



Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland

Open Session Minutes

March 17, 2026

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 9:01 a.m. with the following members present: Vice-President Jeffrey A. Cline, Commissioner Randal A. Leatherman and Commissioner Randall E. Wagner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Leatherman, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to approve the minutes of February 24, 2026. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Wagner thanked Alex Reed the County Watershed Specialist for his presentation to the Land Use Council. He recognized the volunteer groups that help to clean up the waterways.

Commissioner Leatherman wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day. He recognized Sarah Woodson on her passing at 100 years old and her service to Zion Baptist Church and the Community. Commissioner Leatherman attended the Maugansville Fire Company 13 annual awards banquet. He recognized the membership of Company 13 and shared that they responded to 1,140 emergencies in 2025. Commissioner Leatherman attended the 130th anniversary of Zion Baptist Church.

Commissioner Cline wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day. He attended the Fairplay Fire Company, District 12, annual awards banquet. Commissioner Cline thanked County staff who participated in the Home Builders Show. He attended the Lifesaver Awards at the Public Safety Training Center, and he commented on the lifesaving call response of our volunteers, career emergency staff and first responders. Commissioner Cline attended the Emergency Communications Specialist Academy graduation at the Public Safety Training Center, and he congratulated the new 911 call dispatchers. He shared that he had breakfast at the recently reopened Clear Spring Diner with Senator Mike McKay and Delegate Terry Baker where they discussed current legislative items. Commissioner Cline attended the annual awards banquet at the Maugansville Volunteer Fire Company, and he commented on their call volume. He recognized Ed Shindle for 47 years of volunteerism to Maugansville Fire Company. Commissioner Cline attended the memorial service for Bob Moncrief at the Williamsport Fire Hall, and he commented on his over 50 years of service to the volunteer system. He attended the steeple dedication at Trinity Evangelical Church in Boonsboro. Commissioner Cline shared that this is the 10th Anniversary for the Commission on Aging Senior Center, and he recognized Ed Lough and Amy Olack for their service to the seniors.

Commissioner Barr commented on the many Community Concert events happening at the Maryland Theatre. He attended the Community Concert Series of the Next Generation Leahy Family from Canada and shared information on the family's musical talent. Commissioner Barr attended the annual

State Legislature prayer breakfast in Annapolis with former Senator Andrew Serafini. He shared information on the breakfast.

STAFF COMMENTS

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator presented the request for multiple letters of support and/or opposition regarding legislation:

Request for letter of opposition for SB282 regarding budget changes to the miscellaneous grant program's reduction from 1.5 million dollars in funding to \$750,000.00 for the Hagerstown Regional Airport Air Traffic Control Tower.

The Commissioners reached a unanimous consensus (4-0) for a letter of opposition as requested.

Request for letter of support for Cedar Ridge Children's Home and School for their application for funding to replace the wastewater treatment plant that services their Williamsport Maryland campus. They are not requesting any funding from the County.

The Commissioners reached a unanimous consensus (4-0) for a letter of support as requested.

Request for letter of support for the Flying Boxcars' efforts to host the Banana Ball World Classic at Meritus Park in Hagerstown. They are not requesting funding from the City; they are requesting the letter of support to attract the tour to Hagerstown.

The Commissioners reached a unanimous consensus (4-0) for a letter of support as requested.

Request for letter of Support for the Smithsburg Pump Station Replacement Project. The town of Smithsburg is requesting congressionally directed spending to fund the Wastewater Pump Station Replacement Project. The Board of County Commissioners has already allocated \$137,000.00 in American Rescue Plan funds. They are not requesting any additional money from the County.

The Commissioners reached a unanimous consensus (4-0) for a letter of support as requested.

Request for letter of support for SB714 Mobile Food Service Facilities and Semi Permanent Food Service Facilities to eliminate the requirement to have a lavatory or toilet facility.

The Commissioners reached a unanimous consensus (4-0) for a letter of support as requested.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator thanked the Parks and Recreation Department staff for coordinating the St. Patrick's Day Run with the City of Hagerstown's Parks and Recreation Department. She thanked staff who participated in the Home Builders Show. Ms. Gordon attended the Fairplay Community Volunteer Fire Company 12 annual awards banquet. She attended the Emergency Communications Center Academy Graduation ceremony, and she congratulated the graduates as they begin their County careers. Ms. Gordon extended her condolences to the family of Chief Site Inspector Rick Farley on his passing.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, read the County's statement regarding the proposed I.C.E. Processing Facility in the County. She shared information received from the County's meeting with DHS officials on March 16, 2026, regarding the proposed I.C.E. Processing Facility in the County.

RECESS

1, PUBLIC HEARING – MODIFICATION OF 911 FEES

President Barr convened a Public Hearing at 9:30 a.m. to obtain public comment for the proposed modification of the 9-1-1 Fee.

Zachary Kieffer, County Attorney; and Kelcee Mace, Chief Financial Officer, presented the request to adopt the proposed fee schedule for FY2027, as presented or as modified, at after the closure of the public hearing. Per Md. Code, Public Safety Article, § 1-311(c)(1), a county may impose a 9-1-1 fee of up to \$0.75 to be added to all current bills rendered for switched local exchange access service or CMRS or other 9-1-1 accessible service in the county. If revenues attributable to the county's 9-1-1 fee do not provide the revenues necessary to cover a county's operations costs for the 9-1-1 system, § 1-311(c)(2) allows a county to impose a 9-1-1 fee higher than \$0.75 to cover the county's projected operations costs for the 9-1-1 system. The proposed modification is to increase the fee from \$1.75 per month per bill to \$2.00 per month per bill. This fee was last increased on July 1, 2025.

The Public Hearing was opened for public comment. Public comments were received from:
Dave Williams
Taj Smith
Curtis Reigh
Shaun Porter

The Public Hearing was opened for Commissioner questions.
The Public Hearing was closed at 9:42 a.m.

The Public Hearing was opened for Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the Modification to the 911 Fees as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

2. PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL SURVEYORS' WEEK

The Washington County Board of County Commissioners presented a Proclamation for National Surveyors' Week to Robert L. Banzhoff, Jr., Licensed Surveyor, MGH, P.A.

3. SALARY STUDY COMMISSION FINAL REPORT

Zachary Kieffer, County Attorney; and Richard Wilson, Chair, Salary Study Commission, presented the recommendations of the Salary Study Commission on the salaries of several elected officials in Washington County to the Board of County Commissioners. The County is charged by the Local Government Article of the Maryland Code, Title 28, Subtitle 2, with conducting a Salary Study for several public positions every four years. The Salary Study is conducted by the Salary Study Commission. Any increase approved will be effective with the commencement of the next term of office. The Salary Study Commission is recommending the following salary increases: Mr. Kieffer noted a typo the judges of the Orphans Court are currently paid \$7,800.00 not \$8,000.00 however because the Board of County Commissioners are able to affix a salary that is less than recommended it should be fixed to show that the 8.14% increase as recommended by the commission to \$7,800.00 rounded to the nearest dollar would be \$8400.00. That is the only change needed. He noted that with the Treasurers salary there is no increase recommended as the recommendation is and has been \$6,000.00 because a separate section of the Local Government Article 16-205 allows the Board of County Commissioners to increase the Treasurers salary beyond the salary study recommendation. The Treasurer position is currently budgeted at an hourly rate of \$38.93 per hour, which equates to \$80,974.00 annually. Consistent with the other unclassified elected positions, Sheriff's Office and States Attorney, the Treasurer position is not subject to midterm salary adjustments. The Budget and Finance Department budgets annually for that salary; per the constitutional issue of precluding any midterm salary adjustment the salary would remain at the \$80,974.00. Mr. Wilson shared information

on the Treasurers' position and how the salary study commission reviewed comparable jurisdictions during their review of all of the positions for the salary study. He urged the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the recommendations for the salary increases.

The recommendations are:

County Commissioners: 8.14% increase in salary; Members increase from \$38,000.00 to \$41,000.00; The President increase from \$41,000.00 to \$44,000.00.

Board of Education: 8.14% increase in salary; Members increase from \$13,500.00 to \$14,600.00; President increase \$14,000.00 to \$15,100.00.

Board of Liquor License Commissioners: 8.14% increase; Members increase from \$11,600.00 to \$12,500.00; President increase from \$14,000.00 to \$15,100.00.

Judges of the Orphans' Court: 8.14% increase; Increase from \$7,800 to \$8,400.

Treasurer of Washington County: No increase; remain at \$6,000.00 per the study, however, subject to Local Government Article 16-205. Treasurer's position is in the FY27 budget at an hourly rate of \$38.93 (\$80,974 annually); unclassified and not subject to midterm salary adjustments unless approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to adopt the proposed recommendations of the Salary Study Commission for the County Commissioners as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

4. FY2027 GENERAL FUND BUDGET - PROPOSED

Kelcee Mace, Chief Financial Officer; and Kim Edlund, Director, Budget and Finance, presented for informational purposes the proposed first round of adjustments to the FY2027 General Fund Budget.

Commissioner Wagner requested additional funding for the Public Safety Training Center.

5. FY26 BUDGET AMENDMENT – TAX REVENUE

Kelcee Mace, Chief Financial Officer, presented the request to approve the FY26 budget amendment as presented or as amended by the BOCC. Staff is requesting approval for a budget amendment to increase certain tax revenue budgets based on current projection and recommended uses of increased funding. Staff is requesting approval to amend property and income tax revenue budgets based on year-to-date trends by \$11,000,000.00 in total. Additionally, staff is requesting to use those funds for the following purposes: \$242,900.00 for additional fees imposed by SDAT for a billing error; \$250,000.00 to replace funds in IT budget; \$151,000.00 for additional Motorola licensing fees for the upgraded public safety radio system; \$64,000.00 for additional protective gear for patrol officers; \$46,480.00 for Emergency Management Planner salary; \$5,000,000.00 for pension; \$4,226,800.00 for capital reserves; and \$1,018,820.00 to fund capital outlay items requested in the FY27 budget.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator recommended based on Commissioner Wagners request to move the funding allotted for the pension (5,000,000.00) and capital reserves (\$4,200,000.00) to be dedicated to the Public Safety Training Center High Base Training Facility additional funding of \$9,200,000.00.

Commissioner Cline supports Commissioner Wagner's recommendation to allot funding for the Public Safety Training Center.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the FY26 Budget Amendment with the changes as stated by the County Administrator. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

6. ARENA INSTALLMENT PAYMENT PROGRAM (IPP) STREAM RESTORATION EASEMENT

Chris Boggs, Rural Preservation Administrator, Planning and Zoning, presented the request to approve the Anthony P. Arena stream restoration easement. Currently, Mr. Arena is pursuing a stream restoration project on his property at 14847 Fairview Road in Clear Spring. This project will not only serve to improve the stream and its existing stream buffer on the property but will also entail adding a 4.56-acre conservation easement over the buffer area for a period of twenty (20) years. The project is being managed by Ecotone, a company specializing in stream restoration projects. The consensus of staff and the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board (Ag Board) is that the project is worthwhile and of merit, as it will improve the quality of the stream and does not take any agricultural land out of production. No County funds are being used for the procurement of this easement. Ecotone is pursuing funding through the Clean Water Commerce Act.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the Anthony P. Arena stream restoration easement as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. Boggs shared that the County has over 43,498 total acreages in land preservation easements.

7. CONSTRUCTION BID AWARD – KRETSINGER ROAD CULVERT REPLACEMENT

Scott Hobbs, Director, Engineering, presented the request to award the bid for the Kretsinger Road Culvert Replacement contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, Huntzberry Brothers, Inc. of Smithsburg, Maryland in the amount of \$436,995.00. This is a budgeted Capital Improvement Plan project. Total expenses are estimated at \$561,995.00; including \$436,995.00 for the project bid award and \$125,000.00 for other expenses such as inspection, testing, utilities, right-of-way, and construction contingency.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the bid for the Kretsinger Road Culvert Replacement contract to Huntzberry Brothers, Inc. as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

8. FILTER REPLACEMENT CHANGE ORDER FOR SMITHSBURG WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLAN ENR UPGRADE, PUR-1623

Joseph Moss, Deputy Director, Engineering, Water Quality, presented the request to approve the Engineering Design Services Proposal for the replacement of the existing filter units at Smithsburg WWTP in the amount of \$74,900.00. One of the requirements under the Scope of Work for the Smithsburg WWTP ENR Upgrade project was to clean and paint the interior walls of the steel vessels that contain the filter units. Funds have been transferred from Capital Improvement Project Account Change Order #20 has been signed and is attached to the Agenda Report Form.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator shared that the funds are recommended to be transferred from the Capacity Management Project to the Smithsburg Wastewater Treatment project in the amount of

\$74,900.00 therefore the motion needs to be amended to approve the attached budget adjustment that transfers these ARPA funds from one project to another.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the Engineering Design Services filter replacement change order for Smithsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant and as amended to include the budget adjustment. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

9. FISCAL YEAR 2026 ANNUAL CAPITAL TRANSIT GRANT – APPROVAL TO ACCEPT AWARDED FUNDING AND SUBMIT RATIFY GRANT CONTRACT

Shawn Harbaugh, Director, Transit; and Carsten Ahrens, Senior Grant Manager, Grant Management, presented the request to approve to accept awarded funding and ratification of the contract for a grant under the Federal Transit Act. Washington County Transit annually applies to the Maryland Department of Transportation / Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT/MTA) for Federal and State operational and capital grant funding. The grant funds are used to purchase and maintain needed equipment in Washington County. The fiscal year 2026 application requests \$1,525,784.00 in State and Federal funds from MTA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to subsidize the Transit system at current level of service. This would require a \$269,256.00 local share which has already been budgeted.

Commissioner Leatherman, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to approve to accept awarded funding and ratification of the contract for the Annual Capital Transit Grant under the Federal Transit Act as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

10. FISCAL YEAR 2026 ANNUAL TRANSIT OPERATIONAL GRANT – APPROVAL TO ACCEPT AWARDED FUNDING AND SUBMIT RATIFY GRANT CONTRACT

Shawn Harbaugh, Director, Transit; and Carsten Ahrens, Senior Grant Manager, Grant Management, presented the request to approve to accept awarded funding and ratification of the contract for a grant under the Federal Transit Act. Washington County Transit annually applies to the Maryland Department of Transportation / Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT/MTA) for Federal and State operational and operational grant funding. The grant funds are used to operate authorized transportation programs within Washington Cunt, which includes the Section 5307 Public Transportation Fixed Route program, the American Disability Act (ADA) Complementary Paratransit Program, the Statewide Special Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP) – aka: Ride Assist Voucher Program and the Capital Assistance Program (CAP). The fiscal year 2026 application requests \$2,308,698.00 in State and Federal funds from MTA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to subsidize the Transit system at current level of service. This would require a local commitment of \$1,804,984.00 which is already budgeted.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve to accept awarded funding and ratification of the contract for the Annual Transit Operational Grant under the Federal Transit Act as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

11. OFFICE OF PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Jennifer Bricker, Treatment Court Coordinator, Circuit Court for Washington County and Mark Singer, Court Administrator Circuit Court; and Richard Lesh, Grant Manager, Office of Grant Management, presented the request to approve the submittal of the FY2027 Office of Problem-Solving Court's Discretionary grant application requesting \$272,511.33 and accept funding as awarded. The Office of Problem-Solving Courts Discretionary Grant is to assist with the operational expenses and ancillary

services of the Drug Treatment Court. These grant funds will be used to operate the treatment court, which will provide supervision and access to services for court involved, substance dependent participants.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the submittal of the FY2027 Office of Problem-Solving Court's Discretionary grant application and accept funding as awarded as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

12. HAGERSTOWN REGIONAL AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve to accept the recommendation to appoint Rob Ferree to serve a third, three-year term from March 1, 2026, through February 28, 2029, on the Airport Advisory Commission. Mr. Ferree has had a one-year intervening period since he last served on the Commission. This is not a paid board.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Leatherman, moved to approve the appointment of Rob Ferree as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Leatherman, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to convene in closed session at 10:33 a.m. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

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 (1). Personnel matters are confidential.

- Discussion concerning staff member.
- Discussion of County staffing request.
- Discussion of discipline of County staff.
- Discussion of volunteer board assignment
- Discussion of volunteer board appointment
- Interviews for open County position

To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business to expand in the State. Open session discussion would divulge proprietary business information and also disadvantage County bargaining position.

- Discussion of business proposal.

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

- Update and legal advice pertaining to ongoing litigation
- Status update and legal advice from County Attorney on County-Involved legal matter.

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

- Discussion of a business proposal;
- Hiring recommendation for the Airline Station Leader, Hagerstown Regional Airport;
- Staffing recommendations for Airport Firefighting, Hagerstown Regional Airport;
- Discussion of discipline of County employee;
- Commissioner Assignments to County Boards and Commissions;
- Appointments to the Washington County Veterans Advisory Committee;

- Discussion regarding County Boards Historical Advisory Commission and the Historical Advisory Committee;
- Received legal advice and updates on pending litigation matters for which the County is a party.

Present during closed session at various times were Commissioners John F. Barr, Jeffrey A. Cline, , 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; Dave Mason, Interim Director, Environmental Management; Andrew Eshleman, Director, Public Works; Scott Hobbs, Director, Engineering; Jennifer Kinzer, Interim Director, Planning and Zoning; Jennifer Kinzer, Interim Director, Planning and Zoning; Meghan Jenkins, GIS Coordinator/Historic Preservation Planner, Planning and Zoning; Jonathan Horowitz, Director, Business and Economic Development; Linda Spence, Financial Programs Administrator, Business and Economic Development; Joe Lee; Jung Lee; Gordon Poffenberger; David Chisholm, Deputy Director, Emergency Services; Oley Griffith, Coordinator-Volunteer Services, Emergency Services; Interviewees and Chip Rose, Director Human Resources.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to reconvene in open session at 12:57 p.m. The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to adjourn at 2:57 p.m. The motion passed unanimously (3-0).



Dawn L. Marcus, *County Clerk*