

May 19, 2026

FY2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON MAY 19, 2026

A budget work session was held on May 19, 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; G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney; Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, and Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance.

Pete Landon, Director, Office of Emergency Services, and Michael Sutton, Director, Human Resources, provided additional information as requested. Further discussion occurred. The budget work session concluded at 3:51 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 the safety of everyone during the Memorial Day Holiday and for the safety of all military personnel across the world.

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 unanimously approved ten consent items as presented:

1. Regular Session Minutes, May 19, 2026.
2. Liquor Minutes, May 19, 2026.
3. Joanne McNamara, Director, Grants & Contracts, Request for Waiver of 180-Day Expenditure Requirement for CDBG Funds, Wastewater Conveyance Line for the Future Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant.
4. Carrie Klein, Deputy Director, Public Works, Approval of Modification #5 to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Waterway Improvement Fund Grant Agreement MF-1420H-20, for Bayside Landing Marina Renovation Project.
5. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, Approval of the Purchase of a CAT Model 304-07 Mini Excavator and trailer in the amount of \$91,557.00 from Carter Machinery Company from FY2026 Water/Wastewater Capital Improvement Funds.
6. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, Approval of the quotes for the order of two new Crane Trucks for the WWW Division, as proposed in the FY2026 budget. The proposed orders have an anticipated (combined) resale value of \$36,400.00.
7. Republicans of Kent County, Raffle Only, May 28, 2026, Permit.
8. Main Street Rock Hall, Raffle Only, May 29 - August 8, 2026, Permit.
9. Minary's Dream Alliance, Multiple Gaming, May 30, 2026, Permit.

10. Betterton Community Development Corporation, Raffle Only, June 10 - August 1, 2026, Permit.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Heat Safety Week, May 18 – 22, 2026: Pete Landon, Director, Office of Emergency Services (OES), provided background information regarding Heat Safety Week. The National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) has designated May 18-22, 2026, as National Heat Safety Week, a week-long campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of extreme heat and promote heat safety actions nationwide. Individuals across Kent County are encouraged to take action to protect their neighbors, colleagues, and loved ones, including pets, from the dangers of extreme heat. Extreme heat now kills more people in the United States than any other weather-related hazard, and as climate change accelerates, heatwaves are becoming more frequent, longer lasting, and more severe. Heat-related illnesses are preventable, and public awareness is among the most powerful tools we have to protect our community members, especially outdoor workers, the elderly, children, and those without access to a cooling environment. Commissioner Fithian read the proclamation into the record and presented it to Mr. Landon.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week – Improving Outcomes Together, May 17 – 23, 2026: Pete Landon, Director, Office of Emergency Services (OES), provided background information regarding EMS Week. In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate EMS Practitioners and the important work they do in our nation's communities. Kent County and the surrounding communities are partnering to celebrate EMS Week, May 17-23, 2026, to recognize the important contributions of EMS practitioners in safeguarding the health, safety, and well-being of our communities. EMS Week is an annual observance in the United States that celebrates the work of emergency medical services professionals, including paramedics, EMTs, and other prehospital care providers. Commissioner Nickerson read the proclamation into the record and presented it to Mr. Landon.

APPOINTMENTS

Shelter Alliance: Kimrose Goodall, Executive Director, and Tynette Christy, Case Manager, Shelter Alliance, were in attendance to present a data analysis regarding homelessness in Kent County. Ms. Goodall and Ms. Christy shared a presentation to provide further details of the data analysis conducted. Discussion took place.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held on the Establishment of Kent County Agricultural Preservation Districts. Information regarding the abovementioned hearing and minutes is posted on the County's website at <https://www.kentcounty.com/government>.

KENT COUNTY LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director, Kent County Local Management Board, presented a recommendation for an appointment to the Local Management Board. At their January 22, 2026, meeting, the Kent County Local Management Board discussed three candidates for the remaining vacant board seat and presented the recommended candidate for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended candidate to the Kent County Local Management Board.

MICHAEL SUTTON, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES

Finance Associate Vacancy: Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation for a Finance Associate 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.

Contracts Specialist Vacancy: Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation for a Contracts Specialist vacancy. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved a conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

Control Room Operator Salary Adjustment: Mr. Sutton presented a request on behalf of Hilary Siakor-Sirleaf, Warden, Kent County Detention Center, for a salary adjustment for the Control Room Operator position based on years of experience and recent schedule adjustments. On motion by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved the requested hourly rate increase.

SHELLEY L. HELLER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Heller presented a request for a letter of support for the Kent County Public Library Chestertown Branch roof replacement. The library began pursuing funding for the roof replacement in 2024 and secured support from elected officials and partner organizations. An initial application was approved by the state and has been generously carried forward by the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to the next fiscal year. Since the initial application, other quotes have been received that are significantly below the original estimate. The MSLA has recommended that the requested amount and support remain the same as the original request to account for potential overages, and that a simplified process be used rather than revising the request to the lower amount. The final step is the letter of certification for matching funds. The MSLA has informed the library that it may release any remaining unused funds and is required only to match the state funds expended; accordingly, the letter states the maximum amount budgeted rather than a minimum amount. Natalie Hagan, Executive Director, and Chris Walmsley, Chief Operations Officer, Kent County Public Library, were in attendance to provide additional information. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to sign the letter of support for the Kent County Public Library, Chestertown Location, Roof Replacement as submitted.

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

HomePorts (Kent County Cares): Nensi Fiorenini, Board Member, HomePorts (Kent County Cares), requested a letter of support for a Rural Health Transformation Program Grant Application being submitted to the Maryland Department of Health Rural Health Transformation Program Grant Committee. The grant submittal deadline is May 26, 2026. This program can improve healthcare access and quality of life for Kent County seniors while also reducing avoidable hospital utilization, EMS strain, and transportation barriers that currently increase costs across the healthcare system. The Commissioners signed the letter of support as requested.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that the County Commissioners of Kent County will hold a public hearing for the FY2027 Proposed Budget on June 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room of the R. Clayton Mitchell Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland. The hearing is open to the public, and the public is encouraged to attend. The agenda for the meeting will be published online 24 hours in advance of the meeting at <https://www.kentcounty.com/government>.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Certificate of Potability: A water supply system was installed under Permit KE-25-0001, and the Kent County Health Department conducted an evaluation and review of test results. Water tests for coliform bacteria, nitrates, turbidity, sand, and arsenic all met required standards. The well driller's signature certifies that the construction followed State regulations. Under delegated authority from the Secretary of the Department of the Environment, the Approving Authority for Kent County, this letter confirms the State's approval of this well.

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 May 5, 2026, is \$120,798.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$94,826.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in place. Meghan E. Efland, Mayor, Town of Chestertown, provided a few updates for the Town.

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At 6:50 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, June 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
County Clerk

Approved:

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

May 19, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION DISTRICTS

County Commissioners Ronald H. Fithian, Albert Nickerson, and John F. Price were in attendance, as were Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, and Holly Baldwin, Associate Planner of Planning, Housing, and Zoning.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved going into a public hearing.

G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, stated that the public notice was duly advertised and he read it into the record. The rules for a public hearing were in effect.

The public hearing commenced at 6:33 p.m. to discuss the voluntary creation of three Agricultural Land Preservation Districts. Holly Baldwin, Associate Planner of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, provided a summary of each proposed district and stated that the Kent County Planning Commission and the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board recommended approval of the applications as follows:

1. #25-01 – Duck Puddle Farming Enterprises, LLC, wish to create an Agricultural Preservation District on their 88.098-acre farm located on Carroll Clark Road, Massey, in the First Election District. The farm consists of 87 acres of crop land. All the soils are considered Class I or II. There is no dwelling on the property. The farm is zoned Agricultural Zoning District (AZD) and is adjacent to the Priority Preservation Area. The farm is adjacent to over 2,200 acres of agricultural preservation districts and easements. It is outside the 10-year water and sewer plan service areas.
2. #25-02 – Jennifer Wright and Charles Kealey wish to create an Agricultural Preservation District on their 199.72-acre farm located at 10412 Augustine Herman Highway, Chestertown, in the Third Election District. The farm consists of 147.1 acres of crop land. Approximately 66% of the soils are considered Class I, II, or III. There is one dwelling on the property. The farm is zoned Agricultural Zoning District (AZD) and is within the Priority Preservation Area. The farm is adjacent to over 4,900 acres of agricultural preservation districts and easements. It is outside the 10-year water and sewer plan service areas.
3. #25-03 – Robert and Amy Crow wish to create an Agricultural Preservation District on their 83.502-acre farm located at 30189 Duck Puddle Road, Kennedyville, in the Second Election District. The farm consists of 66 acres of crop land, and approximately 92% of the soils are considered Class II & III. There is one dwelling on the property. The farm is zoned Agricultural Zoning District (AZD) and is within the Priority Preservation Area. The farm is adjacent to over 9,000 acres under easement. It is outside the 10-year water and sewer plan service areas.

Ms. Baldwin provided the Commissioners with a proposed Agricultural Districts 2026 map and other documentation relative to the process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS / WRITTEN COMMENTS

During the public hearing, citizens were invited to sign the testimony log and offer comments on the voluntary creation of three Agricultural Land Preservation Districts. No comments were offered. No written comments were received at the time of the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to adjourn the public hearing at 6:37 p.m. and return to regular session. The Commissioners considered the voluntary creation of three Agricultural Land Preservation Districts upon returning to the regular session.

The public hearing concluded at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
County Clerk

Approved:

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

May 19, 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, May 12, 2026.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSES

Minary's Dream Alliance (MDA) submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer, wine, and liquor for a Scholarship Bingo Fundraiser on May 30, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at 9155 American Legion Road, Chestertown. The application was provided for review. No comments were received 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 Minary's Dream Alliance.

Sons of the American Legion (Squadron 246) submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer, wine, and liquor during the annual Betterton Day event. The event is scheduled for July 31, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., at Betterton Beach, Betterton, MD. The application was provided for review. No comments were received in support of or in opposition to the application. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved both Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor licenses for the Sons of the American Legion (Squadron 246).

Sons of the American Legion (Squadron 246) submitted a Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor license application to sell beer, wine, and liquor during the annual Betterton Day event. The event is scheduled for August 1, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Betterton Beach, Betterton, MD. The application was provided for review. No comments were received in support of or in opposition to the application. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved both Special Class C (Per Diem) liquor licenses for the Sons of the American Legion (Squadron 246).

At 6:50 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, June 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Liquor Minutes
May 19, 2026
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THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lacey M. Townsend
County Clerk

Approved:

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