

May 2, 2023

FY2024 BUDGET WORK SESSION HELD

A budget work session was held on May 2, 2023, at 3:00 p.m., with Commissioner Ronald H. Fithian, Commissioner Albert H. Nickerson, and Commissioner John F. Price. Also in attendance were Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Gary Stulir, Accounting Manager, Office of Finance, and Jim Miller, Director, Human Resources.

The following representatives from various agencies and partners discussed FY2024 budgetary requests: Richard Keaveney, Executive Director, Animal Care Shelter; John Schratwieser, Director, Kent Cultural Alliance; John Carroll, Mayor and Justinian Dispenza, Councilmember, Town of Galena; Andy Hollis, Executive Director, Bill Shrieves, President and Kay Brody, Board of Directors, Upper Shore Aging; Allan Schaubert, Secretary, Kent County Chief's Association; Dr. Karen Couch, Superintendent, and Alleesa Stewart, Supervisor of Finance, Board of Education. Ms. Merritt reviewed each budget category. The Commissioners evaluated each aspect of the FY2024 budget categories and methods to balance the budget. The budget work session ended at 5:56 p.m.

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 6:10 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 the audience to remain standing for a moment of silence for everyone affected by the weather and the aftermath this past week.

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, April 25, 2023
2. Liquor Minutes, April 25, 2023
3. Public Hearing Minutes, April 25, 2023
4. Closed Session Minutes, April 25, 2023

PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ZONING

Carla Gerber, Deputy Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning advised The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board and the Planning Commission have recently reviewed applications to establish agricultural preservation districts. All applications were found to exceed the minimum requirements and were recommended for approval. Ms. Gerber requested approval to schedule a public hearing to review and approve ten (10) agricultural preservation district applications. Discussion took place. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to have a hearing to approve ten (10) agricultural land preservation district applications.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Jill Coleman, Director, Parks and Recreation, gave an overview of Kent Jr. Wrestling's 2023 season. The program flourished this season, due to the dedication of the coaches, parents, and athletes. This season the program had a record-high enrollment with fifty-seven (57) participants. During the recent Maryland State Wrestling Association Tournament, eleven (11) athletes placed in the Future Championship category, and four (4) females placed in the girl's category. This is the most athletes Kent County has had place in the future state tournament and girls state tournament. The following were presented with certificates, Coaches: Cody Bonwill, Arthur Kaehler, Jacob Kirwan, Mike Menefee, Samantha Reed, Brian Schaffer, Michael Shrom, Jr., Russell Smith, Dennis Staples, Donald Yerkie, Chris Yiannakis, Emmanuel Zabetakis. Athletes: Rico Chapa, Carsen Conner, Adalynn Davis, Parker Davis, Wilson Downes, IV, Shawn Duckery, Noel Farinacci, Trainor Farinacci, Mi'Kel Floyd, Jeremiah Hinefelt, Maximus Kaehler, Colton Kirwan, Kinsley Kirwan, Caleb Melvin, Landon Merritt, Tatum Milburn, Tyler Phillips, Jace Reed, Rykar Shaw, Holden Schaffer, Chase Schrom, Brennan Starkey, Hudson Wallace, Kaleb Walker, Kylee Walker, and Skylar Yiannakis.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Jim Miller, Director, Human Resources (HR), on behalf of Emergency Services, requested approval to hire the recommended candidate to fill the Director of Emergency Services vacancy at the annual salary presented. Discussion took place. On a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended candidate not at the proposed salary, but at a salary of \$20,000.00 less than the proposed salary for a conditional employment offer.

Mr. Miller stated summer seasonal employment is upon us. The previous Board granted permission for the HR Department and Parks and Recreation to hire without the input of the Commissioners, however, the approval was for one year only. Mr. Miller requested to extend the simplified seasonal employment hiring process, specifically continuing under last year's process. On a motion made by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved the request to continue the seasonal hiring process as for the next 3 ½ years. This will allow HR to make the hiring decisions for seasonal hires with the help of the department.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Shelley Heller, County Administrator, described the County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County Commissioners of Caroline County, The County Council of Talbot County, and Delmarva Community Services, Inc., for Regional Public Transit Services on February 28, 2005. The MOU was amended by the First Addendum dated May 10, 2005. The Second Addendum extends the terms and conditions of the agreement. Commissioner Fithian signed the Second Addendum to MOU on April 24, 2023.

Ms. Heller announced Kent County has volunteered to host the next meeting for the Upper Shore Community Mental Health Center Stakeholders meeting. This will be a multi-county meeting, with health officers and the public on May 5, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Two or more Commissioners plan to attend.

LETTERS FOR SIGNATURE

Robert "Andy" Glenn, President, Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company (RHVC), submitted a letter requesting the Commissioners' consideration of acquiring a Kent County EMS chase unit that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) may be replacing. A letter was prepared in response to Mr. Glenn's request. Commissioner Price requested staff to review requests from the Emergency Personnel and Volunteer Fire Companies in Kent County giving them the opportunity to acquire County vehicles that are due to be taken out of service under the fleet management program. Commissioner Price wants to make sure the County vehicles that are no longer in service can be given to emergency personnel and volunteer fire companies in Kent County when needed.

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair, Commission for Women in Kent County, submitted a request for consideration regarding establishing a Commission for Women in Kent County. A letter was prepared in response to Ms. Bailey's request.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. David Foster, Mayor, Town of Chestertown thanked the Commissioners for contributing \$10,000.00 to the Chestertown Tea Party Festival to boost Wi-Fi for the event. Mayor Foster also stated that the Town of Chestertown received two proposals for the tax differential study: one proposal was under \$10,000.00 and the second was approximately \$29,000.00. After much discussion, Commissioner Price stated he did not feel that further discussion was needed, the County cannot afford to pay for the study. Commissioner Fithian and Commissioner Nickerson concurred.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Commissioners received a courtesy copy of a letter from Jamie L. Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development. The department provided a letter of support on behalf of Chester River Hospital Center Auxiliary. Chester River Hospital Center Auxiliary applied to the Maryland Historical Trust's (MHT) Historic Preservation Capital Grant program for an amount up to \$50,000.00, to fund the re-pointing of the bricks on the exterior of its circa 1800 building. A similar letter of support was signed by the Board and sent to Ms. Fisher on April 18, 2023.

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 FY2023 Contingency balance as of April 25, 2023, is \$199,719.00, and the FY2023 use of Fund Balance is \$371,715.00.

At 7:11 p.m., on a motion by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk

Approved:

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

May 2, 2023

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 by Commissioner Price and seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, the Commissioners unanimously approved Consent Item #2 - Liquor Minutes, April 25, 2023.

SPECIAL CLASS C LICENSE

Dogwood Festival of Galena applied for a Beer, Wine, and Liquor Special Class C per diem liquor license for their Annual Dogwood Festival on May 13, 2023, in Galena during the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The application was reviewed and met the requirements to be approved for an event license. There being no objections 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 the Dogwood Festival of Galena.

At 7:11 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Price, seconded by Commissioner Nickerson, and the Commissioners unanimously approved adjourning the meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.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