

March 3, 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 for all our troops who may be in harm's way and offered prayers that they return home safely.

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

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved four consent items as presented.

1. Regular Session Minutes, February 24, 2026
2. Liquor Minutes, February 24, 2026
3. Closed Session, Minutes, February 24, 2026
4. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, Kent County First Amendment to Project Task Agreement #KE-005-OED Weed Control by and Between MDOT SHA and Kent County. The amendment increases the total project funding by \$8,700.00, bringing the revised maximum reimbursement to \$30,000.00

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Proclamation, Chestertown Rotary Club Celebrates 100 Years on March 8, 2026: The Rotary Club of Chestertown will celebrate a milestone anniversary. A proclamation commemorating this achievement was presented to David White, President of the Chestertown Rotary Club. Mr. White asked Jamie Williams, Director of Economic and Tourism Development; Pete Landon, Director of the Office of Emergency Services; Natalie Hagan, Director of the Kent County Public Library; and Lisa Webb to join him in honor of the occasion. Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation into the record.

G. ROBERT MOWELL, COUNTY ATTORNEY, LEGISLATIVE PROTOCOL

Mr. Mowell outlined actions that the Commissioners could consider during the legislative session. Two legislative bills have been prepared and submitted for the Board's review and action. Discussion occurred. On a motion made by Commissioner Price, and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to go into a legislative session.

G. ROBERT MOWELL, COUNTY ATTORNEY, LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Code Home Rule 1-2026 Boats and Boating - Introduction, First Reading - AN ACT concerning Chapter 68 Boats and Boating, Section 68-15 Enforcement, 68-16 Violations and Penalties, 68-18 Additional Remedies, and 68-19 Appeals. For the purpose of designating the appropriate authority to issue municipal ordinance violation civil citations and establishing the

procedure by which they are enforced. By repealing Chapter 68 Boats and Boating, Section 68-15 Enforcement, 68-16 Violations and Penalties, 68-18 Additional Remedies, and 68-19 Appeals, and reenacting with amendments Chapter 68 Boats and Boating, Section 68-15 Enforcement, 68-16 Violations and Penalties, 68-18 Additional Remedies, and 68-19 Appeals. Discussion took place. Mr. Mowell stated that a public hearing is tentatively scheduled for March 24, 2026. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved introducing Code Home Rule Bill 1-2026 and for the bill to be scheduled for a public hearing.

Code Home Rule 2-2026 Administration of Government - Introduction, First Reading - Code Home Rule Bill No. 2-2026 AN ACT amending Chapter 3 Administration of Government, Section 3-2 Terms, compensation, and Compensation Review Commission. For the purpose of increasing the compensation of the next Board of County Commissioners for Kent County, as a result of a 2025 Resolution enacted by the Compensation Review Commission, suggesting a phased increase in salary over four years, and establishing a commencement date for the terms of the County Commissioners. By repealing Chapter 3 Administration of Government, Section 3-2 Terms, compensation, and Compensation Review Commission, Subsection A Term and Subsection B Compensation, and reenacting Chapter 3 Administration of Government, Section 3-2 Terms, compensation, and Compensation Review Commission, Subsection A Term and Subsection B Compensation, with amendments. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved introducing Code Home Rule Bill 2-2026 and for the bill to be scheduled for a public hearing.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to exit the legislative session.

APPOINTMENTS

Meghan E. Efland, Mayor, Town of Chestertown: Updates were provided to the Commissioners on current Town matters and intentions to attend monthly meetings to offer continued updates. Mayor Efland discussed areas where the Town is seeking County support and introduced the new Town Manager, Chad Rooney, along with newly elected Council Member Andre Demattia of Ward 3. Of concern is the Town's involvement and cost burden of monitoring the quality of water connected to an oil spill at the hospital site, 100 Brown Street, in Chestertown. The Commissioners encouraged continued discussions during upcoming budget work sessions. Opportunities for the County and Town to review budgetary needs and expectations would be welcomed, and the Commissioners agreed to maintain ongoing dialogue for future collaboration. Commissioner Price commented on the next steps regarding potential memorandums of understanding that may benefit the Town, and Commissioner Nickerson thanked Mayor Efland, the newly elected Council Member, and the new Town Manager for their participation.

Robert Baldwin, District Manager, Kent Soil and Water Conservation: The District is proposing to increase the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan review fee for projects disturbing ten or more acres from \$200.00 to \$400.00 per disturbed acre. For the District, large projects require multiple review cycles, detailed technical evaluations, oversight, and the current fee no longer

reflects the true cost of staff time, site visits, and program overhead. Neighboring districts have implemented similar or higher fees, and the proposed rate maintains regional competitiveness while improving cost recovery and supporting timely, quality reviews. The Kent Soil and Water Conservation District recommended adopting the increase to ensure adequate resources to meet regulatory obligations and protect natural resources. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to allow the request to increase review fees, as presented.

Natalie Hagan, Director, Kent County Public Library: Ms. Hagan provided an organizational update, an overview of upcoming summer programs, and a list of planned projects to help maintain the facilities. Commissioner Fithian inquired about the status of the roof repair for the Chestertown Library branch. In response, Ms. Hagan and Dan Mattson, the Director of Public Works, provided the requested update.

KENT COUNTY DETENTION CENTER (KCDC)

Captain Steve Wallace of KCDC presented a proposed contract between Kent County and Friends Research Institute, Inc. (FRI). KCDC has previously partnered with FRI on research studies and now seeks to enter a new agreement for a study recruiting individuals with moderate to severe opioid use disorder who are nearing release and eligible for sublingual or extended-release buprenorphine treatment via telemedicine. Captain Wallace provided a brief background on the program and the services they offer. FRI will pay the County \$25,000.00 per year for 4 years under the contract. Discussion followed. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Contract by and Between Friend Research Institute and the County Commissioners, as presented.

Captain Wallace and Joanne McNamara, Director of Grants and Contracts, presented an Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Grant application to continue supporting the Detention Center's medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program, which has been in place since the passage of House Bill 0116 (2019) requiring MAT services in Maryland detention centers. The current grant funding expires on June 30, 2026, and the new application seeks to fully fund program operations in the amount of \$227,758.00 through FY2027. Staff noted that if the competitive grant is not awarded, the County would need to budget the required funds or potentially use Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) settlement dollars; however, securing state grant funding would keep ORF resources available for community-based opioid response initiatives. A brief discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the submission of a grant application as presented.

JOANNE MCNAMARA, DIRECTOR OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Ms. McNamara noted that in July 2025, the Commissioners passed a Resolution to establish a grant process for the distribution of the Opioid Restitution Funds, and the State of Maryland approved Kent County's Local Abatement Plan (LAP), paving the way to allow Kent County to access its Opioid Restitution Funds (ORF) allocated under the state-local subdivision agreement and make distributions. Since then, the ORF Workgroup has created a grant application process with

two components: a larger 12-month grant application and a smaller, rolling grant application for requests under \$4,000.00 or less. Review of these small requests will be done on a quarterly basis for evaluation and recommendation to the Commissioners for funding. The first quarter of application collection has passed, and two applications for small-grant funding have been recommended; a summary was provided. Staff recommends approval of the ORF awarding the FY2026 Grant Program Small Grant recommendations as follows:

1. Kent County Health Department – \$4,000.00 or less Oral Health Initiative at A.F. Whitsitt Center
2. Choptank Tolomato Legacy Project –\$3,977.00 A.F. Whitsitt Mural Project

This has no financial impact on the County; ORF settlement funds must be received into a special revenue account and not mixed with County General Funds, and can only be used for allowable opioid mitigation, treatment, and prevention purposes. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Opioid Restitution Fund small grant awards, as recommended.

ROSEMARY RAMSEY GRANILLO, DIRECTOR, KENT COUNTY LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (KCLMB)

Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director, and Ms. McNamara discussed the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund (CRRF) 2026 Grant Program Award Recommendations. The Community Reinvestment and Repair Commission (CRRC) reviewed 20 large and 5 small grant applications submitted by a variety of community organizations totaling \$685,476.00. After scoring and ranking the proposals, the CRRC recommends \$100,440.00 for large grants and \$20,000.00 for small grants. A detailed summary was provided. There is no financial impact to the County; CRRF revenue must be held in a separate account and may be used only for allowable purposes. Ms. McNamara provided an overview of the sources of these funds and how they can be utilized through the LMB.

Large Grants Recommendations:

1. Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's – \$15,000.00 for Kent County expansion
2. Minary's Dream Alliance (MDA) – \$14,126.00 for capital request for infrastructure
3. Kent County Middle School (KCMS)– \$5,000.00 for Judy Center transportation
4. Sultana Education Foundation – \$2,000.00 for kayaking and outdoor education MDA program
5. United Covenant Union – \$12,250.00 for domestic worker development program
6. Rebuilding Together Eastern Shore – \$10,000.00 for home repairs
7. Washington College (WAC) Starr Center – \$10,000.00 for Hip Hop Time Capsule program
8. Community Mediation Upper Shore – \$14,900.00 mediation at KCMS
9. KCMS – \$17,164.00 for afterschool buses

Small Grants Recommendations:

1. Big Mixx's – \$4,000.00 youth barbering apprenticeship
2. Citizens' Against Smoking Tobacco (CAST) – \$4,000.00 youth program

3. Kent Attainable Housing – \$4,000.00 financial literacy and homeownership program
4. Open Doors Partners for Education – \$4,000.00 literacy tutoring
5. Voices of Reason Consulting – \$4,000.00 reintegration support impacted by incarceration.

Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the CRRF awards as recommended by the CRRF Commission.

Ms. Ramsey Granillo shared that the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards (LMB) has presented a fiscal note to the General Assembly to ensure and increase year-over-year funding for LMBs. To build broad support and visibility, a letter of support is appreciated. The House Bill will be heard on March 10, 2026. A letter prepared to Chair Ben Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee was drafted in support of House Bill 0680, Children's Cabinet Fund – Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards, for the Board's consideration. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the letter of support, as presented.

The courtesy copy recipients were as follows:

- The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
- The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs
- The Honorable Steven J. Arentz
- The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist

DAN MATTSON, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS

Water and Wastewater Division: Ms. McNamara joined Mr. Mattson to present the FY2027 Federal Appropriations Request for the Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant. Ms. McNamara reported that in FY2026, Kent County requested \$12.8 million in federal appropriations to support the construction and relocation of the facility and successfully secured \$6.2 million through the Agriculture Appropriations Bill, sponsored by Congressman Harris and Senators Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks. Congressman Harris's office advised that the County may pursue an additional \$6.2 million in FY2027. With the federal request period now open, staff recommends submitting a second request for this amount. Ms. McNamara noted that the project has an estimated total cost of \$17.1 million, and the Department of Public Works is actively assembling a funding package that currently includes \$800,000.00 from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), a pending Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) application, and the \$6.2 million federal award received to date, representing 40 percent of total project costs. If the County receives the second federal earmark, secured funds would cover approximately 77 percent of the project. Any remaining costs not met through grants will require County appropriations or loan financing, and staff will continue seeking grant opportunities to minimize local funding obligations. On motion by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved the submittal of the application for a Federal Appropriations request for FY2027 in the amount of \$6.2 million to support costs related to the construction and relocation of the Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Road Division: Mr. Mattson reviewed the FY2027 paving program, noting that American Legion Drive and Mallard Road need rehabilitation. Staff recommended a double-shot tar-and-chip with fog seal instead of traditional paving to reduce costs. The fog seal improves durability and appearance and has been effective in other areas. Commissioners were asked to consider broader use of this treatment to reduce paving costs and increase roadway mileage, while keeping potential resident concerns in mind. Discussion followed to guide budget planning. The Commissioners offered feedback

Environmental Operations Division: Mr. Mattson reported that a loader broke down during the February 3, 2026, storm while traveling to a transfer site, causing damage to the oil line that requires replacement of the hydraulic pump and filter. Repairs total \$16,822.44, with an additional \$4,215.50 for towing, for a combined cost of \$21,637.44. As this is one of only two loaders used by the division, prolonged downtime would significantly affect transfer site and maintenance operations. Because the equipment repair budget is fully committed, the staff requested contingency funds to complete the repair. This procurement has been identified as an emergency due to the above-noted circumstances. Public Works recommended allocating contingency funds. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the allocation of \$21,637.44 from the contingency funds, as requested.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Proclamation, Endometriosis Awareness Month, March 2026: Ms. Heller, on behalf of Shannon Hannawald, Endo Warriors of the Eastern Shore, requested a proclamation for Endometriosis Awareness Month, traditionally recognized in March. Ms. Heller read the proclamation into the record and encouraged citizens to wear yellow to raise awareness.

Ms. Heller, on behalf of Craig Kuhn, Program Manager at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, discussed a funding request. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has identified two areas in Kent County totaling 302 acres where spongy moth populations could lead to defoliation (a map was provided for reference). Mr. Kuhn is seeking confirmation on whether the County would be interested in participating in a spongy moth aerial suppression project scheduled for the spring of 2026. It is important to note that the County's participation will be limited to cost-sharing for non-state-owned lands, specifically the identified 302 acres. Under this cooperative suppression program, funding has traditionally been shared among the US Forest Service (50%), the State of Maryland (25%), and the County (25%). Based on previous estimates, MDA anticipates the County's contribution to be approximately \$15.00 per acre, totaling \$4,530.00. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the allocation of \$4,530.00 in contingency funds to the spraying of the gypsy moth.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Following the Commissioners' meeting on February 24, 2026, support letters for House Bill 1063 – Natural Resources: Hunting Management (which is cross-filed with Senate Bill 0643) were

prepared and signed by the County Administrator on February 26, 2026. The letter supporting House Bill 1063 was submitted as testimony for the legislative hearing held on February 27, 2026. The letter in support of Senate Bill 0643 will be submitted as testimony for the legislative hearing scheduled for March 10, 2026.

The letter for House Bill 1063 was addressed to Chair Marc Korman and the Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. The letter for Senate Bill 0643 was addressed to Chair Brian J. Feldman and the Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

The courtesy copy recipients were as follows:

- The County Commissioners of Kent County
- The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
- The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs
- The Honorable Steven J. Arentz
- The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

Following the Commissioners' meeting on February 24, 2026, a letter was prepared to Barry Byers, the outgoing Chair of the Kent County Police Accountability Board (PAB). The letter expressed gratitude for his dedicated service and significant contributions to the community. It also congratulated him on his new role as a consultant for the PAB and wished him continued success in his future endeavors.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Notice of Application of Herman Highway Solar 1 LLC Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity Case No. 9817 Herman Highway Kennedyville, MD. The letter provides notice of a solar project planned for Herman Highway, Kennedyville, Kent County, Maryland (Map: 0021 Grid: 0002e Parcel: 0267). The 3-Megawatt solar facility footprint is approximately 29 acres and is located approximately 2,000 feet southwest of the intersection of Dairy Street and Augustine Herman Highway. Notice was 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 24, 2026, is \$259,186.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$94,826.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place. Mike Waal provided a comment regarding paving materials.

At 7:33 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 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

March 3, 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, and G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, 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 24, 2026.

At 7:33 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 10, 2026, 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