



Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland

Open Session Minutes

December 16, 2025

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation presented by President, John F. Barr followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag by the full assemblage.

CALL TO ORDER

President John F. Barr called the regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland, to order at 8:00 a.m. with the following members present: Vice-President Jeffrey A. Cline, Commissioner Derek Harvey, Commissioner Randal A. Leatherman and Commissioner Randall E. Wagner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Leatherman, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to approve the minutes of November 25, 2025. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

FIRST CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Cline, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to convene in first closed session at 8:02 a.m. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter. Open session discussion would breach attorney/client privilege.

- Status update and legal advice from County Attorney on County-Involved legal matter.

In first closed session, the Commissioners;

- Received legal advice and updates on pending litigation matters for which the County is a party.

Present during first closed session at various times were Commissioners John F. Barr, Jeffrey A. Cline, Derek Harvey, Randal A. Leatherman and Randall E. Wagner; Dawn Marcus, County Clerk and Zachary J. Kieffer, County Attorney; Michelle Gordon, County Administrator; Rosalinda Pascual, Deputy County Attorney; Aaron Weiss, Assistant County Attorney; Victor Scarpelli, Assistant County Attorney; and Roger Schlossberg, Esquire.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Cline, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to reconvene in open session at 9:07 a.m. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

RECESS

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Wagner thanked the Salvation Army for the opportunity for the County to participate in the annual Salvation Army Bell Ringing fundraiser. He wished the citizens of Washington County and

staff a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season. Commissioner Wagner appreciates staff for all that they have done over the past year.

Commissioner Leatherman commented on the passing of former Mayor Mildred "Mickey" Myers, he shared her accomplishments and commented on her service to the County and the Town of Smithsburg. He extended his condolences to her family and the Smithsburg Community. Commissioner Leatherman recited a Certificate of Appreciation that he received from the Washington County Fire Police for the Board of County Commissioners. He attended the Wreaths Across American at the Antietam National Cemetery. Commissioner Leatherman commented on the process of the preparations for the ceremony, the dedication of the wreath to each individual soldier and he shared information on his wreath dedication to Private Spencer Maley. He wished joy and peace to all County residents over the holidays.

Commissioner Harvey commented on the cold temperatures. He is looking forward to this afternoon's ribbon cutting ceremony for the extension of Halfway Boulevard. Commissioner Harvey commented on the County's 7.2 million dollars per year housing assistance for lower income individuals, which is transferred to the State of Maryland for the management of the funds. He shared information on the approval for rules for additional dwelling units and housing mandates; and increased costs to homeowners, increased costs due to supply and demand, increased costs due to illegal immigration, and increased cost factors due to safety factors.

Commissioner Cline recognized the passing of former Mayor Mildred "Mickey" Myers of Smithsburg and commented on her ongoing support that he had received and her dedication to the community. He shared his condolences to her family and friends. Commissioner Cline attended the Williamsport Community Band Holiday Concert and shared that the band has been providing music to the community for over 25 years. He attended the Funkstown Fire Department Annual Awards ceremony recognizing the top first responders and fire fighter of the year. He attended the Western Enterprise Fire Department Annual Awards. Commissioner Cline rode on the County's 250th Anniversary Memorial float in the Zach Reid Memorial Christmas Parade in Clear Spring. He thanked the Clear Spring officials who rode on the float and Danielle Weaver and her Public Relations Team for participating and their work on the float. Commissioner Cline visited the Fairplay Volunteer Fire Department for their annual breakfast with Santa Claus. He attended the Maryland Department of Transportation update on the Conococheague bridge and shared the expected completion date of August 2027. Commissioner Cline attended the Sheriff's Department Christmas luncheon. He attended the Hub City Labels tour and recognized Thomas Dahbura, President. Commissioner Cline visited the Springfield Barn's Celebration of Trees. He attended the hot chocolate and breakfast fellowship hosted by the Board of Education. Commissioner Cline attended the Washington County Fire Police Christmas meeting where employees were recognized for their years of service. He attended the Korean War Veterans Association Chapter 312 Holiday luncheon where three Gold Star Families were recognized and honored. Commissioner Cline recognized Korean War Battle of Chosin Reservoir survivor Dick Carter. He wished staff a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Commissioner Cline recognized Highways Supervisor Paul Hottinger for driving the County's 250th float in the Clear Spring parade.

Commissioner Barr thanked his fellow Commissioners and staff who participated in the Salvation Army Bell ringing this week. He shared information on the upcoming Angel Tree distribution at the Salvation Army Headquarters. Commissioner Barr commented on the Clear Spring Zach Reid Memorial Christmas Parade and thanked staff who participated in the event and their preparation of the County's 250th Anniversary float. He attended a Community Town Hall meeting hosted by Dr. Maulik

Joshi at Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine and he shared information on Meritus' outreach to the Community. Commissioner Barr attended the Maryland Association of County's (MACo) Winter Conference and commented on his service on the MACo Board. He shared the main topics of conversation at the conference were artificial intelligence (AI) and electrical power in the State. Commissioner Barr commented on his service to the Service and Volunteerism Board for the State. He shared that he hosted the Salvation Army Dinner meeting at Beaver Creek School.

STAFF COMMENTS

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, thanked staff who participated in the Salvation Army Bell ringing, and she thanked the Salvation Army for all that they do to support the Community. She attended the Zach Reid Memorial Christmas Parade. Ms. Gordon thanked the Public Relations and Highways Department staff for their efforts and last minute repairs to the float decorations. She thanked the Town's council who joined the County on the 250th Anniversary float. She attended the Community Home Care discussions at Meritus. Ms. Gordon thanked our Highways staff and personnel for their preparations and dedication during the recent winter weather events. She wished staff a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

1. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO EXTEND AND INCREASE AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION AND EQUIPMENT GRANT FUNDING

Kelsey Keadle, Business Specialist-Agriculture, Business and Economic Development; and Linda Spence, Financial Programs Administrator, Business and Economic Development, presented the request to approve the allocation of \$115,000.00 in Hotel Rental Tax funds for each of the next three fiscal years (2026 – 2028) for a total commitment of \$345,000.00. This amount represents a 15% increase per year. Staff requests approval from the BOCC to extend the Agricultural Innovation and Equipment Grant utilizing Hotel Rental Tax funds.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to approve the allocation of \$115,000.00 per year in Hotel Rental Tax funds as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator requested to approve a change to the fiscal year dates for this request. The correct dates should be FY2027 – FY2029.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the correction as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

2. INSURANCE RENEWAL FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE ASSOCIATION BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026

Tracy McCammon, Risk Management Coordinator, Human Resources, presented the request to renew the commercial property, auto and casualty package with VFIS Insurance Company at the estimated premium of \$691,212.00 the worker's compensation insurance with Chesapeake Employers Insurance Company at the estimated premium of \$390,925.00 cyber liability with BCS Insurance Company at the estimated premium of \$14,288.00 The AD&D insurance remains with Provident Insurance with no increase in premium due to a 3-year rate lock that expires in 2027. The total premium for all coverages is \$1,128,206.00

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve to renew the commercial property, auto and casualty insurance package with VFIS Insurance Company as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

3. CHANGE ORDER - ENHANCED NUTRIENT REMOVAL AT WASHINGTON COUNTY'S WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Joseph Moss, Deputy Director, Engineering Services, Environmental Management, and Kelcee Mace, Chief Financial Officer, presented the request to approve Change Order #19 for Buchart Horn in the amount of not-to-exceed \$435,400.00 for the Smithsburg WWTP ENR upgrade project. The General Contractor, HRI, Inc., (HRI) provided timely notice of material delays early in the project through monthly updates to the baseline schedule. HRI's attempts to improve the schedule, the cause of the delays was subsequently recognized as excusable procurement delays which were out of the Contractor's control and a 341-calendar day contract extension was approved. Ms. Mace shared that the project has been funded through a low interest loan through the state, a bond allocation and ARPA grant funding.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve Change Order #19 as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

4. MARYLAND 9-1-1 BOARD – APPROVAL TO SUBMIT APPLICATION AND ACCEPT AWARDED FUNDING

Alan Matheny, Director, Emergency Management; and Richard Lesh, Grant Manager, Grant Management, presented the request to approve the submission of grant application to the Maryland State 9-1-1 Board in the amount of \$90,814.00 and accept funding as awarded to fund professionals services for design support for the new Emergency communications Center.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the submission of the grant application to the Maryland State 9-1-1 Board as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

5. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATIVE PURCHASE (INTG-25-0223) ONE (1) NEW 2026 FORD EXPLORER (K8D) ACTIVE 4WD FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEPARTMENT

Brandi Kentner, Director, Purchasing; and Shawn Harbaugh, Director, Washington County Transit Department, presented the request to authorize by Resolution, the Washington County Transit Department to purchase One (1) New 2026 Ford Explorer (K8D) Active 4WD, for the Washington County Transit Department in the amount of \$41,603.38 from National Auto Fleet Group of Watsonville, CA., and to utilize another jurisdiction's contract (091521-NAF) that was awarded by Sourcewell to National Auto Fleet Group.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to approve to authorize by Resolution the purchase One (1) New 2026 Ford Explorer (K8D) Active 4WD, from National Auto Fleet Group as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

6. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATIVE PURCHASE (INTG-25-0224) – PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT FOR MARTY SNOOK PARK FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Brandi Kentner, Director, Purchasing; and Andrew Eshleman, Director, Public Works, presented the request to authorize by Resolution, the Parks and Recreation Department to purchase and have installed playground equipment for Marty Snook Park from Kompan, Inc. of Charlotte, NC, for the total sum amount of \$1,076,094.91, and to utilize another jurisdiction's contract, City of Charlotte (2017001135) that was awarded by Omnia Partners.

Commissioner Leatherman, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve to authorize by Resolution to purchase and have installed playground equipment for Marty Snook Park from Kompan, Inc. as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7. COMMERCIAL BUILDING PLANS EXAMINER

Greg Cartrette, Director, Permits & Inspections; and Chip Rose, Director, Human Resources, presented the request to approve to extend an offer for position 1887 to Jessica Kehler. The position is the Commercial Building Plans Examiner, which will be offered as a Grade 13, Step, \$65,436.80/annually.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve extend an offer to Jessica Kehler for the position of Commercial Building Plans Examiner as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

8. EMS STAFFING TRANSITION EMS MOU

R. David Hays, Director, Division of Emergency Services; David Chisholm, Deputy Director, Emergency Services; Oley Griffith, Coordinator -Volunteer Services, Emergency Services; David Glaze, President, Clear Spring Ambulance Club; and Dale Fishack, Vice President, Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, presented the request to approve to move forward with the EMS Employee Transition Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Clear Spring Ambulance Club, Inc., and consensus for the Division of Emergency Services (DES) to transition all current full-time (4) and part-time (3) EMS field employees, and to hire an additional four (4) full-time employees to fill existing vacancies.

Commissioner Cline, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve to move forward with the Emergency Medical Services Employee Transition Memorandum of Understanding with the Clear Spring Ambulance Club, Inc. and transition and hire Emergency Medical Services field employees as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

SECOND CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to convene in second closed session at 10:08 a.m. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

(1). Discussion in open session would disclose confidential personnel matters.

- Discussion of hiring recommendation for open position in County Government.
- Discussion of compensation of County Employee.
- Discussion of performance and assignment of duties of volunteer boards supervised by Commissioners.

To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto (3). Discussion in open would divulge negotiation strategies, as well as legal advice likely to be provided on this item.

- Discussion of strategy and policy for acquisition of real property.

To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter (7). Open session discussion would breach attorney/client privilege.

- Status update and legal advice from County Attorney on County-Involved legal matter.

- Legal Advice pertaining to Bylaws revision.

To consult with staff about pending or potential litigation (8). Open session discussion would divulge strategy and discussions, harming County prospects in potential litigation.

- Discussion potential litigation.

Public safety and security discussion pertaining to fire and emergency services (10). Open session discussion would risk disclosure of information effecting public safety.

In second closed session, the Commissioners discussed; and/or reached a consensus regarding:

- Discussion of implementation of real property acquisition procedure.
- Hiring recommendation for the Senior Network Engineer, Information Technology.
- Review of grant funding received and compensation of Emergency Management Specialist in the Office of Emergency Management.
- Public Safety security update.
- Discussion regarding membership and duties of the Historical Advisory Committee.
- Review of proposed bylaw amendments for the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council.
- Discussion of the proposed FY2026 Tax Equity Model.
- Received legal advice and updates on pending litigation matters for which the County is a party.

Present during second closed session at various times were Commissioners John F. Barr, Jeffrey A. Cline, Derek Harvey, Randal A. Leatherman and Randall E. Wagner; Dawn Marcus, County Clerk and Zachary J. Kieffer, County Attorney; Michelle Gordon, County Administrator; Rosalinda Pascual, Deputy County Attorney; Aaron Weiss, Assistant County Attorney; Victor Scarpelli, Assistant County Attorney; Todd Moser, Real Property Administrator, Engineering; Scott Hobbs, Director, Engineering; Chip Rose, Director Human Resources; Josh O'Neal, Chief Technical Officer; Information Technologies; Alan Matheny, Director, Emergency Management and Communications; R. David Hays, Director, Emergency Services; David Chisholm, Deputy Director, Emergency Services; Oley Griffith, Volunteer Coordinator, Emergency Services; Jim Sprecher Jr., President, WCVFRA; Dale Fishack, Vice President, WCVFRA; Meghan Jenkins, GIS Coordinator/Historic Preservation Planner, Planning and Zoning; Kelcee Mace, Chief Financial Officer; and Zane Garrett, Deputy Director, Budget and Finance.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to reconvene in open session at 12:16 p.m. The motion passed unanimously (4-0). Commissioner Wagner was absent.

Commissioner Wagner returned to the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

SECOND STAFF COMMENTS

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, presented the request to approve to extend an offer to Michael Byers for the position of Senior Network Engineer, Information Technology at a Grade 16, Step 21 at \$131,352.00 annually.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve to extend an offer to Michael Byers as presented, The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to adjourn at 12:18 p.m. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).



Dawn L. Marcus, *County Clerk*

