

June 9, 2026

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 10:00 a.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 a former Kent County Detention Center employee, Andy Cox, who has just been admitted to the hospital and is not doing well.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, and Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development, were also present.

BOB GAST, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER, AND PAT MERRITT, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER, OFFICE OF FINANCE

The following resolutions were submitted for approval, allowing for the adoption of Kent County's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget:

1. Resolution 2026-10 Establishing the Kent County Levy Tax: Taxes are levied upon the assessable property in Kent County, Maryland, for the Fiscal year July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. These taxes exclude any taxes levied by the State and Municipalities. Real Property is \$1.022 on each One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) of real property subject to taxation for County purposes. Public Utilities is \$2.555 on each One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) of property subject to taxation for County purposes. Business Personal Property Taxes on Public Utilities are \$2.555 on each One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) of real property subject to taxation for County purposes in accordance with Chapter 152, Taxation, Article IX, Business Personal Property Taxes on Public Utilities of the Code of Public Laws of Kent County, Maryland. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adopted resolution 2026-10, Establishing the Kent County Levy Tax.
2. Resolution 2026-11 County Income Tax: The county income tax of 3.30 percent of an individual's Maryland taxable income is levied upon the residents of Kent County for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2027. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution 2026-11, County Income Tax.
3. Resolution 2026-12 Establishing Water and Sewer Service Rates with Exhibit A: The water and sewer rates increased by 4%. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution 2026-12, Establishing Water and Sewer Rates for FY2027.
4. Resolution 2026-13 Adoption of the FY2027 Budget, General Fund with Exhibit A: The Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund Budget is \$80,923,944.00. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adopted resolution 2026-13, Adoption of the Kent County FY2027 Budget, General Fund.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FOR FY2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

Three written comments were received during the comment period for the proposed budget hearing, they were from the following: Maryland Science Center, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Kent County Public Library.

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, June 2, 2026
2. Liquor Minutes, June 2, 2026
3. Public Hearing Minutes, June 2, 2026
4. Scott Boone, Director, Information Technology - Virtualization Hardware Support Renewal for a Three-Year Term to Piggyback Off of Maryland 2012 Hardware Master Contract with Alliance Technology Group, LLC for an Amount of \$136,774.54
5. Brad Russum, Chief of Communications, Office of Emergency Services – Priority Dispatch Q-Plus Quality Control Program Renewal, \$45,408.00 Paid for by the Maryland 9-1-1 Board
6. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works – FY2027 Fuel Delivery Services Contract Renewal with Dixie Land Energy, LLC
7. Dan Mattson, Director, Public Works - Fairlee Water Treatment Plant Actuator Valves and Piping Replacement Contract, Premier Service Group, \$170,350.00
8. 2026 Annual Housing Bond Allocation of \$924,069.00- Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
9. Kent County Health Department - Core Public Health Services Funding Agreement, Maryland Department of Health, Amount Due for FY2027 \$749,495.00

APPOINTMENTS

Kent Attainable Housing: Kim Righi, Executive Director, provided an annual update on the organization.

In addition to the organizational update, Ms. Righi requested the Commissioners to donate \$16,200.00 from the County general fund to cover the cost of one water allocation and one sewer allocation to serve a residential lot located on Lambs Meadow Road, Worton, Maryland (Tax Map 0020, Parcel 0130). The County Commissioners approved the Allocation request and executed a Public Works Agreement for the Allocation during the May 6, 2025, meeting; however, the fee has not been paid to date. At the time of approval and execution, the property was in the process of being subdivided into two (2) lots; however, the subdivision had not yet been finalized. As a result, the executed Agreement did not identify the allocation as being associated with a specific lot. Additionally, because the subdivision had not been completed at that time, the required allocation fee was not paid. The subdivision process has since been finalized; therefore, the Public Works Agreement can be updated via an addendum to identify which specific lot will receive the allocation

and to memorialize payment of the required fee. Ms. Righi has advised that grant funding may be available for the low-income housing project; however, eligibility for the grant requires the County to participate financially. In support of the project and the potential grant opportunity, Ms. Righi is requesting a donation in the amount of the allocation fee: \$16,200.00. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved donating \$16,200.00 from the contingency funds to Kent Attainable Housing.

Mid Shore Behavioral Health, Inc.: Kathryn Dilley, Chief Executive Officer, and J Howard, Behavioral Health Coordinator for Specialty Populations & Programs and Liaison for Kent County, provided an annual update for the organization. Ms. Dilley also requested approval of the FY2027 Letter of Agreement. The letter of agreement allows Mid Shore Behavioral Health to act as Kent County's agent in the oversight, planning, and development of the public behavioral system in Kent County. Ms. Dilley summarized the mission, vision, program funding performance, and programs and services offered during FY2026. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the FY2027 Letter of Agreement with Mid Shore Behavioral Health Inc.

Prior to the discussion with Kent County Public Schools, Commissioner Fithian stated that an email had been received from Chief Price of the Kennedyville Volunteer Fire Company requesting the Commissioners' consideration for assistance. Commissioner Fithian asked that a letter be drafted and sent requesting someone from the Kennedyville Volunteer Fire Company to attend a future meeting to present their request in person to the Commissioners.

Kent County Public Schools: Dr. Mary McComas, Superintendent, and Kreigh Kirby, Director of Finance, and Dan Divilio, Public Relations and Communications Specialist, Kent County Public Schools, and Dr. David Lever, Architect and Educational Facilities Consultant, presented a Conditional Approval of Local Funding Letter for the Kent County Middle School Project for the Commissioners to consider. If approved by the Commissioners, the letter will be sent to the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) and the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC). The goal is to allow the Board of Education (BOE) to move forward with bidding for the Middle School project, with the aim of obtaining concrete construction figures for the Commissioners to consider for their budget, likely making a final decision in July. It is important to note that this is not a commitment or approval of the project moving forward. There is a clause in the letter that gives the Commissioners the final decision when they deem it necessary to vote on it. This timeline would closely align us with the IAC's release of their updated figures in July. At that point in time, hopefully, all necessary financial information would be updated for a vote, and should they vote yes, the BOE can proceed immediately with awarding contracts in order to begin construction on time this fall, which would still allow them to complete the new school in Summer 2028 for occupancy of Fall 2028. Discussion took place. On a motion by Commissioner Price, and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners, by a majority, approved and signed the Kent County Middle School Conditional Approval of Local Funding Letter as presented. Commissioner Fithian opposed the motion made.

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

Big Brothers Big Sisters Eastern Shore Contract: In FY2025, the Kent County Local Management Board voted to participate in a state program to expand Big Brothers Big Sisters in Maryland. Children's Cabinet Interagency Funds (CCIF) pledged for this program to receive a three-to-one match. KCLMB included \$24,000.00 in their budget for the program. An additional \$24,000.00 will come from the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, and \$48,000.00 will come from Arnold Ventures, a national philanthropy foundation. Big Brothers Big Sisters has started recruiting mentors and mentees in Kent County. They have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and set up an office at Washington College to partner directly with students and sports teams who could serve as mentors. The recruitment and onboarding process takes time before mentor matches can be established. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the contract with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Shore.

Kent County Public Library Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund Grant: The Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund (CRRF), established under the Cannabis Reform Act of 2023, allocates a portion of adult-use cannabis tax revenue to local jurisdictions to support community-based initiatives that benefit low-income communities and those disproportionately impacted by the enforcement of cannabis laws. In March 2025, the Commissioners established a Kent County Community Reinvestment and Repair Commission (CRRC) to administer the use of funds from Kent County's Community Reinvestment and Repair Special Revenue Fund. The Kent County Local Management Board voted to approve a small grant request of \$4,000.00 from the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund to Kent County Public Library to support the Summer Reading Program at the May 21, 2026, meeting. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved to sign the grant agreement as submitted.

PETE LANDON, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

A police trial board is a disciplinary tribunal that hears cases of alleged police misconduct and determines whether a police officer is guilty. If guilt is proven by a preponderance of the evidence, the trial board will determine the discipline. The Maryland Police Accountability Act (Public Safety Article, §3-106) specifies that a civilian who is not a member of an administrative charging committee be appointed by the county's police accountability board. Mr. Landon requested the Commissioners' approval for the appointment of the recommended candidate by the Police Accountability Board to the Administrative Charging Committee. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended candidate for the Police Accountability Board, Trial Board appointment as presented.

Mr. Landon, Brad Russum, Chief of Communications; Logan Quinn, Chief of EMS; Brian Pearsall, Emergency Planner; and Tara Short, Administrative Specialist, presented the Commissioners with the first Office of Emergency Services (OES) Annual Report for 2025. Mr. Landon reported that the Kent County Office of Emergency Services is responsible for managing and coordinating emergency response efforts across the county. From everyday emergencies to

larger-scale incidents such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, winter storms, hazardous-materials releases, and acts of terrorism, OES works to keep the community safe and informed. Our services include 9-1-1 Communications, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Planning. This includes preparedness & safety information, emergency mass notification, and alerts. Discussion took place.

DAN MATTSON, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS

The Kent County Waterman's Association is requesting permission to permanently place a 3' wide x 5' tall black granite memorial stone set on a 5 x 5 base next to the Oysterman Statue on the bulkhead at Bayside Landing Park. The names of deceased Chesapeake Bay watermen will be etched onto the stone as a memorial. Their request includes creating a concrete foundation into the bulkhead pavement, approximately 3' off the edge of the existing statue. The memorial base will be attached to the foundation, and the memorial will be attached to the base. Mr. Mattson has worked with the Kent County Waterman's Association to finalize the details of the services the Department of Public Works will provide to support this project, along with what is expected of the Waterman's Association for the project. The Kent County Waterman's Association would like to have the memorial completed and unveiled during the 4th of July celebrations. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the installation of the Memorial Stone as agreed upon between the Department of Public Works and the Kent County Waterman's Association.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Heller explained that the Commission on Aging is looking to fill a vacancy on its board. At their May 15th meeting, the Commission on Aging members voted to nominate the recommended candidate for a 3-year term expiring on December 31, 2029. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the appointment of the recommended candidate to the Commission on Aging Board as presented.

LETTERS OR DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNATURE

NourishMD Grant Program Application Letter of Support (Red Acres Hydroponics):
NourishMD is a targeted grant initiative focused on expanding access to fresh, healthy food options in Maryland communities by supporting grocery stores, markets, food retailers, and other eligible food access projects. As part of the Department of Housing and Community Development's review process, the local jurisdiction for projects/awards is notified and provided an opportunity to submit a letter of support for the project prior to moving forward with an award.

NourishMD Grant Program Application Letter of Support (Fresh Start Food and Garden, LLC): NourishMD is a targeted grant initiative focused on expanding access to fresh, healthy food options in Maryland communities by supporting grocery stores, markets, food retailers, and other eligible food access projects. As part of the Department of Housing and Community Development's

review process, the local jurisdiction for projects/awards is notified and provided an opportunity to submit a letter of support for the project prior to moving forward with an award.

Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board Member Letter of Gratitude: Ellen LaFrankie, Executive Director of the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (USWIB), submitted notice that Christine Schindler resigned from her term as a board member effective February 13, 2026. A letter of appreciation recognizing Ms. Schindler's service was drafted and provided for signature.

Department of Social Services Advisory Board Member Letter of Gratitude: Shelly Neal-Edwards, Executive Director, Kent County Department of Social Services (KCDSS), submitted notice that Lisa Mazingo resigned from her term as a board member effective May 20, 2026. A letter of appreciation recognizing Ms. Mazingo's service was drafted and provided for signature.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

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

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2025 Contingency Fund balance as of May 19, 2026, is \$64,678.00. The FY2025 use of Fund Balance is \$2,010,921.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

CLOSED SESSION

At 11:36 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) (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney; Carla Gerber, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; and Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development, were also in attendance.

MATTER NO. 1: LEGAL ADVICE

Topic to be discussed: Legal advice regarding the interpretation of House Bill 1036/Section 7 of the Public Utilities Article of the Maryland Code.

Reason for closing: Legal advice from the County Attorney is privileged and is meant to shield specific details concerning legal strategy.

Carla Gerber, Director, Kent County Department of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, and G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney, discussed HB 1036, the Renewable Energy Certainty Act, which preempts local zoning legislation and establishes fixed site-planning standards. Mr. Mowell provided legal advice. Discussion took place.

At 11:54 a.m., on a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously adjourned the closed session and reconvened in open session.

OPEN SESSION

MATTER NO.1: LEGAL ADVICE

Commissioner Price summarized the closed session discussion involving the approval of solar projects that may be coming into the County. Guidance was given to the Director of Planning, Housing, and Zoning, regarding the solar projects.

At 11:55 a.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 23, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Osborn
Administrative Specialist
Economic and Tourism Development

Approved:

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

June 9, 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, and Rose Osborn, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development, 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, June 2, 2026.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice: an application has been made by Members, Michelle Holland and Brenda Morales, representing Food on Wheels, The Jefas, LLC, a/k/a Tacos on Wheels, LLC, for a Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor License on the premises known as The Jefas Mexican Grill, 100 W. Cross Street, Galena, MD 21635, which shall authorize the holder thereof to keep for sale and to sell Beer, Wine, and Liquor at the place therein described, for on-premises consumption, or elsewhere. A hearing on the application will be held in the County Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr. Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, MD, on June 23, 2026, at 10:00 am, at which time any exceptions to the application will be heard.

At 11:55 a.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 23, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Rose Osborn
Administrative Specialist
Economic and Tourism Development

Approved:

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