

June 2, 2026

FY2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD ON MAY 26, 2026

A budget work session was held on May 26, 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; Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer and Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance; and Lacey M. Townsend, County Clerk. Mr. Gast gave an overview of the final proposed FY2027 County Budget presentation. Public comment was offered by the following: Mike Waal and Kate Gray, and the budget work session concluded at 4:10 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with the following present: Ronald H. Fithian, President, Albert H. Nickerson, and John F. Price. The meeting was convened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to remain silent for everyone's safety during the summer.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, and Lacey M. Townsend, County Clerk, were also present.

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved all eight consent items as presented:

1. Regular Session Minutes, May 19, 2026.
2. Liquor Minutes, May 19, 2026.
3. Public Hearing Minutes, May 19, 2026
4. Pete Landon, Director, Office of Emergency Services - Emergency Services Board Chairperson and Member Appointments, Lynn Sutton was reappointed for an additional 3-year term ending May 31, 2029, and Stephen P. Lagoy was appointed to fill a vacancy (an unexpired term) and will end May 31, 2029.
5. Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance - FinQuery FY2027 - FY2029 Subscription Renewal, the renewal costs were included in the FY2027 budget.
6. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works, Water and Wastewater - Wastewater Pump Station Security Camera Installations, a FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan in the amount of \$33,570.00.
7. Kent County 4-H All Stars, Raffle Only, June 3 - July 18, 2026.
8. Kent County Republican Central Committee, Raffle Only, June 25, 2026.

G. ROBERT MOWELL, COUNTY ATTORNEY

On April 14, 2026, Kent County reserved a certain number of water and sewer equivalent dwelling units ("EDUs") in the Millington Wastewater Treatment Service Area to MCA-1. The

Millington Wastewater Treatment Plant does not have sufficient capacity to permit the County to issue new allocations at this time. Unfortunately, Melinda Bookwalter and John Swain, who reside in the service area, are the owners of a septic system that has failed. MCA-1 has agreed to transfer one of its EDUs to their property so they can connect to the water and sewer system. The County Attorney and Director of Public Works prepared an agreement to memorialize the transfer, which has been executed by MCA-1 and the homeowners. This agreement was discussed favorably at a County Commissioners' meeting on April 14, 2026. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the EDU transfer and executed the agreement.

APPOINTMENT

Community Fire Company of Millington - Jeremy Rothwell, Member of the Community Fire Company of Millington, on behalf of the Board, requested assistance in funding the replacement of a well and well pump, and bringing the pump up to electrical code. Mr. Rothwell provided a quote from E T Kimble & Co. Inc., with two options available for the well project. The Fire Company Board voted to proceed with the first option, which is to replace everything and bring the electrical system up to code, at a cost of \$24,500.00. This is an emergency project that requires immediate action to be taken. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to fund \$24,500.00 to replace the electrical and the well pump for the Millington Volunteer Fire Company, and that the money should come out of contingency funds.

PUBLIC HEARING – FY2027 PROPOSED COUNTY BUDGET

A Public Hearing was held on the FY2027 Proposed County Budget. Information regarding the abovementioned hearing and its minutes are posted on the County's website at <https://www.kentcounty.com/government>.

MICHAEL SUTTON, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES

Kent Family Center Director Vacancy: Mr. Sutton discussed a hiring recommendation of an internal candidate to fill the Kent Family Center's Director vacancy. On motion by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commissioners unanimously approved an offer of employment to the recommended candidate at the proposed rate for the identified vacant position.

JAMIE WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Williams provided the Commissioners with newly designed and printed visitor guides.

In FY2025, the County Commissioners allocated \$15,000.00 to support a Small Business Grant Program. We have been tracking requests from small businesses and analyzing where gaps exist in available grant opportunities. Recently, the Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) invited each county to submit a Rural Maryland Council (RMC) RMPF Mid-Year Grant request for \$10,000.00. We requested that Kent County's allocation be added to the Small Business Grant

Program, and USRC has confirmed that the request was approved. Kent County has a \$7,403.00 balance from the FY2023 Micro Ag Grant program due to grants and/or marketing funds not being fully expended. The USRC holds the funding for these grant programs. We manage the grant applications, agreements, final reports, and related documentation. USRC issues checks once all required paperwork has been submitted and approved. We are requesting approval to use the remaining \$7,403.00 to increase the total grant funding available through the Small Business Community Impact Reimbursement Grant Program. This would bring the total funding available for the Small Business Community Impact Reimbursement Grant Program to \$32,403.00. Grants ranging from \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00 will be awarded to support businesses that provide essential services that contribute to the health, safety, and well-being of residents, including childcare, healthcare, transportation, and educational services. A draft overview with full details, along with the application, was provided for the Commissioners' review. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved \$7,403.00 to be reallocated to the Small Business Community Impact Reimbursement Grant Program and to sign the letter to the Upper Shore Regional Council supporting the reallocation.

PETE LANDON, DIRECTOR, AND LOGAN QUINN, CHIEF OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND JOANNE MCNAMARA, DIRECTOR, GRANTS & CONTRACTS

Ms. McNamara provided a brief overview of the grant opportunity for the Whole Blood Program. Mr. Quinn provided background information regarding the Whole Blood Program initiative. The Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) and Maryland Department of Health (MDOH) invited local jurisdictions to submit applications for grant funding to initiate a Whole Blood Program, funded by an allocation of Rural Health Transformation Funds. The purpose of the Whole Blood Program is to bridge the gap between injury and hospital treatment and improve survival for patients suffering from severe hemorrhagic shock by enabling pre-hospital blood transfusion administered directly by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) clinicians at the scene of the injury or en route to the hospital. MIEMSS and MDOH offered awards to the Emergency Services Departments of Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Somerset Counties, as well as Ocean City and Salisbury. Kent County's Office of Emergency Services seeks to accept its awarded allocation of \$57,226.00 to initiate this program. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved and accepted the Grant Award Agreement as presented.

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

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, on behalf of Rosemary Ramsey Granillo, Director, Kent County Local Management Board, requested approval of the contract with the Washington College Starr Center for the summer 2026 session of the Hip Hop Time Capsule program. The Hip Hop Time Capsule is a summer internship program for high school- and college-age residents offered by the Washington College Starr Center. Students receive career training and opportunities to learn about local history and engage in artistic expression. Kent County Local Management

Board (KCLMB) has supported this program for the past several years. The funds for this contract were approved as part of KCLMB's FY2026 budget proposal, totaling \$15,600.00, and were included in the general fund budget adopted June 10, 2025. This will allow some students in the County to have paid internships to engage in creative and maker projects related to the Innovation Plant and uptown Chestertown's history and culture. On motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved and signed the contract between the Kent County Local Management Board and Washington College Starr Center for the Summer 2026 Hip Hop Time Capsule program.

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 12, 2026, is \$64,678.00. The use of Fund Balance was \$2,010,921.00

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

At 7:36 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 9, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
County Clerk

Approved:

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

June 2, 2025

**PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 COUNTY BUDGET**

In compliance with and according to Maryland Annotated Code Tax-General and Tax Property Articles, the County Commissioners of Kent County held a public hearing on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland, on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget beginning July 1, 2026.

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, Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer, Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance, and Lacey M. Townsend, County Clerk.

Bob Gast, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance, reviewed the Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget via a presentation. Mr. Gast explained the categories of the County's revenue sources. Kent County's property tax rate is \$1.022 per \$100.00 of the assessable base. The maximum income tax rate this year remains the same at 3.30%. Mr. Gast reviewed funding levels by category and function. Mr. Gast reviewed expenditure highlights, capital projects schedule, potential future revenue, and the Kent County Middle School project funding. Personnel actions included a 5% salary increase effective July 1, 2027. The budget includes funding for five new public safety positions and a newly implemented grade schedule in Emergency Services. Some additional expenditure highlights included the County's health insurance increase and pension plan expense increase, a new strategic plan for Economic and Tourism Development, a teacher's pension plan increase, an increase in the allocation to volunteer fire companies, and an increase in public library funding. Mr. Gast provided a brief overview of the County's capital project expenditures. The County's efforts to address the budget challenges included the following:

- Property Tax Rate \$1.022 per \$100.00 of the assessable base (No change)
- Income Tax Rate 3.3% (No Change)
- Public Utilities Property Tax Rate \$2.555 per \$100 of assessable base (No Change)
- Business Personal Property Tax Rate on Public Utilities \$2.555 per \$100 of assessable base (No Change)
- Water and Sewer Rates increase 4%
- Five New Positions
- Capital Projects/Expenditures
- Upcoming State Mandates

Each Commissioner provided remarks on the proposed budget. Commissioner Price read a statement into the record.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to go into a Public Hearing. The public hearing for the Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed County Budget commenced at 6:49 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following public comments were received during the public hearing: Dan Divilio, Local Resident; Herb Cain, Executive Director, Upper Shore Aging; Cliff Coppersmith, President, Chesapeake College; Stephanie Gosman, Museums of Kent County; Francois Sullivan, Parent and Support Our Schools Advocacy Group; and Samantha Parks, Delmarva Community Services (Delmarva Community Transit).

WRITTEN COMMENTS

The following written comment was received before the hearing: a letter requesting support for financial assistance from Mark J. Potter, President & CEO, Maryland Science Center.

To view a copy of the presentation and all related documents, visit <https://www.kentcounty.com/government> or contact the Commissioners' Office at 410-778-4600 ext. 4, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; anyone who wishes to comment can do so in writing until the close of business on Friday, June 5, 2026. The Commissioners are scheduled to adopt the proposed rates and the FY2027 County Budget on June 9, 2026.

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously closed the public hearing for the Proposed Budget for FY2027 and return to the open meeting. The public hearing concluded at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey M. Townsend
County Clerk

Approved:

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

June 2, 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, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, Lacey M. Townsend, County Clerk, and 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, May 19, 2026.

PUBLIC HEARING

The rules for a public hearing were in effect.

SHREE UMIYA LLC DBA SUNNY'S MART, CLASS A, BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR LICENSE

Mr. Mowell stated that an application was submitted for a Class A Beer, Wine, and Liquor License for Shree Umiya LLC d/b/a Sunny's Mart located at 176 Flatland Road, Chestertown. The hearing was duly advertised in the Kent News on May 14, 2026, and May 21, 2026.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to go into a Public Hearing. The hearing commenced at 6:04 p.m.

Mr. Mowell administered the Oath to Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, Kent Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (KATE), Members Rajan Sharma, representing Shree Umiya LLC, dba Sunny's Mart, and anyone else wishing to testify.

Inspector Pearsall informed the Commissioners that the applicants met all the requirements for consideration by the Board and that the County Attorney had reviewed the application. Staff provided a memo in support of the application and recommended approval without contingencies. No other comments were offered in favor of or in opposition to the application.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to go out of the Public Hearing. The public hearing concluded at 6:07 p.m.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Class A, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License for Shree Umiya LLC, dba Sunny's Mart.

**THE VIEW HOSPITALITY GROUP, LLC DBA THE VIEW AT WORTON CREEK,
CLASS B, BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR LICENSE**

Mr. Mowell stated that an application was submitted for a Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License for View Hospitality Group, LLC d/b/a The View at Worton Creek. The hearing was duly advertised in the Kent News on May 7, 2026, and May 14, 2026.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to go into a Public Hearing. The hearing commenced at 6:08 p.m.

Mr. Mowell administered the Oath to Bonnie S. Pearsall, Inspector, Kent Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (KATE), Owner, Eric Walters, representing The View Hospitality Group, LLC, dba The View at Worton Creek, and anyone else wishing to testify.

Inspector Pearsall stated that a legal review of the application for a Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License had been completed. A Sales and Use Tax License was issued to the applicant as an individual, but needs to be issued under the Establishment's name and address, which prompted a Hold from the Office of the Comptroller. As of the time of the Public Hearing, the Sales and Use Tax License has been corrected and released by the Comptroller's Office. However, the applicant must also provide proof of inspection from the Fire Marshal confirming the establishment's maximum capacity. The establishment also needs a food service license, which cannot be issued until the fire marshal inspection has been completed. The applicant has demonstrated good-faith efforts to address these items to make the necessary corrections. It is under the Board's discretion to approve the issuance of an alcohol beverage license contingent upon receiving all necessary documents required. Mr. Walters read a statement into the record regarding his business and the intentions of the operations. No other comments were offered in favor of or in opposition to the application.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to go out of the Public Hearing and back into open session. The public hearing concluded at 6:12 p.m.

On a motion by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License application for The View Hospitality Group, LLC dba The View at Worton Creek, contingent upon the receipt of a Fire Marshal's inspection report, the issuance of a Food Service License, a corrected Sales and Use Tax License, and the Office of the Comptroller's release of hold.

Liquor Minutes

June 2, 2026

Page 3 of 3

At 7:36 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Nickerson, seconded by Commissioner Price, and the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

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