

April 21, 2026

FY2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON APRIL 21, 2026

A budget work session was held on April 21, 2026, at 3:00 p.m., with the following present: Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian, Commissioner Albert H. Nickerson, and Commissioner John F. Price. Also in attendance were Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, and Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance.

Budget requests and municipal updates were presented by John Schratwieser, Director, Kent Cultural Alliance; Kevin Hemstock, Mayor, and Zita Seals, Council Member, Town of Millington; Donald Sutton, Mayor, Town of Betterton; and Dr. Mary McComas, Superintendent, and Kreigh Kirby, Director of Finance, Kent County Public Schools. A discussion took place regarding funding for the proposed middle school.

Ms. Merritt also shared documentation and discussion items for the budget process. Further discussion occurred, and the budget work session concluded at 4:40 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Ronald H. Fithian presiding, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to observe a moment of silence for no specific reason, but there are enough ills happening across the world; let us keep everyone in our prayers and hope that everything will settle down.

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

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, April 14, 2026
2. Liquor Minutes, April 14, 2026
3. Closed Session Minutes, April 14, 2026
4. Harris Murphy, County Administrative Judge, Kent County Circuit Court Courthouse - Approval of the purchase of equipment from Point Security Inc., in the amount of \$32,850.00 for security upgrades
5. Joanne McNamara, Director, Grants and Contracts - State of Maryland Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) documents for MD-26-CD-31
 - a. NEPA Environmental Assessment Checklist, Millington Wastewater System Conveyance Improvements
 - b. Environmental Assessment Certification, Millington Wastewater System Conveyance Improvements

- c. Statutory and Other Requirements Checklist, Millington Wastewater System Conveyance Improvements
6. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, FY2026 Roadway Line Striping Contract, Approval to piggyback on Howard County, Maryland, Office of Procurement and Contract Administration No. 4400004812 with Alpha Space Control, Inc., for roadway striping not to exceed \$50,000.00
7. Carrie Klein, Deputy Director, Public Works, Approval to Award Sole Source Procurement to O'Brien Doors, LLC, CSL24UL Operators, Estimate No. 1191, and to allocate \$18,850.00 in contingency funds for a gate operator system at the Public Works Complex.

TYLER ARNOLD, GIS SPECIALIST, PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ZONING

Geographic Information System (GIS) / Washington College Intern Project Report: Mr. Arnold summarized the projects completed as part of the intern program with Alex Lougue, a Washington College student intern. He also presented further details about these projects. Additionally, a new project to capture sidewalk data for the incorporated towns is currently underway. The Commissioners expressed their appreciation for these projects and the partnership with Washington College's intern program.

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

Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund (CCIF): Ms. Ramsey Granillo explained that the CCIF was established in Maryland law and is administered by the Governor's Office for Children. It supports local community-based services aligned with statewide priorities, including the ENOUGH framework to reduce child poverty and improve economic mobility. All funded activities and community support initiatives must align with one or more of the ENOUGH pillars and support Maryland's all-of-government approach to achieving the Children's Cabinet North Star to increase economic mobility.

Following the FY2027 Notice of Funding Availability issued on February 2, 2026, the County's application requests continued funding for several ongoing programs—Healthy Families Home Visiting, Beyond Your Mental Peer Mentoring, Big Brothers Big Sisters Eastern Shore, Hip Hop Time Capsule, and the KCMS Afterschool Program—while introducing a new initiative to support families with rental assistance or financial planning and benefits access. The application also includes funding for KCLMB operations. In total, the request blends CCIF, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and county dollars to enhance services for children, youth, and families. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners, by unanimous vote, approved the submission of the proposed FY2027 Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund (CCIF) project narrative.

Resolution 2026-08 To Allocate Community Reinvestment And Repair Special Revenue Funds: Ms. Ramsey Granillo explained that the resolution authorizes the Kent County Commissioners to allocate Community Reinvestment and Repair Special Revenue Funds. After

receiving the recommendations of the Kent County Community Reinvestment and Repair Commission, including a summary of community input and applicants, the Commissioners formally approved the Commission's proposed uses of the fund. Ms. Ramsey Granillo provided a list of the recipients of the awarded funds and the amounts they will be receiving. This action fulfills the annual requirement under the Cannabis Reform Act of 2023 for the Commissioners to approve these allocations by resolution. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners, by unanimous vote, approved the resolution as presented by Rosie.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

FY2027 Budget Request for Reimbursement of Continued Test Well Monitoring in Chestertown: In the Special Work Session held on April 14, 2026, the County and the Town of Chestertown discussed continuing to monitor test wells near the site of the hospital oil spill of 1987. Previously, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) had required the hospital to test numerous sentinel monitoring wells. A sentinel monitoring well is a specialized groundwater well located between known contamination sources (the oil spill) and drinking water supplies to detect pollutant migration. MDE's requirements have ended, but the Town would like to continue monitoring for pollutants. The cost for FY2027 is approximately \$20,000.00 to test seven wells on a quarterly basis. The Commissioners tentatively discussed paying half the cost to ensure that the drinking water wells are not drawing contaminated water. Meghan Efland, Mayor, Town of Chestertown, joined the conversation and provided additional comments. On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners, by unanimous vote, approved, including \$10,000.00 in the FY2027 budget to help the Town of Chestertown pay for the quarterly monitoring of the wells and events.

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

Ms. Ramsey Granillo submitted six agreements for the Community Reinvestment and Repair Funds (Small Grants), which were approved at the March 3, 2026, meeting, for signature.

Big Mixx's Beautiful Beginnings \$4,000.00
Citizens Against Smoking Tobacco C.A.S.T. \$4,000.00
Kent Attainable Housing \$4,000.00
Open Doors Partners in Education \$4,000.00
Sultana Education Foundation \$2,000.00
Voice of Reason \$4,000.00

Ms. Ramsey Granillo submitted five agreements for the Community Reinvestment and Repair Funds (Large Grants), which were approved at the March 3, 2026, meeting, for signature.

Community Mediation Upper Shore \$14,900.00
Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's \$15,000.00
Kent County Public Schools (Judy Center Programming) \$5,000.00

Minary's Dream Alliance \$14,126.00

Rebuilding Together Eastern Shore \$10,000.00

PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Finding of No Significant Impact and Request for Release of Funds Under Maryland Community Development Block Grant, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development: The purpose of the Notice is to satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be taken by the County Commissioners of Kent County. The County Commissioners of Kent County will request that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development release funds under the Maryland Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to be used for the Millington Wastewater System Conveyance Improvements. Notice is hereby given that the above-named agency has prepared an Environmental Review Record on the project(s) described in this Notice and has determined that said project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Total Project Costs related to the conveyance system improvements are estimated at \$1,194,995.00. This legal notice will be duly advertised for publication on April 23, 2026.

Proposed Amendment to the Kent County Water Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan, Service for the Everton Warehouse Project: The amendment proposes extending the County Water and Sewer Service Area to include the Everton Warehouse Project (Map 31, Parcel 6), and it has been determined that the amendment is consistent with the Kent County Unified Development Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. The project is located within a designated County Priority Funding Area (PFA). In addition to available water capacity, the County Commissioners and the Town of Millington executed an agreement on February 24, 2026, allocating 34 Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) of existing sewer capacity to support the project. A public hearing for the Amendment to the Kent County Water Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan will be held on May 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Commissioners' Hearing Room at the R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr. Kent County Government Center, located at 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland. This legal notice was duly advertised for publication on April 16, 2026, and will be duly advertised on April 23, 2026.

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 April 7, 2026, is \$164,648.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$94,826.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment procedures were in place, but no comments were made.

CLOSED SESSION

Shelley Heller, County Administrator, read a statement regarding the proposed closed-session agenda items, including the topics and reasons for the session. At 6:21 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)(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. Two separate personnel matters were discussed.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; Jamie Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development; Michael Sutton, Director, Human Resources; and Sondra M. Blackiston, Clerk, were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1: PERSONNEL

Topic to be discussed: Recommendations for the Economic and Tourism Development Commission.

Reason for closing: To discuss the specific qualifications of individuals, and that information should be safeguarded.

During the closed session, Jamie Williams, Director of Economic and Tourism Development, provided background information and documentation regarding upcoming appointments to the Economic and Tourism Development Commission (ETDC). Discussion took place, and Ms. Williams requested additional guidance from the Board.

Ms. Williams departed the closed session at 6:28 p.m. All other persons remained.

MATTER NO. 2 PERSONNEL

Topic to be discussed: The Commissioners' request for information about staff compensation.

Reason for closing: Compensation information is confidential.

At 6:29 p.m., Michael Sutton, Director, Human Resources, joined the closed session. Mr. Sutton reviewed and discussed a revised document for the Commissioners' consideration. As explained, the proposed update is aligned with County policies. The Board discussed the updates with Mr. Sutton and Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator. Mr. Sutton discussed a second item regarding a follow-up to a prior Commissioners' meeting to review compensation. Discussion took place.

At 6:41 p.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to adjourn the closed session and reconvene in open session.

OPEN SESSION

Upon returning to the open session, Commissioner Price summarized the matters discussed in closed session with certain department heads.

MATTER NO. 1 PERSONNEL: The first discussion was on appointments to the Economic and Tourism Development Commission. Staff was instructed to proceed as discussed. On motion by Commissioner Price, and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to allow the Economic and Tourism Development Director to make offers to the folks discussed to serve on the Commission.

MATTER NO. 2 PERSONNEL: The second item briefly discussed a compensation study. Further discussions will take place during a budget work session to address any compensation-related inconsistencies.

At 6:43 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 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

April 21, 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, was 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, April 14, 2026.

At 6:43 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 28, 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