

April 28, 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 Acting Sergeant Richard Cannon of the Kent County Detention Center, in remembrance of his father-in-law, Thomas D. Gsell, and to keep the family in prayers. On a brighter note, Mary Roe Walkup, former Commissioner and Delegate representing District 36, will celebrate her 102nd birthday on May 4, 2026.

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 eight consent items as presented:

1. Regular Session Minutes, April 21, 2026
2. Liquor Minutes, April 21, 2026
3. Closed Session Minutes, April 21, 2026
4. Fuzzy Tails and Shiny Scales 4-H Club, Raffle Only, May 1 – June 20, 2026
5. Craig Kuhn, Program Manager, Forest Pest Management, Maryland Department of Agriculture - Local Government Acknowledgment/Approval of Aerial Spray Operations for Spongy Moth Control
6. Jamie L. Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development- Economic and Tourism Development Commission Members
 - a. Appointment Benjamin Legow for a three-year term, ending on May 8, 2029
 - b. Reappoint David Bowman for a three-year term ending May 22, 2029
7. Joanne McNamara, Director, Grants and Contracts - Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) Residential Energy Equity Grant Agreement No. 2026-09-331S in the amount of \$151,800.00
8. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works - Contract Award Premier Service Group, LLC in the amount of \$73,750.00

SPECIAL REGOGNITIONS

April 2026 is Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Katie Theeke, Chief Marketing Officer, and Myisha Johnson, Lead Victim Advocate, For All Seasons, Inc., provided an overview of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, emphasizing the prevalence of sexual violence, the importance of supporting survivors, and the need for community vigilance and education. Ms. Theeke and Ms. Johnson also highlighted the vital work of professionals who prevent and respond to sexual assault and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to promoting safety, dignity, and continued progress in reducing these crimes. Hotlines are available 24/7, 410-820-5600 (English) and 410-829-6143 (Spanish). Each Commissioner expressed gratitude for the vital services For All Seasons provides to victims and for its advocacy efforts. Commissioner Fithian read the proclamation, which was presented to Ms. Theeke and Ms. Johnson.

May 1-2, 2026, are Kent County Pride Days: Francoise Sullivan, Chair of the Kent County Chapter of the Delmarva Pride Center, submitted a request for an upcoming event celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community and supporting individuals in living openly and authentically. The Chestertown Pride Festival, held during Kent County Pride Days, promotes visibility and unity, encouraging all residents to support and foster a more inclusive community, as described in the proclamation. Commissioner Price read the proclamation into the record.

Hurricane Preparedness Week is May 3-9, 2026: Pete Landon, Director of the Office of Emergency Services, and Brian Pearsall, Emergency Planner, encouraged residents, businesses, and organizations to take proactive steps to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. Mr. Pearsall highlighted the potential severity of hurricanes and tropical storms, the importance of staying informed through official alerts, and the need for emergency plans and well-stocked supply kits. They also urged the community to use resources such as *mdready.maryland.gov* to strengthen preparedness and support a more weather-resilient Kent County. Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation and presented it to Mr. Landon and Mr. Pearsall.

JOANNE MCNAMARA, DIRECTOR, GRANTS AND CONTRACTS, AND JILL COLEMAN, DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION

Ms. McNamara and Ms. Coleman explained a planned project to enhance a Kent County Park. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides federal funding to develop and maintain recreational trails and related facilities in Maryland to enhance pedestrian, biking, and other recreational uses. The Department of Parks and Recreation, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, seeks to submit an application for funding to develop Kent County's first Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant nature trail at a County-owned and operated park. This trail would be located at the site of an existing trail in Turner's Creek Park, a 0.2-mile Overlook Trail, and the project would involve grading the trail to meet ADA-compliance requirements related to slope, meeting width requirements to allow wheelchairs and other accessibility devices, and surfacing the path with firm, stable, slip-resistant paving to allow for the use of mobility aid devices. The total project cost is \$121,000.00, with a 20% cost-share contribution from the County. The departments are also planning to leverage other grant funding sources to lessen the impact on the County's general fund. On motion by Commissioner Price, and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the submittal of a grant application to MDOT's Recreational Trails Program for funding to create an ADA-compliant trail at Turner's Creek Park.

HOLLY BALDWIN, ASSOCIATE PLANNER, PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ZONING

Ms. Baldwin explained that the Kent County Planning Commission and the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board have recommended approval of three applications to establish agricultural land preservation districts. Establishing an agricultural preservation district is a prerequisite for applying to sell an easement to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF). The final step in the district process is approval by the County Commissioners following a public hearing. Staff recommends scheduling a public hearing to establish agricultural preservation districts for Duck Puddle Farming Enterprises, LLC, Jennifer

Wright and Charles Kealey, and Robert and Amy Crow. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Price, and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved proceeding with scheduling a public hearing to establish three agricultural preservation districts, as presented.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Letters of Concern Regarding 2025 Senate Bill 0931 / House Bill 1036: Public Utilities – Generation and Siting 3 (Renewable Energy Certainty Act) and Its Impacts on Kent County: On April 14, 2026, the Commissioners discussed the increasing number of solar panel projects in the County and reviewed previous efforts to intervene in various solar initiatives. Commissioner Price proposed sending letters to the Governor, the Public Service Commission, the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, Senators, and Delegates. These letters would request amendments to recently passed acreage mandates that do not align with the needs of the Eastern Shore, while also advocating for greater local consideration and input. The draft of the letter was submitted for final review. Once formally approved, the letter will be posted on the County's website. Discussion took place, and each Commissioner offered comments with final thoughts to be incorporated into the letter. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to allow the Commissioners' Office to prepare the letter as discussed, purchase a half-page ad in the Kent County News and Tidewater Trader to share the message with constituents, and utilize contingency funds.

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

Kent County Local Management Board: Ms. Ramsey Granillo submitted three agreements for the Community Reinvestment and Repair Funds (Large Grants), which were approved at the March 3, 2026, meeting, for signature.

- Kent County Public Schools (Kent County Middle School) \$17,164.00
- United Covenant Union \$12,250.00
- Washington College Hip Hop Time Capsule \$10,000.00

Economic and Tourism Development Commission: Following the Commissioners' meeting on April 21, 2026, a letter expressing the Board's gratitude for the service of Robert Jacob on the Economic and Tourism Development Commission was submitted for signature.

Washington College GIS Intern: At the April 21, 2026, Commissioners meeting, Tyler Arnold, GIS Specialist, Planning, Housing, and Zoning, shared a project completed with Alex Lougue, who served as a GIS Intern. The Commissioners recommended drafting a letter of support for Mr. Lougue for his future use, as an expression of appreciation for his contributions during his internship with the County. The letter was submitted for signature.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Adoption Notices for Code Home Rule Bill No. 1-2026 (Boats and Boating) and Code Home Rule Bill No. 2-2026 (Administration) were submitted for public information. As required, a summary of each adopted bill is published in a newspaper once a week for three weeks within a four-week period. Both bills were adopted on April 7, 2026, without amendments and will take effect on May 22, 2026.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Water Appropriation and Use Permit Renewal: York Farm LLC has applied for renewal of the Permit to Appropriate the Use of Waters of the State, assigned permit application number KE2002G010/03. The applicant seeks to increase an existing allocation from an annual average of 6,800 gallons of groundwater per day (gpd) and an average of 27,300 gpd during the month of maximum use to an annual average of 18,000 gpd and an average of 217,000 gpd during the month of maximum use for filling a wildlife pond. Water will be withdrawn from one well in the Aquia aquifer. The project is located at 6550 Quaker Neck Road, Chestertown, Kent County, Maryland.

Water Appropriation and Use Permit: Tideland Gardens, Inc. has applied for a Permit to Appropriate and Use Waters of the State, assigned permit application number KE1986G004/08. The applicant seeks to increase an existing allocation from an annual average of 60,000 gallons of groundwater per day (gpd) and an average of 120,000 gpd during the month of maximum use, to an annual average of 135,000 gpd and an average of 270,000 gpd during the month of maximum use for a potable supply, sanitary uses, and nursery stock irrigation. Water will be withdrawn from six wells in the Aquia aquifer. The project is located at 10040 Perkins Hill Road, Chestertown, Kent County, Maryland.

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 14, 2026, is \$154,648.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$94,826.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

CLOSED SESSION

G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, read a statement regarding the proposed closed session agenda item, including the topics and reasons for the session. At 10:45 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; (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and (8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation. Two matters were discussed.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, Hilary Siakor-Sirleaf, Warden, Kent County Detention Center, and Lacey Townsend were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1: LEGAL ADVICE AND POTENTIAL LITIGATION

Topic to be discussed: Discussions regarding certain contracts for the Kent County Detention Center.

Reason for closing: Legal advice from the County Attorney is privileged and should not be disseminated to the public. The details of potential litigation should be closed to the public because discussing legal strategy and potential claims in public would harm the government's position, revealing weaknesses, negotiating tactics, and sensitive details that could prejudice the case.

Hilary Siakor-Sirleaf, Warden of the Kent County Detention Center (KCDC), and G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, discussed a vendor contract. The County is in the process of securing a new contract for these services through a piggybacked Request for Proposals (RFP). contractual implications, Mr. Mowell offered legal guidance on potential steps forward. Mr. Siakor-Sirleaf sought the Commissioners' feedback. Discussion took place.

Mr. Siakor-Sirleaf departed the closed session at 10:51 a.m. All other persons remained.

MATTER NO. 2 PERSONNEL

At 10:53 a.m., Michael Sutton, Director, Human Resources, joined the closed session.

Topic to be discussed: An issue related to personnel.

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

Michael Sutton, Director, Human Resources, provided information regarding a complaint received by a county employee. Mr. Sutton and Ms. Heller provided their professional opinions and further input for the Commissioners to consider. Mr. Mowell provided legal advice for the Commissioners' consideration. Discussion took place.

OPEN SESSION

Upon returning to the open session, Commissioner Nickerson summarized the two topics discussed in closed session.

MATTER NO. 1 LEGAL ADVICE AND POTENTIAL LITIGATION: The first item addressed vendor contracts; staff will proceed accordingly.

MATTER NO. 2 PERSONNEL: The second topic concerned personnel, with no action taken.

At 11:43 a.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

FY2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON APRIL 28, 2026

A budget work session was held on April 28, 2026, at 1:00 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 James Cook, Mayor, and Bob Middleton, Town Manager, Town of Rock Hall; Michelle Nichols, Interim CEO, and Samantha Parker, Special Projects Consultant, Henry Teets, Director, and Brittany Baker, Transit Deputy Director, Delmarva Community Transit; and Dr. Mary McComas, Superintendent, and Kreigh Kirby, Director of Finance, Kent County Public Schools.

Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, was asked to provide an update on the Detention Center, Worton Elementary School, and Kent County Public Library (Chestertown Branch) roof repairs. Mr. Mattson provided updates on each roofing project and provided additional information.

Pete Landon, Director of the Office of Emergency Services, requested the hiring of four additional Emergency Medical Technicians to support the County's safety.

At 2:39 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, Ms. Merritt, Mr. Gast, and Lacey Townsend, Acting County Clerk, remained for the closed session.

CLOSED SESSION, PERSONNEL

Topics to be discussed: Salary discussions for various personnel.

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

Bryan DiGregory, State's Attorney, State's Attorney's Office; Dennis Hickman, Sheriff, and Harry Kettner, Captain, Kent County Sheriff's Office; Jill Coleman, Director, Parks and Recreation; Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director, Kent County Local Management Board; and Michael Sutton, Director of Human Resources, explained the details of each personnel request and its budgetary consequences.

At 3:50 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 budget 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

On a motion made by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously adjourned the budget work session. The budget work session ended at 3:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
Acting County Clerk

Approved:

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

April 28, 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, 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, April 21, 2026.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSE

Radcliffe Creek School has submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer only during the Chestertown Tea Party Distance Classic Race & Run for a Radcliffe event. The event is scheduled on May 23, 2026, from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Wilmer Park, 413 S. Cross Street, Chestertown, MD. 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 Radcliffe Creek School.

Sultana Education Foundation (SEF) submitted multiple Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license applications to sell alcohol during the First Friday/Community Gathering/Fundraiser events. The SEF will sell beer, wine, and liquor on May 1, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on October 2, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at 200 S. Cross Street, Chestertown. They will also sell beer and wine on June 5, 2026, August 7, 2026, and September 4, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at 200 S. Cross Street, Chestertown. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved all five Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license applications for the Sultana Education Foundation.

SEF submitted an application to sell beer and wine during a Harvest Party event on October 3, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at 301 S. Mill Street, Chestertown. 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 the Sultana Education Foundation.

SEF submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer and wine during the annual Downrigging event. The SEF will sell beer and wine on October 30, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., on October 31, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and on November 1, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Chestertown Marina, 207 S. Water Street, Chestertown. On a motion by Commissioner Nickerson and seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application for the Sultana Education Foundation.

No comments were received either in support of or in opposition to the above-noted applications.

**BONNIE S. PEARSALL, INSPECTOR, KENT ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO
ENFORCEMENT (KATE)**

2026 Alcoholic Beverage License Renewals: Inspector Pearsall explained that all county-issued Alcoholic Beverage Licenses expire annually at the end of April. There are six remaining renewal applications to approve. Three establishments are recommended for approval, subject to contingencies. The first establishment will be contingent upon receiving fingerprint results for new members being added to the license (Inn at Osprey Point). The second establishment will be contingent upon receipt of the required Statement of Purchases - Food and Alcoholic Beverage Sales report (Marzella's by the Bay). The third establishment will be contingent upon receiving two of the applicants' notarized signatures and their Statement of Owner of Premises page being signed and notarized (Riley's Mill Ale Works). Staff recommends approval of the six renewal applications received, three of which meet the renewal processing requirements, and approval of the three applications contingent upon receipt of fingerprinting results, Statement of Purchases - Food and Alcoholic Beverage Sales report, and properly signed and notarized pages. All renewal applications are available for review in the Commissioners' Office at any time. On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the six renewal applications as presented, at least three of which have contingencies that need to be met.

At 11:45 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, and the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lacey M. Townsend
Acting County Clerk

Approved:

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