advice from the County Attorney is privileged as is meant to shield specific details concerning the acquisition of real property and negotiations related thereto, and information provided by staff regarding the matter should be shielded because it relates to the acquisition of real property.

Bobby Mowell, County Attorney, and Mr. Mattson provided confidential memoranda to the Commissioners for their review regarding property transactions for the Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Updates were provided, and a general discussion occurred.

MATTER NO. 3 LEGAL ADVICE

Topic to be discussed: Questions about the rights and responsibilities of the County in maintaining public roads versus private roads and the validity of maintenance agreements for private roads.

Reason for closing: Legal advice from the County Attorney is privileged and should not be disseminated to the public.

Previous discussions with the Commissioners expressed an interest in a specific road(s) resurfacing project. Mr. Mattson provided an update, and Mr. Mowell offered legal guidance.

At 12:15 p.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

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

Matter No. 1: Personnel - The Commissioners discussed a hiring recommendation for a director of a County department. Commissioner Price made a motion for the HR Department to extend a conditional employment offer, as discussed. Commissioner Nickerson seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-1, with Commissioner Fithian opposing.

Matter No. 2: Property Acquisition and Legal Advice – The Commissioners discussed land acquisition and directed the Public Works Director to proceed as directed.

Matter No. 3: Legal Advice – Commissioner Price stated that no action was taken at this time.

At 12:17 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, March 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

February 24, 2026

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, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, and Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, Kent Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, were 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, February 10, 2026.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSE

The Timothy Kern Memorial Fund submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer only for a sporting clays event fundraiser on March 28, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Hopkins Hunting Sporting Clays, 13003 Turners Creek Road, Kennedyville. The application was reviewed. No comments were received either in support of or in opposition to the application. 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 Timothy Kern Memorial Fund.

PUBLIC HEARING PROTOCOL

G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, affirmed Commissioner Fithian's suggestion in waiving the reading of the public hearing protocols. The rules for a public hearing were in effect.

TRACKSIDE BAR & GRILL, LLC, CLASS B, BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR LICENSE

The hearing commenced at 10:14 a.m. The public notice was provided for the record. Notice, an application has been made by Member Javier Colon Algarin, representing Trackside Bar & Grill, LLC, for a Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License on the premises known as Trackside Bar & Grill, 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. The hearing was duly advertised.

Mr. Mowell administered the Oath to Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, Kent Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (KATE), and anyone else wishing to testify. The applicant was not present.

A legal review of the application for a Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License was completed. Inspector Pearsall informed the Commissioners that the applicant had met all the requirements for the application to be heard, and a pre-hearing inspection had been completed. Staff recommended approval of the application with a contingency noted. No comments were offered in favor of or in opposition to the application. There being no objections, on a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License for Trackside Bar & Grill, LLC, contingent upon the receipt of a corrected Sales and Use Tax License. The public hearing concluded at 10:07 a.m.

At 12:17 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, March 3, 2026, 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