



Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland

Open Session Minutes

February 6, 2024

STATE OF THE COUNTY PRESENTATION

The Commissioners attended the State of the County Presentation at Fountain Head Country Club, 13316 Fountain Head Road, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, hosted by the Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber of Commerce.

The Commissioners departed for 100 West Washington Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, at 9:00 a.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A moment of silence was observed, 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 10:02 a.m. with the following members present: Vice President Jeffrey A. Cline, Commissioner Randall E. Wagner, Commissioner Derek Harvey and Commissioner Wayne K. Keefer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the minutes of January 30, 2024. The motion passed 4-0. Commissioner Keefer abstained.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Keefer congratulated Kirk Downey on his appointment. He extended his appreciation to the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the State of the County and recognized Danielle Weaver for her video narration. Commissioner Keefer requested consideration to bring the State of the County presentation in the evening for citizen participation.

Commissioner Wagner thanked staff for attending the State of the County and recognized Danielle Weaver. He attended the Fire Recruit Graduation ceremony and thanked staff and the instructors. Commissioner Wagner attended the evening meeting in Maugansville noting the meeting was well attended and shared his appreciation of staff's support.

Commissioner Harvey attended the Fire Recruit Graduation ceremony acknowledging the speakers, professional aspects, attendance, and he commented on the future growth and development of the program. He requested the County Administrator and President Barr follow up with the City of Hagerstown to get staff together regarding the water issue. Commissioner Harvey shared the Maryland Supreme Court's decision regarding the State Board of Elections Washington County voting sites, overturning the lower court's decision. The next step will be a mediation to take place in February.

Commissioner Cline thanked the Chamber of Commerce, attendees and staff who attended the State of the County. He represented the Commissioners at the Fireman's Funeral of Harry Gossert. Commissioner Cline attended the Fire Recruit Graduation ceremony. He attended the annual

Ground Hog Day celebration, thanking the volunteers and recognizing President Barr for his event spirit. Commissioner Cline attended the evening meeting in Maugansville, thanking staff for their preparation and detailed answers to the citizens.

Commissioner Barr recognized Danielle Weaver and her staff for the outstanding video they created for the State of the County, he requested access for the public to view the video. He participated in the Ground Hog Day festivities at the Ag Center. Commissioner Barr commented on the 90 Day Legislative Session in Annapolis as he will meet with MACo tomorrow and he discussed the importance of attending the Legislative meetings.

STAFF COMMENTS

Chip Rose, Director of Human Resources presented the recommendation to advertise for the vacant County Attorney position at a Grade 20.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline moved to advertise for the vacant County Attorney position as presented by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Chip Rose, Director of Human Resources presented the recommendation to appoint Zachary Kieffer as the Interim County Attorney effective February 17, 2024, with a temporary immediate 10% salary increase or \$117,511.00/annually.

Kirk Downey, County Attorney recommended amending the motion to be effective upon his resignation date, as yet to be determined.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline moved to appoint Zachary Kieffer as Interim County Attorney as presented by staff and amended to be effective upon the resignation date, as yet to be determined, of the current County Attorney. The motion passed unanimously.

Chip Rose, Director of Human Resources presented the recommendation to advertise for the vacant Deputy Director of Emergency Communications at a Grade 16.

Commissioner discussion regarding changes to the position and the intent of the future of the department.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator shared there will be no changes to the Deputy Director Position, it will remain a Grade 16.

Chip Rose shared the future intent is to move Emergency Communications under the Department of Emergency Management. The Deputy Director of Emergency Communications will fall under the Director of Emergency Management.

Commissioner Cline, seconded by Commissioner Harvey moved to approve the recommendation to advertise for the vacant Deputy Director of Emergency Communications as presented by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Chip Rose, Director of Human Resources presented the recommendation to approve Kelly Fisher as the Interim Deputy Director of the Emergency Communications Center effective February 3, 2024, with an upgraded salary increase of 10% or \$77,294.00 annually.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline moved to approve the Kelly Fisher as the Interim Deputy Director of the Emergency Communications Center as presented by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Chip Rose, Director of Human Resources presented the recommendation to advertise for the Solid Waste, Office Associate position at a Grade 9 and allow for a 90 day overlap for training.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline moved to advertise for the Solid Waste, Office Associate position and allow for a 90 day overlap for training as presented by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve the re-appointment of George Stone to serve a second, full three-year term, from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2026, on the Hagerstown Regional Airport Advisory Commission. This is not a paid board.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the appointment of George Stone as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve the appointment of Jeanine Salifou to serve a first, full three-year term, from February 1, 2024, through January 31, 2027, on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. This is not a paid board.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the appointment of Jeanine Salifou as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve the appointment of Angela Yamashita to serve a first, full three-year term, from February 1, 2024, through January 31, 2027, on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the appointment of Angela Yamashita as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve the appointment of Eric Schwartz to serve a first, full three-year term, from February 1, 2024, through January 31, 2027, on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Commissioner Cline, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve the appointment of Eric Schwartz as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve the appointment of Luis Flores to serve a first, full three-year term, from February 1, 2024, through January 31, 2027, on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Keefer, moved to approve the appointment of Luis Flores as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.

Dawn Marcus, County Clerk, presented the request to approve the appointment of Fatima Sakarya to serve a first, full three-year term, from February 1, 2024, through January 31, 2027, on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Commissioner Keefer, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve the appointment of Fatima Sakarya as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator commented that she reached out to the City of Hagerstown yesterday, regarding the January 9, 2024, joint meeting directive for staff to work on Water System issues and did not receive positive feedback. She will reach out to the City again. She attended several Washington County Delegation and MACo meetings regarding pending legislation that will impact the County. Ms. Gordon attended the Maugansville evening meeting thanking staff for their attendance and thorough responses to the citizens. She attended the Fire Recruit Graduation ceremony congratulating the recruits. Ms. Gordon thanked Public Relations for their coordination and production of the State of the County video. She attended the Ground Hog Day event and commended staff. The next meeting will be February 13, 2024.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

None

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED FY2025 GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (WCPS)

Dr. David Sovine, Superintendent of Schools; Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer; Washington County Public Schools presented the Superintendent's Recommended FY2025 General Fund Budget request for discussion with the Commissioners. The Superintendent's Recommended FY2025 General Fund Budget as scheduled to be adopted by the Board of Education on February 20, 2024, as the FY2025 Draft General Fund Budget. The Board of Education is currently scheduled to have a public hearing during their business meeting on March 19, 2024, and to adopt the budget as their final FY2025 General Fund Budget at their business meeting on April 16, 2024. WCPS requested \$118,737,360 for FY25 which is an increase of 8.9% over FY24. They shared a Power Point presentation and provided a copy of the recommended budget to the Commissioners and discussed the effects of the State Blueprint on the budget, staffing and school class size and salaries.

The Commissioners shared comments regarding the shift of staffing and funding to schools, criteria of the State Blueprint, penalty to rural schools, enrollment, salary compensation and retention, timelines for staff to present Board of Education budgets, and behavioral and truancy issues that utilize funds from the schools.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator shared statistics on enrollment, salaries, county contributions and clarification on the county requirements.

WASHINGTON COUNTY FREE LIBRARY BUDGET PRESENTATION

Jenny L. Backos, Executive Director, Washington County Free Library presented the annual State of the Library and Budget Request. The Washington County Free Library is requesting and increase in support of \$104,090.00, she shared a power point presentation and provided a handout to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners shared comments regarding staff salaries, library certifications, transferring of books, display concerns at the Smithsburg library, daytime shelter security concerns, plans for Williamsport renovation.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator requested information regarding plans for unrestricted cash and investment funds of \$13.9 million.

RECESS

WASHINGTON COUNTY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS – UPDATE AND FY25 SUPPORT REQUEST

Sarah J. Hall, Director; Ted Reeder, Treasurer; and Elizabeth “Beth” Smith, Director of Development, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts presented an update and annual support request for FY25 is \$140,000, which represents a \$3,380 increase over FY24. They shared a power point presentation.

The Commissioners shared comments on the children’s programs and quality of the art collections, the capital project.

FORT RITCHIE-CASCADE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES DESIGNATION RENEWAL

Jill Baker, Director, Planning and Zoning; Jennifer Kinzer, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning Move to direct staff to submit/not submit the application to renew the Sustainable Communities Designation for the Fort Ritchie – Cascade area. A Sustainable Communities designation was approved for the Fort Ritchie – Cascade area in February 2014 and was renewed in February 2019. The designation expires 5 years after approval and the Department of Housing and Community Development has provided positive guidance for a second renewal. The designation provides access to a toolbox of revitalization financing programs and tax credit incentives for the designated area. The incentives are available to local governments, community development organizations, nonprofits and some small businesses.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to submit the application to renew the Sustainable Communities Designation for the Fort Ritchie -Cascade area. as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

REISER RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM (RLP) EASEMENT

Jill Baker, Director, Planning and Zoning presented the request to approve the Bert C. & Stefanie J. Reiser RLP Easement project, in the amount of \$199,430.00 for 56.9 easement acres, paid for 100% by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and to adopt an ordinance approving the easement purchase and to authorize the execution of the necessary documentation to finalize the easement purchase. The Reiser property is located at 2045 Reed Rd., Knoxville, and the easement will serve to permanently preserve a valuable agricultural, scenic and environmental property in the County.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the Bert C. & Stefanie J. Reiser RLP Easement project, in the amount of \$199,430.00 for 56.9 easement acres, paid for 100% by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and to adopt an ordinance approving the easement purchase and to authorize the execution of the necessary documentation to finalize the easement purchase as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. ORD-2024-03 is recorded among the Acts, Ordinances, and Resolutions of Washington County and the originals are in the County Commissioners' Office.

CONTRACT AWARD (PUR-1636) – RESH SOLAR II

Brandi Naugle, Buyer, Purchasing; Dave Mason, Deputy Director, Solid Waste presented the request to award a contract for the Resh Solar II project for the Division of Environmental Management Department of Solid Waste to the responsive, responsible firm, Community Power Group, LLC, of Washington, DC who submitted the Total Lump Sum (Verbiage corrected to Total Proposed Yearly Sum) in the amount of \$95,000.00. No local or federal funds will be required for this project. The County will receive the revenues from the land lease.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to award a contract for the Resh Solar II project for the Division of Environmental Management Department of Solid Waste to the responsive, responsible firm, Community Power Group, LLC, in the amount of \$95,000.00 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Keefer, moved to convene in closed at 12:19 p.m. 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-and To consider the investment of public funds.

In closed session, the Commissioners discussed appointments, employment and personnel matters and the investment of public funds.

Present during closed session were Commissioners John F. Barr, Jeffrey A. Cline, Randall E. Wagner, Derek Harvey and Wayne K. Keefer. Also present was Dawn Marcus, County Clerk; Kirk C. Downey, County Attorney; Michelle Gordon, County Administrator; Also present at various times were; Deputy County Attorney, Zachary Kiefer; Jonathan A. Horowitz, Director, Business and Economic Development; Dan Spedden, President, Hagerstown/Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau; Chip Rose, Director, Human Resources; Kelcee Mace, Chief Financial Officer; R. David Hays, Director, Emergency Services; Kevin Lewis, Deputy Director, Emergency Services; and Greg Cartrette, Director/Code Official, Permits and Inspections.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to reconvene in open session at 1:33 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to adjourn at 1:33 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of County Commissioners, County Clerk, County Administrator, Couty Attorney, and their staff attended a mandatory County Employee Harassment Prevention Training at 100 West Washington Street, Suite 1115 Hagerstown, MD.



Dawn L. Marcus, County Clerk