

March 9, 2021

A meeting of the County Commissioners of Kent County was called to order at 10:02 a.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 a moment of silence for Mike Moulds, Director, Public Works, for the passing of his wife, and for the County Administrators' family as they are faced with COVID-19 illness.

Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney; April Bitter, Project Manager, and Chris Bannister, Network Engineer, Information Technology; Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance; and Marty Hale, Director, Human Resources, were present in person.

The following staff and presenter attended the meeting remotely: Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator; Shannon Hannawald, Ambassador, Endometriosis Association; and Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commissioner Fithian read the following notice for Code Home Rule Bill No. 4-2021 Economic and Tourism Development, AN ACT to amend Chapter 21, Economic and Tourism Development, of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a Director of Economic and Tourism Development, merge the existing Economic Development Commission and Tourism Development Advisory Board to create a single Economic and Tourism Development Commission consisting of seven (7) to nine (9) members, and provide for the duties and terms of the Members.

Commissioner Jacob read the notice for Code Home Rule Bill No. 5-2021 Bond Issuance Procedure, AN ACT to amend Chapter 3, Administration of Government, Article II Finances of the Code of Public Local Laws of Kent County, Maryland. The purpose of the amendment to this Chapter is to allow an exemption regarding bond issuance as permitted in the Local Government Article.

Public hearings for the above noted legislative bills will be held on March 16, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr., Kent County Government Center, 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland. In response to the State of Emergency, and in lieu of public appearance, the meeting will be held remotely, via video teleconference and viewable on the County website at www.kentcounty.com/government. Hearings are open to the public and written comments will be accepted until noon on March 19, 2021. Public comment can be submitted prior to the hearing(s) by the following methods: email kentcounty@kentgov.org, letters sent to The County Commissioners of Kent County, 400 High Street, Chestertown, MD 21620, and by phone during public comment using the call-in option 1-872-239-8359 Conference ID 368 656 892 then press #.

CONSENT ITEMS

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

1. Regular Session Minutes, March 2, 2021
2. Liquor Minutes, March 2, 2021

PROCLAMATION

March 2021 is Endometriosis Awareness Month: Commissioner Mason read the proclamation. Shannon Hannawald, Ambassador, Endometriosis Association, accepted the proclamation and shared her story. Endometriosis affects an estimated 200 million women worldwide, a disease which there is no cure for. The local support group, Endo Warriors of the Eastern Shore, have joined together with others to promote awareness, support, and education for Endometriosis. The County recognizes and acknowledges the importance of raising awareness of Endometriosis.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

April Bitter, Project Manager, and Chris Bannister, Network Engineer, Information Technology (IT) presented a request for the use of contingency funds. Ms. Bitter explained the current Schneider Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) at 400 High Street needs replacing. The unit began having issues in January 2021. The issues were resolved temporarily, and the vendor has confirmed the system needs replacing. Ms. Bitter presented a request to approve \$29,293.92 from FY2021 contingency funds to upgrade the legacy APC Symmetra System located at 400 High Street from EnNet, with Maryland Hardware Contract No. 060B2490022, to replace the system. Discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved the request as presented.

OFFICE OF FINANCE

Pat Merritt, Chief Finance Officer, Office of Finance, presented a request to conduct the 2021 tax sale online. Ms. Merritt explained the County traditionally holds a live auction to conduct its tax sales. Ms. Merritt recommends moving to an online platform for the 2021 tax sale utilizing Realauction.com, LLC, as it would reduce staff time as well as give the properties increased exposure among potential purchasers. Realauction.com, LLC charges a \$10.00 fee per purchased property. Ms. Merritt stated this vendor currently handles the online tax sales for nine (9) counties in Maryland and is already a partner with the County's accounting software vendor, Central Square. A lengthy discussion took place. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved to contract with Realauction.com to conduct the 2021 real property tax sale online with no bidder fee.

Ms. Merritt presented the FY2021 Financial Statements as of December 31, 2020. Ms. Merritt highlighted the favorable and unfavorable totals in revenue and expenditures for the General Fund, Water and Wastewater, and Capital Projects. Revenues have increased due to

recordation and property transfers. Ms. Merritt conveyed conservative guidance provided by the State regarding forecasts for income tax revenue.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Marty Hale, Director, Human Resources, on behalf of Wayne Darrell, Director, Emergency Services, presented a request to fill a vacant full-time Paramedic position at the recommended Grade 6 salary. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved the recommended candidate for the vacant full-time Paramedic position in Emergency Services as requested, pending successful completion of County pre-employment requirements.

At their March 2nd meeting, the Commissioners approved to postpone the hiring process for the Human Resources Specialist vacancy. In reviewing the Financial Statements as presented by Ms. Merritt, Commissioner Mason discussed moving forward with the advertising of the Human Resources Specialist vacancy. Mr. Hale and the Commissioners discussed the structural/career promotion increases and the current vacancies in the Roads Division, Public Works. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved to advance those individuals in the career ladder and make those advancements retroactive to the date the employee qualified to be promoted. On motion by Commissioner Jacob and seconded by Commissioner Mason, the Commissioners unanimously approved the advertising of the Human Resources Specialist vacancy. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners by majority, approved to advertise for two (2) MEO I/II vacancies in the Roads Division, Public Works. Commissioner Mason voted in opposition.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator, announced the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) will be holding the annual summer conference this year. Further information will be forth coming.

Ms. Heller stated Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has created a webpage to provide the most current information pertaining to COVID-19. For more information visit <https://govstatus.egov.com/md-coronavirus-rumor-control>.

Ms. Heller presented an Agreement for the Purchase and Sale of Property, Kelleys Park Road. At their January 5th meeting, the Board by a majority vote, agreed on an \$8,000.00 purchase price of County owned land. The purchasers agreed to pay engineering fees up to \$1,200.00 for a living shoreline grant application, subject to local laws, advertising, and contract. A Disposal of Real County Property Public Notice was duly advertised per the Local Government Article 10-312. Discussion took place. Commissioner Fithian shared that the sale of the property was discussed at the Public Landings and Facilities Board meeting on March 8, 2021. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the

Commissioners by majority, approved the Agreement for the Purchase and Sale of Property to William R. and Valerie L. Ashmore as presented. Commissioner Mason voted in opposition.

Ms. Heller reviewed a correspondence addressed to the Commissioners dated February 5, 2021, from a citizen regarding the Kent County Public Library. The Commissioners acknowledged receipt of the letter and responded in kind. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved the response letter as submitted.

Ms. Heller, on behalf of Richard Keaveney, Executive Director, The Animal Care Shelter for Kent County, presented a request for two (2) letters of support. The Animal Shelter is seeking funding from grants provided by the Maryland Department of Agriculture Spay and Neuter Program. One grant would cover the cost of alteration surgeries for low-income families in Kent County, and the second grant would cover the cost of alteration surgeries for feral cats who are brought to the shelter through the Trap-Neuter-Return program. On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved both letters of support as submitted. The Commissioners signed two (2) letters addressed to Nathaniel Boan, Program Coordinator, Maryland Department of Agriculture, conveying the County's support of The Animal Care Shelter of Kent County grant applications.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

At their February 9th meeting, the Board approved to invest funds with Shore United Bank. Ms. Merritt was notified that the Authorized Bank Account Information Change Form Between Kent County and PNC Bank, National Association, required signature. Commissioner Mason signed the form on March 2, 2021 to allow the transfer of funds.

KENT COUNTY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The procedures for public comment were in effect. The public was invited to participate. No comments were received from citizens.

CONTINGENCY FUND

The FY2021 Contingency Fund balance as of February 23, 2021 is \$565,750.00 and the use of fund balance total is \$72,723.00.

There being no further business to claim their attention, a motion was made by Commissioner Jacob, seconded by Commissioner Fithian, and the Board unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 11:46 a.m. The Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra M. Blackiston
Clerk/KATE Manager

Approved:

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

March 9, 2021

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

Thomas N. Yeager, County Attorney was present in person.

Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator attended the meeting remotely.

CONSENT ITEM

On motion by Commissioner Fithian and seconded by Commissioner Jacob, the Commissioners unanimously approved Consent Item #2 - Liquor Minutes, March 2, 2021.

There being no further business to claim their attention, the Board adjourned and agreed to meet again on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.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