

June 7, 2022

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 6:04 p.m. with the following present: P. Thomas Mason, President, Ronald H. Fithian, and Robert N. Jacob, Jr. The meeting convened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Mason asked the audience to remain standing for the graduating students from our High School and local Colleges, may they remain safe during the summer season and continue safely into their new endeavors. Let us be thankful for these scholastic scholars.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, were also in attendance.

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved the following items:

1. Regular Session Minutes, May 24, 2022
2. Public Hearing Minutes, May 24, 2022
3. Liquor Minutes, May 24, 2022

RECOGNITION

Kent County Learning Center 2022 Volunteer Tutors: Commissioner Mason read the certificate of recognition prepared for each volunteer tutor. The following were recognized for their efforts and dedication in helping the Rock Hall Elementary School students excel in their education and were in attendance to receive their certificates: Bill Trainor, Martha Bliss, Don Spagnolo, Ed Lynerd, Becky Glenn, Les Scanlon, Mary Etta Reedy, Nancy Walls, Patti Nelson, Shirley Spagnolo, Janine Nilson, and Phil Cicconi. Those recognized but unable to attend the meeting were as follows: Anna Hurd, Carol Kendall, Cindy Hayes, Debbie Bergen, Nia Kusske, Erlena Linthicum, Linda Morgan, Becky Taylor, Carol Trippe, Karen Biddle, Linda Buckle, Jo Miller, and Heather Brack. Each Commissioner personally commended the Volunteer Tutors for the time and dedication they put into helping the children of Rock Hall.

Commission on Aging: Commissioner Jacob read the certificate of recognition for Michael J. Brison, Store Manager, Chestertown Dollar General. Mr. Brison was recognized for his efforts and compassion in helping protect the senior citizens in our community. Mr. Brison has seen many elderly customers purchase multiple items to send to people claiming to need their help. Mr. Brison has been able to help explain the unfortunate circumstances to his customers allowing them to save their finances. His efforts to protect and help the elderly from fraud and scams targeting our seniors are commendable and greatly appreciated. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Brison for his sincerity and his willingness to look out for the elderly in our community.

PUBLIC HEARING – THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 PROPOSED COUNTY BUDGET

A public hearing was held for the proposed County budget for the fiscal year 2023. Public information regarding the above-mentioned hearing and minutes are posted on the County's website at <https://www.kentcounty.com/commissioners/meeting-agenda>.

KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

John Price, Sheriff, Kent County Sheriff's Office, sought the Commissioners' approval to apply for a FY2023 Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) Sex Offender Compliance and Enforcement in Maryland Grant. Ms. Heller explained Kent County has been the recipient of this grant since 2013. Sheriff Price offered further input regarding the grant. On a motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved the Governor's Office of Crime Control Prevention Sex Offender Compliance and Enforcement in Maryland grant application for an amount of \$2,880.00 as submitted.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Marty Hale, Director, Human Resources, on behalf of Mike Moulds, Director, Public Works, presented a request to fill the Procurement Manager vacancy at the recommended rate. Mr. Hale summarized the hiring recommendation suggested by the staff. On a motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved hiring the recommended individual for the Procurement Manager position, pending the successful completion of the County pre-employment requirements.

ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Jamie Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development, and Susan O'Neill, Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC); gave an overview of the \$50 million Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund granted by Governor Hogan. Each Rural Regional Council will be granted up to \$10 million to address key issues like infrastructure, broadband, and workforce development. Kent County has been awarded \$2.9 million of these funds. The department has been communicating with the five municipalities and organizations that have inquired about the availability of the funding. Staff recommends soliciting project submissions and forming a committee to score the submissions prior to being presented to the Commissioners for approval, the projects will then need to be sent to the USRC for their approval, and they will send them to the Maryland Department of Commerce for final approval. There is an extremely tight timeline for the submission of these projects and Ms. Williams requested approval of the process and timeline as drafted. Ms. O'Neill offered insight into the process and explained the net effect of the Maryland Department of Commerce's guidelines. A lengthy discussion took place. Each Commissioner expressed interest in understanding more about the funding. Commissioner Fithian expressed a desire to have a work session to discuss and prioritize certain County or community initiatives. The Board's consensus was to move forward with the process concept and schedule a work session.

KENT COUNTY LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (KCLMB)

Rosemary Ramsey-Granillo, Director, Kent County Local Management Board (KCLMB), presented a request for the use of \$6,775.00 of contingency funds to purchase office furniture. The KCLMB has outgrown the current office space they are utilizing and has made plans to move to the Planning, Housing, and Zoning conference room/code enforcement space on the first floor. This will allow the KCLMB to create a collaborative and welcoming workspace to better serve the families and constituents they interact with. Ms. Ramsey-Granillo has worked with Rudolph Supply Company to reconfigure the new space. The project is \$15,647.00 and the department has \$8,900.00 of unspent funds in FY2022 to help cover a portion of the project cost. The cost overage of \$6,775.00 would require the use of contingency funds. On a motion by Commissioner Jacob and seconded by Commissioner Fithian, the Commissioners unanimously approved the use of \$6,775.00 of contingency funds as requested.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

On May 23, 2022, Elizabeth Jo Manning, Town Administrator for the Town of Millington submitted a written proposal to the Board. The proposal is to gain consent from the County to annex the former Millington Elementary School, 172 Sassafras Street, Millington, into the Town of Millington's town limits. The property is in the process of being conveyed to the Town, but the transfer has not yet taken place. Therefore, because the County is the rightful owner of the property, the Town of Millington must receive permission from the County to annex the property into the town limits. Discussion took place. The staff recommends the Board consent to the request. On a motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved support of the annexation request for 172 Sassafras Street, the former Millington Elementary School property, into the Town of Millington's boundaries. President Mason signed the authorization letter.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Shelley Heller, County Administrator, reported Commissioner Mason signed the Constant Yield Tax Rate Notice from the Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation on May 24, 2022. This is an annual report that is required by the state. The County tax rate as of July 1, 2022, will be \$1.012 and increases the real property tax revenues by .8%.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. Captain Robert Newberry, Chair, Delmarva Fisheries Association (DFA) spoke on matters of the Chesapeake Bay, and the seafood industry.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS (ARPA)

A copy of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spend Plan outlining the approved expenditures to date was provided to the Commissioners for informational purposes.

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2022 Contingency balance as of May 24, 2022, is \$68,235.00 and the FY2022 Use of Fund Balance total is \$173,201.00.

At 7:38 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Fithian, seconded by Commissioner Jacob, and the Board unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk/KATE Manager

Approved:

P. Thomas Mason, President
The County Commissioners
of Kent County, Maryland

June 7, 2022

PUBLIC HEARING PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

In compliance with and pursuant to Maryland Annotated Code sections 6-308 of the Tax Property Article; 10-103 and 10-106 of the Tax-General Article, the County Commissioners of Kent County held a public hearing on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at 6:17 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland, on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget beginning July 1, 2022.

County Commissioners P. Thomas Mason, Ronald H. Fithian, and Robert N. Jacob, Jr., were in attendance as well as Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney, and Patricia Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance.

Mr. Yeager read the public hearing notice and the procedures to testify into the record. Ms. Merritt reviewed the Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget via a presentation. Ms. Merritt explained the categories that encompass the County's revenue sources. Kent County's property tax rate is 1.012 per \$100.00 of the assessable base, and the income tax rate is 3.20%, the highest allowed rate by the State of Maryland. Ms. Merritt reviewed the level of funding by function. There is a proposed 4% increase in the water and sewer rates. Ms. Merritt reviewed historical revenue growth through FY2022 for property tax, income tax, and other revenues. The proposed budget estimates the County's Fund Balance to end FY2022 at 19.9%, which is above the 7.5% target. Ms. Merritt reviewed recurring and non-recurring expenditures. For FY2023, Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) will be funded at the FY2022 level or required Maintenance of Effort. Contingency Funds will be reduced to the pre-pandemic level. Personnel actions included salary increases for employees and the addition of five positions: (4) full-time and (1) part-time. Several positions were eliminated reflecting an increase in operating expenses because of a shift to contracted services. Funding to most agencies was funded at the FY2022 level.

Commissioner Mason invited the public to comment. The following individuals signed the testimony log and provided comments: Karen S. Smith, Vice President for Administrative Services, Chesapeake College; Paul Rickert, Area Extension Director – Upper Shore Cluster, University of Maryland Extension; Diane Milenic, Worton Resident; and Captain Robert Newberry, Chair, Delmarva Fisheries Association (DFA). The following written comments were received prior to the hearing: in support of Delmarva Community Transit - Keith Adkins, Acting Deputy Director; Karen and Reid Hemingway; in support of Kent County Humane Society - Richard Keaveney, Executive Director; in support of the University of Maryland Extension - Paul Rickert, Area Extension Director; Justinian Dispenza, Council Member, Town of Galena; Captain Gary Robson and Nancy Robson, Joy Mayfield; in support of Kent Cultural Alliance - John Schratwieser, Director; in support of Upper Shore Aging - Joyce Davis; Kay Brodie; Joyce Davis (Board Member); and Commission on Aging member Philip Cicconi along with Co-Chairs Muriel Cole and Carolyn Sorge; in support of Museums of Kent - Stephanie Gosman.

The presentation and all related documents can be viewed at <https://www.kentcounty.com/commissioners/meeting-agenda> or by contacting the Commissioners' Office at 410-778-4600, and press 4, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Written comments will be accepted by the County Commissioners' Office until Friday,

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June 10, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. The Commissioners are scheduled to adopt the proposed rates and the FY2023 County Budget on June 14, 2022. The public hearing concluded at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk/ KATE Manager

Approved:

P. Thomas Mason, President
The County Commissioners
of Kent County, Maryland

June 7, 2022

The Board of License Commissioners met today with the following present: P. Thomas Mason, presiding, Ronald H. Fithian, and Robert N. Jacob, Jr.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney; were also present.

CONSENT ITEM

On a motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved Consent Item #2 - Liquor Minutes, May 24, 2022.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSE

The Arc of Central Chesapeake Region has applied for a Beer and Wine only Special Class C per diem license. The event is scheduled for June 18, 2022, from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Rock Hall Landing Marina. There being no objections, on a motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved the application as presented.

There being no further business to claim their attention, the Board adjourned and agreed to meet again on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk, KATE Manager

Approved:

P. Thomas Mason, President
The County Commissioners
of Kent County, Maryland