

May 21, 2024

MAY 21, 2024 BUDGET WORK SESSION

A budget work session was held on May 21, 2024, at 3:00 p.m., with Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian, Commissioner Albert H. Nickerson, and Commissioner John F. Price. Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, and Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance, were also present. During the work session, several individuals discussed budgetary matters. These included Bailey Elliott, Client Strategy Manager, Enterprise Fleet Management; Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works; and Keith Adkins, Interim Director, Henry Deets, Upper Shore Route Supervisor, Delmarva of Community Services, Inc. Ms. Merritt shared the current overview, allocations, and a draft version of the public hearing presentation. The session ended at 4:47 p.m.

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 convened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Fithian asked everyone to remain silent for a moment for the passing of Faye Yerkie and Tom Haniffee's father, keeping both families in their thoughts and prayers.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, was also present.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Commissioners of Kent County will hold a public hearing for the FY2025 Proposed County Budget on June 4, 2024, 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 they are encouraged to attend. Commissioner Fithian read the public notice into the record.

CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the following items:

1. Regular Session Minutes, May 14, 2024
2. Liquor Minutes, May 14, 2024

KENT COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION

Otis Darling, Vice-President of Kent County Fire Chief's Association, and Jason Lobley, Chief of Kent & Queen Anne's County Rescue Squad, were in attendance to provide an update regarding the state of volunteer firefighting and volunteer emergency medical service providers in Kent County. Chief Darling discussed an overview of the following:

- Knox Box Program and purpose
- State of Volunteers countywide and each station's call statistics for 2023
- Additional benefits such as property tax credits
- Advertising assistance on the County's website via the Economic and Tourism Development page and other social media venues
- Other recruitment and retention opportunities

Chief Darling mentioned that nineteen (19) Office of Emergency Services (OES) employees also have firefighter training and asked the Commissioners to consider revising their job descriptions to combine their firefighting skills with their current job responsibilities to provide additional coverage if they are available for emergency purposes. Discussion took place. The Commissioners thanked the Kent County Fire Chief's Association for their service, duties, and hard work and expressed their willingness to help and support the organization as much as possible.

MID SHORE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, INC.

Katie Dilley, Executive Director, and Lisa Short, Behavioral Health Coordinator, Mid Shore Behavioral Health (MSBH), were in attendance to give an annual report. Ms. Dilley stated that MSBH will celebrate thirty-two (32) years of service this year. MSBH serves all five Counties. Collaboration with consumers, family members, providers, and community partners will be essential to successfully implement integrated services. MSBH will continue to work collaboratively with the mid-shore Health Departments in planning to move towards a regional Local Systems Management Integration and Local Behavioral Health Authority Structure. MSBH is the primary oversight entity for the Crisis System, which serves all nine (9) Counties of the Eastern Shore. MSBH governs the awards and grant dollars that fund the Mobile Crisis System, Regional Crisis Hotline, and Mobile Response and Stabilization Services. The State recently decided to move mobile crisis services into a fee-for-service structure; MSBH will strive to ensure everyone still has access to the services needed. Ms. Dilley provided the FY2025 annual Letter of Agreement (LOA) for July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. The LOA stipulates that MSBH will act as the Core Service Agency for the oversight, planning, and development of the Public Behavioral Health System in Kent County. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the FY2025 Letter of Agreement with Mid Shore Behavioral Health Inc. to act as the Core Service Agency for the oversight, planning, and development of the Public Behavioral Health System in Kent County.

Ms. Short shared services provided throughout Kent County. MSBH received two grants, one for a Suicide Prevention Coalition and the second for distributing gun locks throughout the communities. MSBH is still in the Coalition's implementation stage. MSBH partnered with the Kent County Sheriff's Office and the Chestertown Public Library to distribute gun locks to the community. MSBH hosted Going Purple Together in coordination with the Kent County Local Addictions Authority.

MSBH continues to work closely with the Kent County Health Department to advocate for the sustainability of the A.F. Whitsitt Center and its service expansion. MSBH is committed to services that benefit Kent County and thrive to help those in need. Discussion took place.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police Accountability Board: Pete Landon, Director of the Office of Emergency Services, and Frank McGarvey, Police Accountability Officer, discussed the FY2025 Police Accountability, Community and Transparency (PACT) Grant. Kent County's Law Enforcement Accountability Initiative will continue building a program to establish full accountability, transparency, and community relations measures per the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021. To do this, program grant funds will be applied for and requested to continue funding the part-time administrative specialist, contracting with a technical consultant (accountability officer), contracting a trial board chair (memoranda of understanding), purchasing equipment and office supplies, and funding public outreach as well as required training and meetings. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Director Landon to apply to the State of Maryland for the FY2025 PACT Grant to be used to fund the Kent County Law Enforcement Accountability Initiative, including the Police Accountability Board, Administrative Charging Committee and Police Trial Boards totaling \$103,821.00. Commissioner Fithian signed the necessary certificates and assurances for submission of the grant application.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Jillyn Coleman, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Jory Mitzel, President of Little League Softball, discussed a funding request. Ms. Coleman expressed the department's desire to sponsor this year's Minor League district tournament in June. Since this decision was made at the last minute, the tournament was not included in the budget for the current season. Hosting this event will be an excellent opportunity to showcase our ballfields at Worton Park, highlight the athletes, and create a positive experience for the coaches, players, and the community. The department and Little League Softball will need additional funding to accommodate this tournament. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the allocation of \$1,700.00 from the surplus funds in the Youth Sports League Equipment Fund Grant to sponsor the Minor League District Softball Tournament.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Jim Miller, Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Dan Mattson, Director of Public Works, requested approval to fill the Utility Technician vacancy in the Water and Wastewater Division. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved a conditional offer of employment to the recommended candidate.

PUBLIC WORKS

Fleet Management: Mr. Mattson requested a vehicle order in advance of the final FY2025 budget approval. Staff have been working with Enterprise Fleet Management (EFM) to confirm specifics for all proposed vehicle replacement orders under the FY2025 Budget. Four (4) Sheriff's Department vehicles are proposed to be replaced. Due to availability and aftermarket outfitting, these vehicles can typically take 16+ months from the time of order until delivery. EFM has identified a current supply of suitable vehicles and provided Enterprise Fleet Management Open End (Equity) Lease Rate Quote No. 8016847. If the order is approved, the available vehicles will be sent to the aftermarket and ultimately delivered to the County in late summer 2024. Payments toward the vehicles would not begin until delivery to the County. A vehicle purchase costs \$55,444.00 per vehicle, or \$221,776.00 total (excluding aftermarket). If the vehicle purchase is approved, a separate item for aftermarket outfitting will also be submitted for approval. The total cost, including anticipated aftermarket, is estimated at \$321,776.00. Scheduled payments will not begin until the delivery of vehicles to the County in FY2025. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the order of four (4) Chevrolet Tahoes for the County Sheriff's Department, per the submitted quotes.

Chestertown Library: Mr. Mattson and Chris Wamsley, Director of Office Administration, Kent County Public Library, requested the Board's support for a grant application to replace the roof at the Chestertown Branch. A grant will provide 50% of the total project costs. The project is anticipated to cost \$598,000.00, and the requested grant amount is \$299,000.00. The project and grant amounts are substantially higher than previously requested or considered. This is the result of a detailed inspection of the roof by Tremco Roofs, which revealed significant concerns regarding the design of the roof itself. It appears that the building was originally designed to have a metal or slate roof, but this was changed to shingle during or before construction as a cost-saving measure. The design was not adequately modified to account for the shingle roof's ventilation; specifically, no soffit panels were installed. The design/existing conditions do not allow for the retrofit of soffit panels or other measures to provide necessary ventilation. This is the cause of the significant issues currently seen with the roof and means that if 'replaced-in-kind' with a shingle roof, the anticipated lifespan of the new shingle roof would be well under expected (5-8 years before issues resurface instead of the anticipated 30-years). A new standing seam metal roof would allow for a substantial lifespan increase compared to an ideal shingle roof and a 10x or greater lifespan than a direct replacement of an existing shingle roof. Per Mr. Walmsley, a letter of support and commitment is a required part of the application package. The letter expresses the Commissioners' support of the project and notes that whether the project is awarded grant funding, it will be budgeted for and constructed in FY2026. Discussion took place. If the grant is awarded, the board will reevaluate the project specifics. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved signing the submitted letter for the Kent County Public Library's application to the Maryland State Library's County Public Library Capital Projects Grant Program in support of roof replacement at the Chestertown Branch, to occur in FY2026.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

On behalf of Carol L. Niemand, Community Relations Liaison, Shrewsbury Church, Shelley Heller, County Administrator, discussed a request to the Board to arrange a tour of buildings and properties suitable for homelessness and housing projects. Discussion took place. The request is not under the County's purview. The full letter and newspaper article excerpt were available for review. Staff will provide Ms. Niemand with additional information concerning her request.

Ms. Heller, on behalf of Muriel Cole, Vice-Chair, Commission on Aging (COA), recommended candidate Sally Coleman to fill the vacancy of COA member. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended candidate to fill an unexpired term ending on December 31, 2024. Commissioner Fithian mentioned that the Commissioner Representative (CR) for the COA will resign and asked if there was a recommendation for the vacancy. Discussion took place. Ms. Heller explained that the bylaws state that the COA should submit a recommendation to the Commissioners for approval. The Board asked to convey their suggestion for Carolyn Sorge to fill the CR vacancy and to contact Ms. Sorge to see if she would be interested.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Mark Carper, Associate Planner for Planning, Housing, and Zoning, provided a revised notification as an adjacent property owner regarding PHZ Permit #24-18-MDL 153 for Mason Solar, LLC. The proposal presentation to the Board of Appeals is June 17, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. John Massey, a County Resident, asked the Commissioners to do anything possible to support the Fire Departments.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

The Commissioners were provided with a copy of the ARPA Spend Plan outlining the approved expenditures to date for informational purposes.

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2024 Contingency balance as of May 14, 2024, is \$159,252.00. The FY2024 use of Fund Balance is \$128,225.00.

At 7:10 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 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

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May 21, 2024
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Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

May 21, 2024

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, was 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 14, 2024.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSE

ShoreRivers submitted a Special Class C per diem liquor license application to sell Beer, Wine, and Liquor for a fundraising event. The event will be held at Wilmer Park on Saturday, June 29, 2024, from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. There being no objections, 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 ShoreRivers.

At 7:10 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 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk/KATE Manager

Approved:

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