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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: NORMAN BASSETT  
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**NEWS  
RELEASE**

Review of Actions Taken in the Washington County  
Board of County Commissioners Meeting  
Tuesday, September 9, 2008

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD A JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF EDUCATION TO HEAR REPORTS ON FOURTH QUARTER BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS, AND ON THE STATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEARS 2010-2015

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

Commissioners' President John Barr welcomed internet viewers to the inaugural streamed webcast of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners' meetings. Viewers may access the stream by going to the County website [www.washco-md.net](http://www.washco-md.net) and linking to the Commissioners Page. A link is available to take citizens to the stream at that point. Audio of the meetings is streamed separately.

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

Commissioner Terry Baker commented on the recent meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board. Under discussion at that meeting was the methodology for distribution of State Program Open Space funds, Baker said.

Commissioner Jim Kercheval commented on last week's presentation on Life Sciences for local elected and economic development officials at Hagerstown Community College. The College presented a study it recently completed on Life Sciences Industries in a preliminary effort to educate stakeholders on the issue and build a unified effort to attract these high paying jobs. The Economic Development Commission was recently asked to perform a similar initiative, Kercheval said. The Commissioners decided to direct EDC to hold off on this initiative until discussing the need with the EDC board. The Commissioner met with the Community Lobby Coalition to discuss lobbying initiatives for the next legislative session. The suggested initiatives will be presented to the Commissioners at a future meeting and include funding for the downtown expansion of the Library as well as the protection of local gaming funds, capital funds, and transportation funding. Monday evening's Planning Commission meeting saw approval of

site plans for two of the older buildings at Fort Ritchie by the developer Corporate Office Properties Trust. The Commissioner discussed need for the County to support economic development on this site by streamlining the planning approval process. In recognition of Labor Day, the Commissioner thanked all County employees for the excellent jobs they do every day for the citizens of Washington County.

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire reported on Monday's meeting of the Funkstown Mayor and Council. Traffic issues were discussed at that meeting. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting discussed Green Industries at its most recent meeting. Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> the annual Antietam Stream Cleanup event will be held, starting at Suns Stadium. Plastic bottles and bags are the major problem in the creek, Aleshire said. The Commissioner commended former Herald-Mail Editor Terry Headlee for a recent article on the North Hagerstown High School track, and noted that an editorial written by the Commissioner will be printed soon echoing those remarks.

Commissioner Bill Wivell commented on the recent Water Quality Advisory Committee meeting. Under discussion were budget issues, and a continuing request for further information and clarification concerning the City of Hagerstown's sewer fee structure for County citizens in the joint service area.

Commissioners' President John Barr told the Board that the new Martin's supermarket on Pennsylvania Avenue will officially open on Wednesday. A meeting with City officials last week discussed final conclusion to the downtown revitalization project that will demolish a building housing an adult book store. A demolition permit will be sought for early January 2009, and the County has been asked to provide financial assistance to the City in redevelopment of the nearby area. A ribbon cutting ceremony has been set for the Community Center at the former Fort Ritchie on September 27<sup>th</sup>, Barr said. A meeting is scheduled between City and County officials to discuss a flooding situation in Hagerstown near the City reservoir. Public Works Director Joe Kroboth will attend that meeting.

#### 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL PIKE FESTIVAL AND WAGON TRAIN,

The Board of County Commissioners approved this measure by unanimous vote. Event coordinator Laura Bowman brought this request for assistance to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Pike Festival and Wagon Train, before the Board. The request was to approve funding to pay overtime costs for two Sheriff's deputies for the National Pike Festival on May 16-17, 2009, to permit usage of County's mailroom facilities and to include the event under the County's event insurance coverage. The Wagon Train was recently named Event of the Year for Maryland activities and last year was named in the National Geographic Traveler Magazine. The event has also been featured in American Roads magazine and the international magazine "The Draft Horse Journal." Bowman presented the Commissioners with a commemorative photograph of last year's wagon train taken on Route 40 West of Hagerstown.

#### 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.

Phil Physioc of Hagerstown commented on a legal issue.

Robin Jones, Phil McNamee and Trish McNamee of Sharpsburg brought information to the Board regarding a noxious weed issue on Mondell Road. County Attorney John Martirano said his office has been reviewing legal interpretations regarding that case and the Commissioners will discuss a course of action later in the meeting.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING: CITY OF HAGERSTOWN/WASHINGTON COUNTY ENTERPRISE ZONE EXPANSION JOINT APPLICATION**

The Board of County Commissioners approved this measure by unanimous vote. Sonja Hoover, Economic Development Commission Fiscal/Research Specialist brought this request, for expansion of the City of Hagerstown/Washington County Enterprise Zone to Public Hearing. It was recommended that the Commissioners support the joint application for expansion of the Enterprise Zone on property located within the corporate boundaries of the City of Hagerstown and in Washington County. The County and the City submitted a joint application to Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) for redesignation of the Enterprise Zone in October 2002. That designation was effective in December of 2002 and remains in effect until December, 2012. The objective is to include parcels 557, 559, and 560 of Weller's Alley under the designation. Currently, the parcels bordering Weller's Alley between North Prospect Street and Jonathan Street in Hagerstown are in the Enterprise Zone with the exception of parcels 557, 559, and 560. The designation period for the expansion area of the zone runs simultaneously with the period of the current zone designation and expires at the same time as the current zone designation. Real property tax credits would be granted for 10 years. To participate in the Enterprise Zone Program, property owners would need to meet the program's eligibility requirements. City of Hagerstown Planner Debbie Everhart testified in favor of the plan, commenting that the expansion will allow for property enhancement in the area, and that the City held its public hearing on the matter recently. The record was not required to be held open, and the measure was passed.

#### **BID AWARD: MOUNT AETNA WATER STORAGE TANK**

The Board of County Commissioners approved this measure by unanimous vote. County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Department of Environmental Management Deputy Director Mark Bradshaw brought a request to award the construction bid for the Mount Aetna Water Storage Tank to PSI Pumping Solutions, Inc., of York Springs, Pennsylvania for the Grand Total Base Bid of \$265,100.00, contingent upon state approval. The project is for the construction of the Mt. Aetna Water Storage Tank and would furnish and install a 105,000 gallon water storage tank, yard piping and pump, removal and installation of six foot high chain link fence, furnish and install fire hydrant and concrete pad as shown on contract plans, the project is to be completed within one hundred eighty (180) consecutive calendar days after Notice to Proceed is issued.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

County Attorney Issues: County Attorney John Martirano and Assistant Attorney Andrew Wilkinson returned the matter of weed control on a property on Mondell Road, to the Board for discussion. The property in question had been under a federal program allowing certain environmental uses until August 28, 2008. Neighbors complained about

the grasses and other plants, which had grown far above the 18 inch requirement under the County Weed Ordinance. The County Ordinance prohibits grass and weeds higher than 18 inches. The County Attorney's Office was seeking direction from the Commissioners as to how to proceed in this instance. The Commissioners supported enforcement of the Ordinance as written and discussion took place about reviewing the Ordinance.

County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray Commented on the County's inaugural streaming video of today's meeting. Murray told the Board that the stream is the culmination of a goal to provide citizens free and open information regarding the Commissioners' actions. County Public Information Officer Norman Bassett will no longer be providing a weekly printed summary of the Commissioners' meetings in its current form, due to the shift in duties with the video setup. Information will be provided about issues of importance to the Community on Wednesday of each week, and Official Minutes of the meetings will continue to be provided by County Clerk Joni Bittner. Washington County has been providing a printed summary of the meetings each Tuesday for 11 years.

#### THE BOARD ATTENDED THE "REMEMBRANCE IN THE PARK" MEMORIAL CEREMONY HONORING PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL FALLEN IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Washington County Citizen Corps, Elected Officials, and representatives from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, active military and veterans' groups honored fallen heroes, Smithsburg Law Enforcement Officer Christopher Nicholson, and Jeffrey Wroten, Maryland Department of Corrections Correctional Officer. The event included presentation of proclamations by the County and the City of Hagerstown, followed by a tree planting and showcase of a commemorative brick walk. September 2008 was proclaimed Citizens' Emergency Preparedness Month in Washington County, citing the remembrance ceremony and Community Emergency Response Training opportunities that will be offered all month.

#### CHANGE ORDER: FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES 9-1-1 CENTER RENOVATION

The Board of County Commissioners approved this measure by unanimous vote. Director of Public Works Joe Kroboth and Gary Pozzouli, Project Manager brought this request to approve a change order proposal of \$104,318.44 to Palmer Construction for the purpose of adding additional electric power panels and wiring at the Fire & Emergency Services - 911 Center Renovation Project. A computer server and electronic equipment room is located within the basement level of the Fire & Emergency Services – 911 Center Project. During the initial planning for the project, this room was intended only to serve telephone equipment and radio electronic equipment. Throughout the project, various decisions were made to improve efficiency and make more effective use of space, to relocate to and add additional electronic equipment in the room that was originally not included in the electrical power requirements. The additional equipment includes Verizon equipment, Motorola equipment and computers from the Information Technologies Department. These additional loads require the installation of another power distribution panel and reconfiguring wiring to other newly installed panels to

combine similar uses. County staff and the architect have reviewed this proposal and recommended approval by the Board. The funds would come from remaining contingency currently in the project budget.

#### COMPENSATION RECLASSIFICATION POLICY

The Board of County Commissioners reviewed this policy, made recommendations for changes and gave consensus to move ahead with the policy as amended. Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik brought this request, to accept the Compensation Reclassification Policy, before the Board. In February of 2008 the Board approved the Wage and Salary Classification Program policy -- PR-18. That policy outlines the procedure for reclassification on a regular schedule. To ensure fair compensation, and that County positions are correctly graded, it is necessary to evaluate all County positions on a regular basis. The policy will provide for an annual review of one third of County positions every year. Discussion took place on makeup of the review committee, and membership from employers outside County government. Appointments will be recommended by the County Administrator and approved by the County Commissioners.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

**Staff Comments:** Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik requested permission to advertise a Procurement Specialist position at Grade 9. The request was approved by unanimous vote.

**Commissioners' Comment:** Commissioners' President John Barr commended County and City Emergency Services and Law Enforcement personnel for the remembrance ceremony held at Noon in City Park. The ceremony was moving, Barr said, in spite of the heavy rains at the noon hour. At the event, a need for funding for four flagpoles to honor fallen public safety personnel and veterans was discussed. Barr suggested that the County fund one of the poles, and the City and veterans' groups be asked to make funding for the other three poles available. The measure, to approve \$800.00 for one flagpole, from the Commissioners' Contingency fund, was approved by unanimous vote.

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PLEASE NOTE--LAST SUMMARY ISSUE: As referenced under County Administrator's Comments, this summary marks the final such dissemination by the Washington County Public Information Office. As of September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008, we are streaming live video. In the interest of providing this service to our citizens in the most cost effective manner possible, duties of the PIO have been realigned to affect the necessary changes. News stories will continue to be released on issues of importance as covered in the Board meetings. Citizens are urged to access [www.washco-md.net](http://www.washco-md.net), and link to the Commissioners' page to find the link to streaming video. Citizens will be able to view meetings for a four-week period after the initial webcast. The action will in no way affect the official minutes of Commissioners' meetings, which are published by the office of the County Clerk. Additional information is available from the PIO office at 240-313-2077.

-- Norman Bassett