



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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John F. Barr, *President*
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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240-313-2077

**NEWS
RELEASE**

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

**THE BOARD ATTENDED THE ANNUAL COUNTY EMPLOYEE SERVICE
AWARDS BREAKFAST IN FUNKSTOWN**



COMMISSIONERS PRESIDENT JOHN BARR CALLED FOR A MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF FORMER HAGERSTOWN CITY COUNCILMAN AND PAST CHAIR OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE LINN HENDERSHOT.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Bill Wivell asked for information regarding a private for-profit company's possible exemption from Amusement taxes as a "training center" recognized by the state. Wivell also asked about the property tax rate set by the state.

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire commented on a response by the Gaming Office on the Amusement tax issue. The Commissioner reported on attending the Halfway Fire and Rescue Company membership meeting last week. Staff should be commended for the

fine job in developing and implementing the Employee Service/Retirement event held earlier in the day, he said, and asked about a future public hearing on the communications tower project. A meeting with Citizens to Protect Washington County last week discussed water and sewer issues from both the City of Hagerstown and the County's perspectives. Aleshire commented on attending the Monday viewing for former City Councilman Linn Hendershot and stated that citizens should commit to his level of participation in Community affairs. Hendershot made the local government process work, Aleshire said.

Commissioner Jim Kercheval commented on a meeting with a developer last week to discuss traffic, buffering and entrance/egress issues on a planned development on U.S. 40. A preliminary consultation should be set up with the County and that developer, and City officials should also participate, he said. The Commissioner reported on attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new infield at Hagerstown Municipal stadium. Commissioner Baker attended Monday evening's Planning Commission meeting in Kercheval's absence. Under discussion were a rezoning in Smithsburg, a site plan for a motel in Clear Spring and a proposal for a new bank on Sharpsburg Pike.

Commissioners' President John Barr expressed condolence for the Hendershot and Hardin families on Linn Hendershot's passing. Barr said Hendershot was an inspiration to the community. Barr said a meeting last week with Allegheny Power officials on the PATH project, which would construct two 500 kv power lines connecting West Virginia with eastern Maryland, revealed that the lines could bypass the County and go further south. A similar project from West Virginia to Winchester Virginia has moved ahead of the PATH project, Barr said, slowing its development. The Commissioner praised the Community Foundation for its donations of \$500,000 in grants to worthy causes in Washington County.

FY 2009 PROGRAM OPEN SPACE FUNDING

Director of Buildings, Grounds and Parks Jim Sterling brought this report on requests for Program Open Space (POS) funding before the Board. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board has heard requests from the various municipalities, the Board of Education, and Hagerstown Community College. Each year these entities, and the County submit projects for consideration for inclusion in the State funding program. Based upon anticipated funds available, a program is developed, giving consideration to the priority ranking of the project given by its sponsor. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board then recommends to the Board of County Commissioners a program for adoption. After adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, notification is provided to the sponsors as to which projects have been included in the program along with approval letters. This then allows the sponsors to apply for funding. Total POS allocation for FY 2009 is expected to be \$386,558.00. Under the proposed allocations, Boonsboro would receive \$50,000 to help with development of a roadway and parking lot at Shafer Park. Funkstown would receive a total of \$13,770 for a walkway in Community Park and assistance in tennis court rehabilitation. The City of Hagerstown was approved to receive \$49,500 for irrigation work at the Fairgrounds, and \$36,000 for restrooms at Pangborn Park. The Town of Hancock would receive \$50,000 in assistance towards its Kirk Woods Park Bridge. The Town of Keedysville was approved to receive \$10,800 for development of a basketball court at Taylor Park. Smithsburg was approved for \$18,000 in assistance in development of a service road in Veterans' Park. Williamsport would receive \$32,000

in assistance towards the Beard Pool stabilization project. Hagerstown Community College would receive \$27,000 of its request for Track Rehabilitation assistance. Washington County Public Schools would receive \$29,700 for rehabilitation of tennis courts at the Clear Spring schools. Washington County's Marty Snook park would see a walking trail project receive \$38,700, and \$22,500 would be authorized for rubberized mulch for the playgrounds at that park. \$8,588 would go towards replacing the roof on the Doubs' Woods Arts Pavilion, Sterling said. He also asked that permission be granted to use \$41,000 in funds from the Howard Trust to construct a pavilion at Black Rock Golf Course., The project would not use POS funds. The measures were approved by unanimous vote. Sterling also put forth a change in title for his department that would more accurately reflect the nature of the operation, now that Recreation has been moved into that department. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities will be the new title of that organization.

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.

No one appeared to give comment on this day.

OTHER BUSINESS:

County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray stated that the State Board of Public Works Real Property Tax rate remains at last year's rate of 28 cents per \$100.00. The Capital for a Day event will bring the Governor and Cabinet to Hagerstown on Thursday. Meetings will be held at various sites throughout the day. Staff will have the chance to interact with state department Secretaries and Governor O'Malley. The event is being coordinated by City of Hagerstown staff, Murray said.

Director of Public Works Joe Kroboth told the Board that the State Highway Administration project to replace the bridge on I-70 over Black Rock Road has begun and there will be temporary delays through the summer on Black Rock Road. I-70 will remain open, with a temporary bridge built in the median. The project will take place through the next two summers, Kroboth said. The Route 40-Mount Aetna Road intersection project has also started, and Rest Areas on I-70 have been closed by the State for rehabilitation. A temporary rest stop has been set up at Prime Outlets. Kroboth requested the Board set a date for a Public Hearing on the Funkstown Bridge project as soon as possible, if the project is to be completed in this year's construction season. The Division of Public Works would present an overview of the project followed by an opportunity for the public to offer testimony in favor of, opposed to or otherwise relating to the project. Commissioners would attend, and the local delegation has been invited to participate. The Board directed Kroboth to set the meeting for Wednesday, May 14th at 7:00 p.m. at E. Russell Hicks Middle School.

Reports from County Staff: Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik introduced Leslie Hendrickson as the new Agricultural Marketing Specialist. Hendrickson had been serving as Agricultural Education Center Museum Coordinator.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR VOLUNTEER MEMBERS OF FIRE AND RESCUE COMPANIES

Assistant County Attorney Andrew Wilkinson brought this request to approve a resolution for Workers' compensation for volunteer members of fire and rescue companies before the Board. The resolution would allow members of volunteer fire or rescue companies to be considered covered employees while on duty for purposes of workers' compensation coverage provided by the County. State law allows a county government to provide such coverage. Although the County does not have a resolution in place, the County and its workers' compensation insurer have in the past considered such members covered employees. A recent workers' compensation matter concerning a volunteer has raised the issue of whether the insurer could deny coverage based on the County not having a formal resolution. A resolution from this Board would clarify the issue. If approved, each volunteer company would elect whether its members would be considered covered employees for workers' compensation protection. It is expected that all companies would do so. The statute is clear that a volunteer does not become an employee of the County for any other purpose by virtue of the workers' compensation coverage. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.



PROCLAMATION, BUILDING SAFETY WEEK

Director of the Permits and Inspections Department Dan Divito and staff received a proclamation from Commissioner's President John Barr designating May 5-11, 2008 as Building Safety Week in Washington County. The proclamation cited building safety and fire prevention officials, architects, engineers, builders and others in the construction industry as making positive contributions to safe construction practices. The International Code Council and its membership develop and implement codes for protection of citizens and are used by most cities, Counties and states. The Codes include safeguards for protection of citizens and local codes officials help prevent fires and accidents through enforcement of the codes. This year's theme is "Building Safety: Where you Live, Work and Play," and encourages citizen awareness of the role codes officials play in ensuring safety for all. Divito told the Board that during the week, Permits and Inspections staff will make presentations at the Technical High School to explain to students the importance of codes adherence and enforcement. Chief Building Inspector Rob Smith told the Board that 6 members of the Inspections staff are graduates of Tech High, and that the importance of training and education at that institution as well as the training

provided by the Barr Institute mean much to the Building and Construction industry in the County.

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