



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

County Administration Building
100 West Washington Street, Room 226
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740-4834
Telephone (Voice/TTY) 240-313-2200
FAX: 240-313-2201

Terry L. Baker, *President*
John F. Barr, *Vice-President*
Ruth Anne Callahan
Jeffrey A. Cline
William B. McKinley

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Sarah Lankford Sprecher, Director of Public Relations & Community Affairs

Phone: 240-313-2215

Email: slankford@washco-md.net

Norman Bassett, Public Information Officer

Phone: 240-313-2077V/TDD

Email: nbassett@washco-md.net



**COMMISSIONERS APPROVE URBAN GROWTH AREA COMPREHENSIVE REZONING,
REVIEW SCHOOL BUS CAMERAS PLAN, AND HONOR OUTSTANDING YOUTH**

Hagerstown, MD (January 13, 2012) – As part of its regular meeting on January 10th, the Washington County Board of County Commissioners approved the Urban Growth Area Comprehensive Rezoning, heard plan details on the school bus cameras program, and presented Youth Meritorious Awards for the month of January, 2012.

URBAN GROWTH AREA COMPREHENSIVE REZONING

The Commissioners agreed to move ahead with proposed zoning changes in the Urban Growth Area (UGA) surrounding Hagerstown, after discussing citizen input from the third public hearing on the issues, which was held on December 13th, 2011.

The Board discussed requests from 19 individuals at that hearing, involving rezoning map and text amendments and UGA Boundary adjustments, as well as comments in writing received after the hearing ended. The majority of decisions were in agreement with property owner requests.

The Legal Department will draft necessary documents for final approval.

SCHOOL BUS CAMERAS

The Board approved moving forward with a request from Sheriff Doug Mullendore to find a suitable contractor for installation of video cameras on the exterior of County school buses in order to reduce vehicles running the flashing red lights and stop bar when the buses are loading and unloading students.

The action will permit a draft Ordinance to be written authorizing cameras to be placed on school buses in Washington County. The County will be one of the first jurisdictions in Maryland to make use of the law, which went into effect on September 1, 2011.

A Public Hearing will be held prior to finalization of the project. All costs will be absorbed by the vendor, who will receive a portion of fines collected as payment. Fines for violators captured on camera would be \$250, but no license points would be issued. The cameras would only be used for passing violations and in cases of safety to students and bus operators. Warnings will be issued during the first 60 days the cameras are in use.

YOUTH MERITORIOUS AWARDS

The Commissioners presented Certificates of Merit to two outstanding middle school students for their efforts in class and in the community (see attached release).

OTHER ACTIONS

School Budget Adjustments

The Commissioners approved changes to the Washington County Public Schools' First Quarter budget for the current fiscal year. Board of Education (BOE) Chief Financial Officer Chris South stated that savings have come from elimination of two senior management positions in Administration as well as one supervisor and one clerical position in mid-level Administration.

Additional savings were seen in the Summit Program. Those savings will fund new computers for classrooms, unbudgeted non-resident students, social worker and nurse positions for the Summit Program, and evening meals for students attending the Outdoor Program.

The State of Maryland will fund the lease for the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts for this fiscal year, saving \$634,704. Those funds will be applied to the maintenance backlog.

No new funds were requested and the net change in the fund balance was zero.

Maryland law requires local school systems to periodically re-forecast their financial needs and make necessary changes to their budgets. The BOE approved the changes its December 13, 2011 meeting. Several of the changes cross major categories and had to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

Real Property Issues

The Commissioners approved the acquisition of 414 square feet of property along Longmeadow Road for the sum of \$6,500, and the transfer of surplus right of way on Fountainhead Road at the request of a property owner.

Emergency Management Performance Program Award

The Board approved accepting the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2011 Emergency Management Performance Grant in the amount of \$97,376.00 from the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and executing an Agreement and any other necessary documentation with MEMA.

This is an annual distribution of funding to all local jurisdictions to enhance and strengthen emergency management capabilities at the state and local level, and helps offset personnel, operational and training expenses for local emergency management.

Bid Award: Uniform Rental

The Commissioners approved the bid award for uniform rental service for various departments to the responsive, responsible, bidder with the lowest bid, Coyne Textile Services, of Colonial Heights, Virginia, in the amount of \$49,946.00.

County Attorney Issues

The Commissioners approved drafting a resolution authorizing endorsement of the \$50,000 grant from the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) and designating the Hagerstown-Washington County Industrial Foundation (CHIEF) as agent for that grant. Funds will be used to develop the Hagerstown-Washington County Economic Development Commission (EDC) Strategic Plan.

The Board adopted a Rescission of Agreement for the use of property located on the Hagerstown Community College Campus. The building housing the Early Childhood Center is no longer being used for that purpose. An agreement with HCC allowed the Board of Education to utilize the facility. The Early Childhood Program has been moved to the Funkstown Early Childhood Center.

County Administrator's Comments

County Administrator Greg Murray reminded the Commissioners that video streaming of the meeting has been put on temporary hold pending equipment upgrades. There is no meeting of the Board next week due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, and that will allow time for testing of the new system.

Lobbyist Coalition Request

The Commissioners rejected, by a three-two vote, a request from the Washington County Community Lobbying Coalition for a contribution to lobbying efforts in Annapolis. The Board cited the Coalition's plan to use \$15,000 for a reception for Legislators, and the recent \$5,000 contribution to the PlanMaryland lobbying effort as reasons for the rejection.

###

COMMISSIONERS HONOR MERITORIOUS YOUTH

The Washington County Board of County Commissioners honored two outstanding middle school students with the Meritorious Youth Award in its January 10th meeting.

The honorees are Alison Keelan of Western Heights Middle School, and Grace Ramacciotti of Clear Spring Middle School.

Alison Keelan

Alison Keelan, an 8th Grade Student at Western Heights Middle School is the daughter of Thomas and Kristin Keelan and was nominated by School Counselors Nick Mowen and Dana Pentoney.

Her Counselors say, "Alison is an outstanding eighth grade Western Heights student. Her attitude in school is infectious. She is enthusiastic about learning; is polite and respectful to students and faculty members alike and is always smiling. Her attendance has been exceptional earning Perfect Attendance in seventh grade. Since sixth grade Alison has been enrolled in all Merit classes and has been on the Honor Roll and Distinguished Honor Roll multiple times. By the end of her eighth grade year she will have earned high school credits for Spanish, Algebra and Geometry. Alison is the Vice President of the National Junior Honor Society at Western

Heights, plays trombone in the band, and is an active member of the Where Everyone Belongs (W.E.B.) team.”

Alison’s additional activities include being a member of the 2011 Northwood swim team, an active participant in the Youth Alive program at St. Ann’s Roman Catholic Church, and a two-year teammate on the Western Heights Intramural Volleyball Team.

Grace Ramacciotti

Grace Ramacciotti, an 8th Grade Student at Clear Spring Middle School, is the daughter of John and Linda Ramacciotti, and was nominated by School Counselor Earl Meagher.

Her Counselor writes, “Grace is an eight grade student at Clear Spring Middle School and a member of student government. Academically, Grace has been on the honor roll her entire school career, and is a positive role model. Outside of school, Grace helps her father coach soccer and helps with volleyball. She also helps with PTSA fundraisers. It is a pleasure to have Grace at Clear Spring Middle. She is a kind person to all students. She is the All-American middle school student.”

The County Commissioners, through the Office of Community Grant Management, award the Youth Meritorious honor to students who exemplify excellence in the classroom, at home and in the community.

###