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OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEWS
RELEASE**

Review of Actions Taken in the Washington County
Board of County Commissioners Meeting
Tuesday, March 25, 2008

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN WORKSHOP

Budget and Finance Director Debra Murray brought this look at the Capital Improvement Project Budget for the coming Fiscal Year before the Board. Murray introduced the Board to the start of the County's 10-year, long-term plan, listing capital projects by Division. Highlights included the funding for Public Schools capital projects with requests topping \$238 million over the period from 2009 through 2018. With Hagerstown Community College and Library requests, the entire Education request would be over \$336 million for the period. Environmental Management project requests were at \$95 million for water quality and solid waste projects, Public Works requests were just over \$131 million and the Sheriff's Department would see \$44 million in capital projects. Combined total for all budget divisions over the 10-year span would be \$637.65 million. Murray discussed debt capacity analysis with the Board showing projected figures 20 years into the future. Details of CIP budgets by department and division for Fiscal Year 2009 showed Hagerstown Regional Airport requesting \$740,000 for equipment and the 20-year Airport Plan upgrade. The Board of Education request is \$9.68 million for the coming fiscal year, to include planning funds for a new primary school, a Cafeteria for Fountain Rock Elementary, and funds for Antietam Academy. Hagerstown Community College's request for \$6.46 million was for a new Math and Science building.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Each week the Board of County Commissioners sets aside time to hear from citizens of Washington County on matters of importance to the community.

Lieutenant David Kloos and 1st Sergeant Kevin Lewis of the Maryland State Police Hagerstown Barracks introduced themselves to the Board. Kloos is the new Barracks Commander and Lewis was recently transferred in as 1st Sergeant of the Barracks. Kloos offered cooperation to the Commissioners in mutual projects.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN WORKSHOP *continued*

Budget and Finance Director Debra Murray brought a continuation of the CIP budgets to the Board for discussion. Detail of the Washington County Free Library request showed a need for \$1.21 million in the FY '09 budget for renovations of the main branch in Hagerstown. Discussion centered on possible participation in the project by the City of Hagerstown. The Bridge projects would total \$1.72 million. Drainage projects would be set at \$135,000. General Government's projected Capital budget would be set at \$2.23 million. A \$275,000 request for renovations at the Administrative Annex at 80-West Baltimore Street could be reduced due to purchase of buildings downtown. Funding for a proposed Senior Center would be shifted into the 2010-2011 fiscal year timeline, due to planning need and possibility of reuse of a County facility. Parks and Recreation would see \$562,500 in its CIP if state funding remained unchanged. Buildings, Grounds and Parks Director Jim Sterling told the Board that the Program Open Space funds from the state will be reduced from \$2 million in FY '08 to about \$386,000 in FY '09. County Park projects were reduced due to that possibility. Public Safety requested \$9.7 million including \$2.02 million for Fire and Emergency Services, \$3.54 million for the Radio Communication System, and \$4.13 million for the Detention Center. Additional discussion on the CIP will take place at a later date. All budgets will receive line-item review prior to the public hearing set for May.

TRANSFER POINT RELOCATION STUDY -

Department of Transit-County Commuter Director Kevin Cerrone, Lib Fetting and Jason Quan of KFH Group consultants brought this report on the Transfer Point Relocation Study outcome before the Commissioners. The presentation was for information purposes, and input from the Commissioners on the matter was requested. The Washington County Public Transportation Department operates the County Commuter and is under the County's Division of Public Works. The transit system has been providing local public transit bus service in the County for over 35 years. The transit system operates ten fixed routes, the Jobs Opportunity Bus Shuttle (JOBS), the Hopewell Express, the Statewide Special Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary Paratransit service. County Commuter has been committed to meeting the mobility needs and improving the quality of bus service in the community. As part of that commitment, County Commuter is looking to relocate the current transfer point to a more convenient, user-friendly, and safe location. The transfer point was originally located at Public Square. As downtown Hagerstown became redeveloped and revitalized there was pressure from downtown merchants and City officials to relocate the transfer point out of Public Square. Subsequently, the transfer point was relocated to the 300 block of West Washington Street, a third of a mile from downtown. For the last 12 years, County Commuter has operated out of this location. This on-street transfer point, located below a railroad overpass, is in a non-user-friendly location and is considered a detriment to the transit system's ability to serve its customers. The 2003 Transportation Development Plan for the WCPTD recommended developing a new transfer facility that would be more centrally located, located near a major trip generator or other destination, and provide a more pleasant and secure environment for customers. Since 2005, County staff has

worked with City of Hagerstown staff to identify potential new locations within the City. Sixteen possible locations were identified. Many of the locations were subsequently eliminated from the list due to operational issues stemming from being on-street and/or on a one-way street, narrow streets, or steep grades. Others were eliminated because the site was part of future development or redevelopment. Numerous considerations factor into the choice of a new site include real estate availability, impact on ridership, bus schedules, traffic, security, the ability to provide passenger amenities and the potential for partnerships to reduce costs or provide additional services. Through support from the Maryland Department of Transportation, KFH Group was contracted to assist in identifying potential permanent locations for the transfer center. The purpose of this study is to document the deficiencies of the current site and examine the advantages and disadvantages of potential new sites to assist in the development of a new facility. The report assessed the current location and condition of the transfer point, identified possible locations for a new transfer center, documented the operational, facility and amenity needs of the new transfer center, estimated the minimum space requirements, and ranked the potential locations. Possible locations included the Former Ames Shopping Center, a Former Wendy's Site on Dual Highway, the Former Hoffman's Affordable Vehicles lot on Dual Highway, the 300 Block of East Antietam Street, the Former Greyhound Station, a Gravel Lot adjacent to the Herald Mail, the County Administration Annex at 80 West Baltimore Street, the Market House Lot, the 200 Block of West Franklin Street, the South End Shopping Center, the Greyhound Station on Maryland Route 65, the MTA Commuter Bus Park and Ride Lot in that same general area, Longmeadow Shopping Center, the Former Giant Eagle Shopping Center, First Data Auxiliary Parking Lot on Western Maryland Parkway, and Valley Mall .. In order to guide the decision-making process, the 16 sites were ranked based on criteria including size of lot, availability, vehicle access, pedestrian access, proximity to activity centers, proximity to downtown, impact on routes, and compatibility with adjacent land use. The size and availability of the site were weighted the most, followed by vehicle access. The two locations with the highest ranking were 80 West Baltimore Street and the 300 block of East Antietam. Both locations are adequate in size. The 80 West Baltimore Street location is owned by the County and the 300 block of East Antietam is a surface parking lot only, owned privately. 80 West Baltimore Street is County-owned, consists of 1.1 acres and includes a 12,500 square foot facility on the lot which is occupied by several County departments of Planning and Zoning. If this location was to become available, County Commuter could utilize the existing lot and/or building as their new transfer center. With the County already owning the lot, there would be no acquisition cost and the appraised value of the lot could be used as the local match for Federal and State funds. In addition, all of the necessary utilities and infrastructure are already on site, the report indicated. Further consideration of this plan would be needed.

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT TO MECHANICAL FEE SCHEDULE

Permits and Inspections Department Director Dan DiVito brought this request, for an amendment to the Mechanical Fee Schedule relating to the establishment of a registration fee for mechanical contractors in Washington County, Maryland to the Board and requested adoption of an ordinance to amend the Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to Adopt a Fee Schedule to Govern all Building Work Performed in Washington County,

Maryland" as presented by staff. A public hearing was held on March 4, 2008 for the purpose of considering an amendment to the Mechanical Fee Schedule adopted by Ordinance on July 25, 2005 and amended on May 23, 2006, by establishing a registration fee for mechanical contractors who desire to perform work in Washington County. Pursuant to Section 110, Registration, of an ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to Repeal the 2003 International Mechanical Code, First Printing, with Local Amendments for Washington County, as amended, and to Enact the 2006 International Mechanical Code, First Printing, with Local Amendments for Washington County, Maryland," adopted on December 17, 2007, effective March 1, 2008, any person or persons desiring to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace a mechanical system in Washington County, Maryland must first register with the Plumbing/Mechanical Board and shall pay the established registration fee at the time of application and pay a biennial renewal fee on or before the 31st day of May of the renewal year. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

CONTRACT AWARD: SHARPSBURG AND HIGHFIELD WATER STORAGE TANKS REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Mark Bradshaw, Deputy Director – Department of Engineering Services brought this contract to the Board for approval./act award for the Sharpsburg and Highfield Water Storage Tanks Rehabilitation Programs. The request was to rescind the contract award made by the Board on October 23, 2007 for the subject services to Utility Service Co., Inc. of Perry, GA, with the lowest Total Lump Sum Fee of \$330,000.00 and to award the contract to the next lowest responsive, responsible proposer, Southern Corrosion, Inc. of Roanoke Rapids, NC. with the next lowest Total Lump Sum Fee of \$382,594.00, contingent upon the approval of the Maryland Department of the Environment, and to approve the attached Budget Transfer Request of \$41,359.00 dated March 4, 2008. This contract provides for the existing Sharpsburg 200,000 gallon Torus elevated tank and the Highfield 400,000 gallon ground storage tank in order to comply with Federal, State, and Local Regulations. Since Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is providing funding for this project, the County had to receive MDE permission to award the contract to Utility Services, Inc. The request for proposal document specified that the proposal submissions were valid for ninety calendar days. The County didn't receive MDE's permission to award the contract until the ninety calendar days specified in the proposal document had expired. The County contacted Utility Services, Inc. in regards to awarding the contract, but that firm declined to honor its bid and withdrew the proposal. The County has contacted the next lowest proposer, Southern Corrosion, Inc., and they are willing to honor their proposal and enter into a contract with the County to perform the work as outlined in the RFP. Notice to proceed would be proposed for April 1st with a 180-day project period. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATIVE PURCHASE OF CONSULTING SERVICES FOR PAVEMENT DATA COLLECTION

Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Rob Slocum, Acting Deputy Director of Public Works – Capital Projects brought this Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchase of Consulting Services for Pavement Data Collection for the Engineering Department to the

Board for approval. The request was to authorize by Resolution the Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchase of Consulting Services for Pavement Data Collection for the Department of Public Works to Enterprise Information Solutions, Inc. of Columbia, MD, in the amount of Ninety Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty (\$99,750.00) Dollars via a Howard County, Maryland contract, and additional services as required in FY '09 at the unit prices contained in the contract. In June 2005, the Board awarded a contract for the intergovernmental cooperative purchase of Consulting Services for Digital Based Asset and Pavement Tracking Services via a contract of Howard County and the Sole Source purchase of related software for a total of \$82,469.00 to Enterprise Information Solutions, Inc. of Columbia, Maryland. The services required are relative to the use of this software. The project will deliver a current road survey in electronic format for 350 miles or approximately one third of Washington County's Road network. A minimum of 400 traffic counts will also be collected. Both of these data sets are necessary to operate Washington County's Pavement Management Software Program. The data is integral to managing and maintaining Washington County's Roads in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. The Division of Public works anticipates a similar project in Fiscal Year 2009, to complete the remaining two thirds of Washington County's Road network. The measure was approved by a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Wivell voting "no"..

BY-LAWS FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lynn Little, Director of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Washington County office and Economic Development Commission Director Tim Troxell brought this request, for approval of By-Laws for the Agricultural Marketing Advisory Committee, before the Board. On October 16, 2007 the County Commissioners appointed 5 members to the Agricultural Marketing Advisory Board to help draft a job description and business plan for the new position of Agricultural Marketing Specialist. The group completed those tasks and will soon have the position filled. To provide continued oversight of this position and to make recommendations regarding the marketing and economic development of Washington County's agricultural industry, the Advisory Board is recommending By-Laws for a new Agricultural Marketing Advisory Committee. In summary the by-laws state that the Agricultural Marketing Advisory Committee has been established by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland to provide recommendations regarding the marketing and economic development of Washington County's agricultural industry and related businesses. The Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity only. The Committee would advise the Board on policy issues associated with the development, marketing, and management of strategies to attract, maintain, and develop Washington County's agricultural industry and related businesses, would provide advice and recommendations to the Agricultural Marketing Specialist, and provide advice and recommendations as to policy issues associated with the development, marketing, and management of strategies to attract, maintain, and develop Washington County's agricultural industry and related businesses. The Committee would consist of 7 members appointed by the Commissioners and three additional members to include 1 from Extension, 1 from the Economic Development Commission, and 1 from the Chamber of Commerce, and would serve without compensation. Terms would be 3 years with reappointment for one additional term. The request was approved on a 3-2 vote with

Commissioners Bill Wivell and Terry Baker voting "no".

EXPANSION OF SMART GROWTH ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Kathy Maher, Planning Director for the City of Hagerstown and City Planner Alex Rohrbaugh brought this request regarding Expansion of Smart Growth Arts and Entertainment (A&E) District Boundaries before the Board. The City of Hagerstown is inviting the County to partner again on the Smart Growth A&E District program for the existing district boundaries and the proposed expanded boundaries by providing property tax credits for projects which create artist housing or space for arts and entertainment enterprises in the downtown A&E district. In 2001, a portion of downtown Hagerstown was designated as a Smart Growth A&E District by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. The boundaries included Public Square and the four surrounding blocks. This designation makes certain activities and enterprises eligible for property tax credits for creation of artist housing and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises, exemption from the admissions and amusement tax, and an income tax subtraction for artists who live within the County and have over 50% of their artistic income generated within the district. At the time, Washington County agreed to participate in the program by also allowing a County property tax credit for eligible activities. The designation was good for a period of 10 years. The City of Hagerstown is submitting an application for re-designation of Hagerstown's Smart Growth A&E District with an expanded boundary. The Mayor and City Council agreed to the boundary expansion proposal in March 2007. If designated by the State, the local program would be "re-upped" for another 10 years for the available tax incentives. On March 25th, the Mayor and City Council will hold the necessary public hearing on the application and will adopt a resolution indicating the intent to provide the tax incentives in the existing and expanded Smart Growth A&E District. The deadline for submittal of the application is April 1st, 2008. If the County Commissioners would be interested in partnering with the City and the State again a letter indicating that partnership intention would be needed. There would be no impact on the County budget, Maher said. A motion to support the City's grant application was approved by unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

County Attorney Issues: Assistant County Attorney Kirk Downey and Planning Director Mike Thompson sought Commissioners' guidance on the proposed Planning Commission Rezoning Hearing schedule, prior to publication on the County website. In a previous discussion, the Commissioners came to consensus to hold Rezoning Hearings twice per year instead of quarterly, as is now the case. A number of comments were received from the public in the interim. The Board reaffirmed its position on the matter.

County Administrator Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray brought a request before the Board from the Maryland Department of the Agriculture for a commitment of \$100,000 in County funds for the Annual Gypsy Moth spraying program, up from \$40,000 in previous years. Discussion centered on the state's offer to match the

funds two-for one and how many additional acres the increase would allow to be sprayed. Additional information will be sought from MDA.

PERSONNEL BENEFITS

County Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik and Benefits Administrator Debbie Peyton brought the Annual review of Employee benefits before the Board and gave the Board a second look at Personnel requests for the coming fiscal year. Employee Health Insurance, Drug, Vision and Dental costs are expected to rise by about 12% next year. As a result, the amount employees would pay into the benefits fund would increase about 12% for medical coverage, but vision and dental coverages would not see an increase. Employee contributions under the HMO plan would range from \$15-49 single to \$43.67 family per month, while the POS Medical contribution would range from \$28.52 for single to \$80.44 per month for Family coverage. County contributions for Medical would increase 7% across the board. All budget items will receive further review prior to the May budget hearing at Hagerstown Community College.

NEW PERSONNEL REQUESTS/BENEFITS

County Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik brought the Board a second look at New Personnel Requests from the departments. The requests were discussed on March 11th, and included positions in the Sheriff's Department to support patrol, detention and Central Booking. Commissioners requested time to evaluate those needs. The Sheriff requested three non-uniformed positions, which would enable additional officers in the field. A Property, Planning, Fleet Management and Grants Coordinator position, a Training and Accreditation Coordinator and a Sex Offender Registrar were requested. Overcrowding at the Detention Center has required 11 additional deputies, Sheriff Doug Mullendore said. 10 Central Booking positions would be filled for half the fiscal year, starting in January 2009. The Narcotic Task Force would see a part-time Intelligence Analyst moved to full time. Shift Differential payments would become percentages of salary ranging from 3-5% and overtime for Process Servers was requested. Commissioners came to consensus to move ahead. Fire and Emergency Services requested Basic and Advanced Life Support (ALS) specialists and dispatchers to support the consolidation of 9-1-1 services. 3 ALS II positions and an Assistant Chief were requested to fully implement phase I of the Emergency Services Master Plan. Funding for 9 ALS I and 9 Basic Life Support Technicians was placed in a set-aside, to be utilized when and if needed, after Phase I of the plan is underway. A request for 2 new emergency Communications Specialist positions for the existing 9-1-1 dispatch operation was reduced to one. 11 positions for the consolidated 9-1-1 Center would be added for half the fiscal year, beginning January, 2009. Additional funding was requested for the Special Operations budget. Overtime for Fire-Rescue Communications personnel was recommended to be reduced to \$30,000. The measures were approved by a 3-2 vote. The Commissioners approved 3 part-time Recreation Attendant positions to support the Community Resource locations at the three new elementary schools, a GIS Specialist position in the Planning Department to take the place of several positions transferred to the Information Technologies Department last year, one Full-time Office Associate in the

Department of Transit-County Commuter for support of expanded operations along with a part-time Mechanic position, and overtime for Planners. Those measures were approved to move ahead, by consensus.

GENERAL FUND WORKSHOP

Budget and Finance Director Debra Murray, brought this review of projected revenues for Fiscal Year 2009 before the Board. Murray said that Property Taxes for the year are projected at \$120.67 million, an increase of 10.72% over last fiscal year. Discussion took place on the affect of the Property Tax Assessment cap reduction to 5% and on tax credits. Income Tax was projected to rise about 5% and other local taxes, interest on investments, repurchase agreements, other penalties and fees were projected at about a 2% increase over FY 2008. The County saw \$1 million decrease in Recordation Tax. A \$775,000 drop in the Hotel-Motel Tax was seen because those revenues are now being recorded in a separate fund, Murray said. The projected Grand total for all revenue sources is expected to be \$207.49 million, an increase of 6% over FY 2008. Property Tax Revenues as presented are based on current tax rate of \$0.948 per \$100 of assessed full value, which is the same rate that has been in effect in Washington County since 2001. The projected budget will be reviewed by County Commissioners in budget workshops prior to the Public Hearing in May.

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