



Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland

Open Session Minutes

April 16, 2024

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 9:03 a.m. with the following members present: Vice-President Jeffrey A. Cline, Commissioner Derek Harvey, Commissioner Randall E. Wagner and Commissioner Wayne K. Keefer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Keefer, moved to approve the minutes of April 9, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Harvey did not have any comments this morning.

Commissioner Keefer did not have any comments this morning.

Commissioner Wagner recognized dignitaries in the audience and welcomed staff. He attended a grave marking ceremony honoring Patriot Captain John Miller at St. Paul's Lutheran Church held by the Sons of the American Revolution.

Commissioner Cline expressed his condolences to the family and friends of Boonsboro Chief of Police Kevin Morgan. He recognized 911 Dispatchers for Telecommunications week and shared in April 2022 Keith Bowen retired as a 911 Dispatcher after 34 years of service, he was referred to as the "calm voice". Commissioner Cline shared this week is Public Work Zone Safety week to bring awareness to keep our workers safe and reminded all to slow down while driving in a work zone. He attended the Home School Safety Days Event at the Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Department. Commissioner Cline attended the Dementia Friendly, Washington County, Maryland meeting and shared the training seminars will soon be coming out. He attended the Williamsport 89th Anniversary of the Rockville Tragedy and discussed the impact of the tragedy. As a result of the tragedy, safety measures were implemented in the US at railroad crossings by President Roosevelt. He attended the Americas Hauling for Hope Greenhouse groundbreaking ceremony which will provide fresh vegetables for our seniors.

Commissioner Barr attended the Williamsport 89th Anniversary of the Rockville Tragedy. He attended multiple events at the Maryland Theatre where Dr. Elizabeth "Betty" Morgan was recognized for her service as School Superintendent. Ms. Morgan was an integral part in the launch of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts. Commissioner Barr attended the Dueling Pianos event Friday evening and the comedy event on Saturday evening recognizing local comedian Will Abeles. He shared upcoming events to include the Clara Barton Memorial Dedication on May 7, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at Park Circle.

STAFF COMMENTS

Chip Rose, Director, Human Resources, presented the request to retitle IT job from Cloud Solutions Architect to Systems Engineer. The position will remain a Grade 15.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve the naming of the IT job title to Systems Engineer as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Chip Rose, Director, Human Resources, presented the request to promote Kelly Fisher as the Deputy Director of Emergency Communications at a Grade 16, Step 10 / \$91,624.00 annually, effective April 13, 2024.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Cline, moved to approve the promotion of Kelly Fisher as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Chip Rose, Director, Human Resources, presented the request to hire Darren J. Pevarnik as the Deputy Code Official, Permits and Inspections at a Grade 16, Step 5 / \$80,995.00 annually. Effective date to be determined.

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, moved to approve the hire of Darren J. Pevarnik as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Scott Hobbs, Director, Engineering, presented for information purposes the MDOT Priority Letter with focus on the following projects.

- I81 widening.
- I70 at MD65 interchanges.
- Revenue replacement for HUR.
- HGR runway and airfield rehabilitation and lighting / marking upgrades, other upgrades to terminals, passenger bridges, roadways, etc.
- Transit-matching funds for increased ridership.
- Sidewalks, railroad crossing study.
- Rt11 bridge replacement in Williamsport.

Mr. Hobbs thanked Andrew Eshelman, Kevin Cerrone, Neil Doran and Matt Mullinex for their assistance. He shared the letter is in preparation for the MDOT/CTP meeting in the fall; and, throughout the year he meets with the town managers to discuss the needs of the municipalities. He also has quarterly meetings with the state where concerns are brought up regarding the transportation priorities.

Commissioner discussion regarding round table meetings with the Secretary of Transportation at MACo to discuss the priorities and projects, hope for future funding for I-81 for Phase 2 and concerns regarding the cost exceeding before the project is done. In addition, concerns were shared regarding replacement of the 522 bridge and adding that to our priority list, obtaining input from Williamsport and the municipalities, Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization involvement and long-range transportation plans.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, commented on the importance of the Highway User Revenue request topic as the gas tax has declined due to use of electric vehicles. The state is struggling to find

funds for infrastructure, roads and bridges and this is an important priority. She shared the cumulative loss of HUR is eighty (80) to ninety (90) million dollars over the years.

Commissioner discussion regarding the State funding pulled during the O'Malley Administration to balance the State budget at loss to the County of 90% of HUR funding from nine (9) million dollars to less than one (1) million dollars per year. We are currently down to three (3) million dollars budgeted annually in Highway User Revenue as opposed to the nine (9) million dollars we previously received.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, commented on the building codes informational meeting scheduled for Friday, April 19, 2024, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The County adopted the 2021 Maryland Building Performance Standards and the 2021 existing Building Code for Trades, Local Amendments and related Ordinances and Resolutions. These building codes will become effective on July 1, 2024. Greg Cartrette, Code Official/ Director of Permits and Inspections, will also hold additional informative meetings in May and June to make sure builders, residents and businesses are able to transition to the new building codes.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, presented a request for approval to advertise for the Operations Manager, 911 Emergency Communications at a Grade 14. This position is needed due to the promotion of Kelly Fisher.

Commissioner Cline, seconded by Commissioner Keefer, moved to approve to advertise for the Operations Manager as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Mary Heeringa, WCTA, shared information on the Maryland's Blueprint for the Future and requested Commissioner support for funding the School Board Budget.

Dan Tedrick, Clear Spring, invited the Commissioners to the National Workers Memorial Day Celebration, Friday, April 26, at the U.A.W. 171 Hall, at 10:00 a.m.

YOUTH MERITORIOUS AWARD PRESENTATION

Richard Lesh, Grant Manager, Grant Management; presented that throughout the school year, the Board of County Commissioners present "Youth Meritorious Awards" to students attending both public and private schools or those being home schooled in Washington County. The following individuals have been selected based on their scholastic achievement, leadership qualities, community service performed or other positive contributions to their school and community.

These exceptional youths have consistently worked and distinguished themselves as model students and members of our County. The Board of County Commissioners recognized the following four youth today:

Justin Grabenstein – Northern Middle School, Parent(s) –
Kimberlie Grabenstein, Nominated by Merrideth Wile

Zander Hine – North Hagerstown High School
Parent(s) – Kim Hine, Nominated by Alexandra Lee

Makynzie Golden – Hancock Middle Senior High School
Parent(s) – Janelle Golden, Nominated by Amber Rubeck

Faith Demuth -Clear Spring Middle School
Parent(s) – Amy Demuth, Nominated by Megan Ruthvin

PROCLAMATION FOR MS AWARENESS WEEK

Michael Tomlin, Member, National Multiple Sclerosis Society – Greater DC-Maryland Chapter, shared his story regarding his MS diagnosis and requested that the Commissioners recognize MS Awareness Week. The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County presented a proclamation to Mr. Tomlin for MS Awareness Week.

PRESENTATION BY THE WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Beth Harvey, President, Skyla Heise, and Elise Weber members, Washington County Commission for Women, presented that April marks the 37th anniversary of the Washington County Commission for Women. Ms. Harvey shared the multiple meetings and briefings that they have attended and their goals. She attended the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame Induction in Annapolis, and noted that each year, five(5) high school recipients are recognized with the Maryland Young Leaders Award. Applications will open in the fall. The Commission would like to nominate a young woman who is an emerging leader from Washington County. Ms. Harvey recognized Washington County Woman, Mary Lemist Titcomb, the last to be voted into the in the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame. In May, they will host Delegate Brooke Grossman at their monthly meeting and welcomed all to attend. Ms. Heise shared the Commission is promoting local women in Government and recognized public leadership role models: County Administrator, Michelle Gordon; Ms. Gordon’s Executive Assistant, Michelle Priebe; County Clerk, Dawn Marcus; and Chief Financial Officer, Kelcee Mace. Ms. Heise also recognized the County’s elected women: State’s Attorney, Gina Cirincion; The Honorable Lacy Flook at the Register of Wills; The Honorable Debra Breeding at the Orphans Court; Delegate Brooke Grossman, City of Hagerstown; City of Hagerstown Mayor Takesha Martinez; and women across the state and county who sit on the City Councils and School Boards. She shared the Commission oversaw a Financial Literacy Program for women in recovery at Brooke’s House. Elise Weber shared that they are looking to build student representation on the Commission to provide a look into local politics, networking and resume building with information on the positions. She shared information regarding their partnership with TEDx which showcases five (5) Washington County Women each year. They recognized two (2) young women accomplishing great things, Tulia Bhowmik, a fifth grader at Cascade Elementary School, recently won the “Best of County” Arbor Day poster Contest promoted by the Washington County Forestry Board. This honor showcased Tulia’s artwork on the state level for judging by First Lady Moore. They also recognized the winner of Miss Washington County, Sabrina Frost. They shared Ms. Frost’s many accomplishments. They also recognized Jen Pfifer, Board President of Miss Washington County.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT(S) – EMS TRANSITION 2024

David Hays, Director, Emergency Services, presented the request to approve a Budget Transfers related to the cost encumbered for additional physicals (Human Resources) and wages, pension, health insurance, workers comp., uniforms and personal protective equipment included in the attached budget transfer. \$45,000.00 transfer to Human Resources for physicals, etc. and \$709,640.00 for wages, uniforms, pension and other county employee related costs.

Commissioner request for clarification that the funds are already in the budget.

Michelle Gordon, County Administrator, clarified the funding is already in the budget this request is for a transfer of the funds.

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to approve the budget adjustment as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Harvey, moved to convene in closed at 10:01 a.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 consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter. The motion passed unanimously.

In closed session, the Commissioners discussed boards and commissions, personnel matters, and a legal matter.


Present during closed session were Commissioners John F. Barr, Jeffrey A. Cline, Derek Harvey, Wayne Keefer and Randall E Wagner. Also, present in closed session was: Dawn Marcus, County Clerk; Zachary J. Kieffer, County Attorney; and Michelle Gordon, County Administrator. Also, present in closed session at various times, were: Rosalinda Pascual, Assistant County Attorney; Aaron Weiss, Assistant County Attorney; R. David Hays, Director, Emergency Services; Andrew Eshleman, Director Public Works; Neil Doran, Airport Director; and, Chip Rose, Director Human Resources.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Keefer, moved to reconvene in open session at 11:12 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Harvey, seconded by Commissioner Keefer, moved to adjourn at 11:12 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.



Dawn L. Marcus, *County Clerk*

