

April 7, 2026

FY2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON MARCH 31, 2026

A budget work session was held on March 31, 2026, at 10:02 a.m., with the following present: Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian, Commissioner John F. Price, and Commissioner Albert H. Nickerson. Also in attendance were Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, and Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance.

Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance, shared the general fund overview and presented the department's budget. Bryan DiGregory, State's Attorney, State's Attorney Office; Dennis Hickman, Sheriff, Harry Kettner, Captain, and Kim Dixon, Office Manager, Kent County Sheriff's Office; Roland Sheppard, Director of Operations, Kent County Detention Center; Pete Landon, Director, Office of Emergency Services; Lisa Mazingo, Director, Kent Family Center; Joanne McNamara, Director, Grants and Contracts, Daniel Mattson, Director, and Carrie Klein, Deputy Director, Public Works, Daniel Bitter, Division Chief, County Roads, Jill Coleman, Director, Parks and Recreation and; Scott Boone, Director, and April Bitter, Project Manager, Information Technology; Carla Gerber, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Jamie Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development; Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director, Kent County Local Management Board; Michael Sutton, Director, Human Resources; and Sondra Blackiston, Clerk/KATE Manager, Commissioners' Office were in attendance. Each agency, department, or division presented its respective FY2027 budget. The Commissioners took a lunch break at midday, and the budget work session ended at 2:19 p.m.

FY2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON APRIL 7, 2026

A budget work session was held on April 7, 2026, at 1:30 p.m., with the following present: Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian, Commissioner John F. Price, and Commissioner Albert H. Nickerson. Also in attendance were Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, and Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance. Ms. Merritt shared the general fund overview, and the Commissioners reviewed allocations. The budget work session ended at 3:30 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 3:40 p.m., with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, President, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price.

CLOSED SESSION

G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, read a statement regarding the proposed closed session agenda item, including the topics and reasons for the session. At 3:41 p.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)(3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto; (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, respectively. One matter was discussed.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney; Lacey Townsend, Deputy Clerk II; and Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development, were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1: THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY AND LEGAL ADVICE

At 3:42 p.m., Dan Mattson, Director, 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 private to the public and 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.

Mr. Mattson presented the final Purchase Agreement and Access Agreement for the new site for the Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Mattson summarized the terms of the agreements and updated the County Commissioners on the final changes made to both agreements. A lengthy discussion occurred.

OPEN SESSION

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

Matter No. 1: The Acquisition of Real Property and Legal Advice – The Commissioners discussed land acquisition with the County Attorney and the Public Works Director and directed the Public Works Director to proceed as directed.

At 4:07 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved recessing the meeting until 6:00 p.m.

RECONVENE REGULAR SESSION

The meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County reconvened at 6:00 p.m., with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, President, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to remain silent for the unrest around this great land and for everyone to remain safe.

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

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, March 24, 2026
2. Liquor Minutes, March 24, 2026
3. Public Hearing Minutes, March 24, 2026
4. Closed Session Minutes, March 24, 2026
5. Joanne McNamara, Director, Grants and Contracts – Department of Housing and Community Development, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Award Acceptance, Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant infrastructure project in the amount of \$800,000.00
6. Pete Landon, Director, Office of Emergency Services – Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charge Committee Appointments – Shelley Schofield and Lisa Doyle
7. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works – Maryland Energy Administration Local Government Energy Modernization Grant Award Acceptance – Energy Efficiency Planning and Implementation (\$171,507.00) and Renewable Energy Planning and Implementation (\$904,735.00)
8. Mr. Mattson, Water and Wastewater Division – Butlertown Tower Rehabilitation Contract Award Approval – Proposal WW 26-08, Minoan Industrial LLC, in the amount of \$248,350.00
9. Kent County 4-H Bits & Bridles 4-H Horse Club, Raffle Only, April – July 18, 2026

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Good Sports Awards – Jill Coleman, Director, Parks and Recreation, provided a brief overview of the Good Sports Awards program. Good Sports Awards is a program under MARPSA (Mid-Atlantic Recreation & Sports Alliance) that extends beyond the realm of sportsmanship. It encourages local athletes, officials, and coaches to take accountability for their actions and conduct both on and off the field, ensuring a positive sporting experience for everyone involved. To celebrate these remarkable individuals, MARPSA sponsors a statewide Good Sports Award for players, coaches, officials, and officers. Each year, they are honored at an annual banquet in Annapolis. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, they will not be holding the banquet this year. The Parks and Recreation Department felt it necessary to recognize the following individuals: Alexandria Hall, Shawana Pinkett, Jamie Arcos, Creg Fleetwood, and Julianne Blevins. Tonya Thomas, Program/Facilities Manager, assisted Ms. Coleman in presenting the awards to the recipients.

Proclamation Fair Housing Month April 2026 - Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation into the record and presented it to Carla Gerber, Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning.

PUBLIC HEARING – REDESIGNATION OF CHESTERTOWN ENTERPRISE ZONE APPLICATION

A public hearing was held on the Redesignation of Chestertown Enterprise Zone Application. Information regarding the abovementioned hearing and its minutes are posted on the County's website at <https://www.kentcounty.com>.

RESOLUTION 2026-04 REDESIGNATION OF CHESTERTOWN ENTERPRISE ZONE

Upon the conclusion of the public hearing for the Redesignation Chestertown Enterprise Zone Application, the application process requires the adoption of a Kent County resolution. Mr. Mowell presented Resolution 2026-04 Redesignation of Chestertown Enterprise Zone for consideration. On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Resolution 2026-04 Redesignation of Chestertown Enterprise Zone as presented.

G. ROBERT MOWELL, COUNTY ATTORNEY, LEGISLATIVE SESSION

At 6:22 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to go into legislative session.

Mr. Mowell summarized actions the Commissioners could consider during the legislative session. Two legislative bills were scheduled for a third reading and presented for passage, rejection, amendment, or deferral for a later date. No proposed amendments were received. No written comments were received during the comment period for either bill.

Third Reading and Vote - Code Home Rule Bill No. 1-2026 Boats and Boating - 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 civil citations for ordinance violations and establishing the procedure by which they are issued and adjudicated. 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. No written comments were received after the hearing date. Discussion took place.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Code Home Rule Bill 1-2026 Boats and Boating.

Third Reading and Vote - Code Home Rule Bill No. 2-2026 Administration of Government - 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 a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners, by a majority vote, adopted Code Home Rule Bill 2-2026 Administration of Government. Commissioner Nickerson voted in opposition to the bill.

On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to go out of legislative session at 6:25 p.m.

KEVIN HEMSTOCK, MAYOR, TOWN OF MILLINGTON, AND FRANK HODGETTS, PRESIDENT, HOME PARTNERSHIP, INC.

Kevin Hemstock, Mayor, and Zita Seals, Councilwoman, Town of Millington, Frank Hodgetts, President, Home Partnership, Inc., and Mike Sheedy, Executive Director, Volunteers of America Chesapeake & Carolinas, provided an update on the Millington Senior Village Project. Discussion took place.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Pete Landon, Director of the Office of Emergency Services (OES), presented a request to donate surplus vehicles to multiple fire companies. On September 16, 2025, the Kent County Office of Emergency Services requested permission to begin the donation process for a medical chase unit to the Betterton Volunteer Fire Company. Since that time, two additional requests have been received, one from the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company and one from the Kent and Queen Anne's Rescue Squad, for similar vehicle donations. Due to delays from the outfitter in placing new medical chase units into service, this project experienced a delay. In the second week of March, two medical Tahoe's were successfully retired from service, allowing for proper appraisals to be completed.

The appraised values of the three retired medical chase units are as follows:

- 2016 Ford Explorer (Police Interceptor) — \$3,930.00 (*Kent and Queen Anne's Rescue Squad)
- 2018 Chevrolet Tahoe (Police) — \$7,430.00 (*Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company)
- 2019 Chevrolet Tahoe (Police) — \$8,930.00 (*Betterton Volunteer Fire Company)

All three vehicles will provide significant benefit to these volunteer organizations, as they will require only minimal outfitting for emergency lighting, sirens, and Kent County radio equipment. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to have the Kent County Office of Emergency Services to proceed with the next steps in allowing the Betterton Volunteer Fire Company, Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company and the Kent and Queen Anne's Rescue Squad to obtain a used chase unit (that has already been turned into Public Works), in coordination with

the Kent County Department of Public Works, to ensure the most cost-effective allocation of resources.

KENT COUNTY LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Kara Wehmueller, Fiscal Compliance Specialist, Kent County Local Management Board, requested approval of a contract with Due East Partners to facilitate action-planning work in accordance with the FY2026 ENOUGH LMB Capacity Building grant awarded in December 2025. KCLMB released an RFP on the Kent County website to complete the development of an operational Neighborhood Action Plan that builds on the community input and goal-setting completed in 2025. After extending the RFP deadline by two weeks, KCLMB received two applications. Due East Partners was the least expensive proposal, and KCLMB has experience with them from community planning work completed in 2019. The second proposal, from Smith Planning and Design, was for \$53,000.00. The Neighborhood Action Plan will be developed between three work groups: one for Housing, another for Economic Mobility, and the third for Education. The plan will be reviewed and refined by the Uptown and Beyond Advisory Council, which KCLMB convenes with Washington College's Innovation Plant. Work will be completed by June 30th, with the option to extend activities until September 30th with a no-cost extension. The contract amount is not to exceed \$31,600.00. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the FY2026 contract with Due East Partners.

MICHAEL SUTTON, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation for an Office of Emergency Services, 9-1-1 Specialist vacancy. On motion by Commissioner Price, 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.

Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation for two Parks and Recreation Facilities Specialist vacancies. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved a conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidates.

Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation for a Public Works - Maintenance Worker I vacancy. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved a conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Heller announced that a public meeting with the legislative bodies of Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties will be held on April 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will take place in the Dorchester Board Room at Chesapeake College, 100 College

Circle, Wye Mills, MD. This is the annual budget meeting, where the counties collectively vote on Chesapeake College's budget.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Ms. Heller reported that Kreigh Kirby, Director of Finance, Kent County Public Schools (KCPS), needed Commissioner Fithian's signature giving consent for a FY2027 Nonrecurring Cost Request for a BAS Replacement to Kent County High School and Henry Highland Garnett Elementary School. This document verifies that these expenses are not recurring; it does not indicate how or if the expenses will be paid by the County. The KCPS needed the document signed before the next Commissioners' meeting could take place, and it was signed outside a regularly scheduled meeting. The document was provided for review.

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

During the March 24th Commissioners meeting, a request was received to waive the interest and penalty fees on a property tax bill. The Commissioners denied the request to waive the fees. A response letter was submitted for signature.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

A Sewage Sludge Utilization Permit Application has been submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to transport sewage sludge generated by the Galena Wastewater Treatment Plant located in Kent County, to the Worton-Butlertown Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at 25 310 Chinquapin Road in Kent County, Maryland. Please be advised that MDE has initiated the processing of this permit application. The application and correspondence were provided for review.

A Sewage Sludge Utilization Permit Application has been submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to transport sewage sludge generated by the Kennedyville Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in Kent County, to the Galena Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at 13265 Augustine Herman Highway in Kent County, Maryland. Please be advised that MDE has initiated the processing of this permit application. The application and correspondence were provided for review.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. No comments were made.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

The Commissioners received a copy of the final ARPA Spend Plan report.

CONTINGENCY FUND

Regular Session Minutes

April 7, 2026

Page 8 of 8

The FY2026 Contingency Fund balance as of March 24, 2026, is \$164,648.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$94,826.00.

At 7:02 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, April 14, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
Deputy Clerk II

Approved:

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

April 7, 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, March 24, 2026.

A reprimand letter was issued to Betty's Bar on March 17, 2026, after a Board of License Commissioners administrative hearing held on February 24, 2026. The incident involved the selling or providing of alcoholic beverages to an intoxicated individual. It was determined that the members violated a prohibition contained in the Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article of the Maryland Code. As a result, the Board of License Commissioners issued a reprimand.

At 7:02 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, April 14, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lacey M. Townsend
Deputy Clerk II

Approved:

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

April 7, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING

County Commissioners Ronald H. Fithian, Presiding, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price were in attendance, as well as Shelley Heller, County Administrator, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, and Jamie Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development.

REDESIGNATION OF CHESTERTOWN ENTERPRISE ZONE APPLICATION

Mr. Mowell read the protocols for the public hearing and the public hearing notice into the record. The public hearing was duly advertised. The rules for a public hearing were in effect. Two sign-in sheets were made available to the public: an attendance sheet and a testimony log.

The public hearing commenced at 6:18 p.m. in the County Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, MD. A public hearing to discuss a Chestertown Enterprise Zone Redesignation Application.

Mr. Mowell gave an overview of the Enterprise Zone (EZ) Designation. The EZ program provides real property tax credits for businesses and state income tax credits for employees located in a Maryland Enterprise Zone in return for job creation and capital investments. The Maryland Department of Commerce provided the data needed for the redesignation of the Chestertown Enterprise Zone (EZ). Maryland EZs must be redesignated every 10 years. Chestertown remains eligible. Ms. Abbott is updating the 2016 application, which is due April 15, 2026. As part of the process, a joint public hearing with the Town is required. Eligibility is determined by the poverty rate for Census Tract 9503, which currently stands at 13.6% (2026). For comparison, it was 20.3% in 2016, 5.1% in 2021, and 5.9% in 2022, an example of the significant fluctuations and inconsistencies often seen in Census data for Kent County.

The Town of Chestertown was required to hold a public hearing regarding the Redesignation Chestertown Enterprise Zone Application. Meghan E. Efland, Mayor, Town of Chestertown, provided an overview of the public hearing held on April 6, 2026, by the Town of Chestertown. Jamie Williams, Director of Economic and Tourism Development, provided additional background information.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to conclude the public hearing at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
Deputy Clerk II

Approved:

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