

## **Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland**

February 4, 2025

Theodore J. Elder, president  
Eric J. Fiori, vice president  
Caryn G. Abbott  
Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.  
Madison J. Bunting, Jr. (Absent)  
Joseph M. Mitrecic  
Diana Purnell

Following a motion by Commissioner Fiori, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, with Commissioner Bunting absent, the commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to discuss legal and personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions (GP) Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions permitted under the provisions of Section GP 3-104. Also present at the closed session were Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Candace Savage, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, and Human Resources Director Stacey Norton and Deputy Director Pat Walls, and Attorney Skip Cornbrooks. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: personnel updates, hiring Jason Wilford as a general laborer/maintenance worker I within the Maintenance Division, Randolph "Randy" Nock as a utility mechanic I within the Solid Waste Division, and Clive Stampp as senior accountant in the Treasurer's Office; discussing the acquisition of real property for a public purpose; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions, including discussing potential board appointments.

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:45 a.m.

Commissioner Bunting was absent from the open and closed session meetings.

After the closed session, the commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Elder called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Pastor Davida Washington of Liberty Church on the Rock in Snow Hill and pledge of allegiance, announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session.

The commissioners reviewed and approved the open and closed session minutes of their January 14 and 21, 2024 meetings as presented.

The commissioners presented a proclamation to Rick Stephens, the welding instructor and SkillsUSA advisor for Worcester Technical High School recognizing February 2-8, 2025 as SkillsUSA Week in Worcester County.

The commissioners presented commendations to the Stephen Decatur High School

(SDHS) Seahawks Football Team for winning the 2024 MPSSAA Class 2A State Championship, the SDHS Seahawks Unified Tennis Team for winning the 2024 Maryland State Tennis Championship, the Pocomoke High School (PHS) Warriors Field Hockey Team for winning the 2024 Maryland Class 1A Field Hockey Championship, and the PHS Warriors Boys 4x100 Meter Relay Team for winning the 2024 1A State Championship.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved by consent agenda item numbers 3-8 and 10-12 as follows: declining to purchase surplus property owned by the Maryland Department of Transportation; adopting amended Bill 24-11 (Zoning – Private, noncommercial storage buildings in the A-1 Agricultural District) as conceptually approved on January 21, 2025; appointing the Honorable Victor K. Butanis to serve on a trial board being scheduled by the Town of Ocean City; sponsoring 2025 employee recognition events; Ocean City Health Department renovations totaling \$80,477.95 to be completed in-house by the Maintenance Division; awarding the contract to Trane Technologies for four new HVAC systems for the Commission on Aging totaling \$62,455.51 and two new HVAC roof-top systems for \$68,750 for the Worcester County Government Center; advertising for the position of Emergency Services director; adopting Resolution No. 25-2 creating the Newark Water and Sewer Advisory Board; and sending a letter requesting the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services declare the aged communications shelter at the Water Tower in Snow Hill to be surplus property and make it available for public and private sector broadband providers.

Pursuant to the request of Development Review and Permitting (DRP) Director Jennifer Keener and upon a motion by Commissioner Fiori, the commissioners voted 5-1, with Commissioner Bertino voting in opposition, to file a SolarAPP+ grant application to cover costs within Development Review and Permitting to implement mandatory solar plan review software under the 2024 Brighter Tomorrow Act. In response to questions by Commissioner Bertino, Ms. Keener advised that staff would insert County amendments into the software, including certain exemptions, such as flood zones.

Pursuant to the request of Procurement Officer Nicholas Rice and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners voted 5-1, with Commissioner Mitrecic voting in opposition, to award the contract to Fidelity Power Systems for the purchase of a 100kw mobile, towable generator and necessary accessories totaling \$144,075.49 for Emergency Services.

In response to questions by Commissioner Mitrecic, Emergency Services Deputy Director James Hamilton stated that this unit could have been utilized twice in the past year when generators used by Emergency Services went down, and it could be loaned to other County departments on an as-needed basis. Public Works Director Dallas Baker confirmed that Public Works operates 80 generators throughout the county.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved the Riddle Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant Change Order No. 1 for totaling \$228,070 for a membrane control system and to cover a shortfall in grant funding. In response to a question by Commissioner Fiori, Mr. Baker stated that the contractor amended the timeline to complete Riddle Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant repairs from December 2025 to January 2026.

Pursuant to the request of Mr. Rice and Mr. Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously accepted the contract from Davis, Bowen, & Friedel totaling \$42,685 for architectural and engineering services related to the Isle of Wight building.

Pursuant to the request of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Elder to sign the FY26 Rural Legacy Area (RLA) application for the Dividing Creek RLA and the Bishopville-Showell RLA for grant funds totaling \$6,065,000.

The commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon nominations by Commissioner Fiori, the commissioners unanimously agreed to reappoint Gail Fowler and Deborah Stanley to the Water and Sewer Advisory Council for the West Ocean City Service Area, and to appoint Kevin Kinsey, Charles Crawford, Aaron Lovegrove, and Gerry Horner to the Water and Sewer Advisory Council for the Mystic Harbor Service Area.

Upon nominations by Commissioner Abbott, the commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Jim Scott, Susan Age, and Jenny Mumford to the Water and Sewer Advisory Council for the Newark Service Area.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young and Bedrock Advocacy and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously authorized Commissioner President Ted Elder to sign an open letter to the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) that will accompany letters from other local public officials, lawmakers, and the local business community opposing the PSC's recent decision to approve US Wind's rebid proposal to include the lease area of competitor Orsted's canceled project. The letter was revised to include language advising that Maryland fishing quotas must be offloaded in the State of Maryland.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on February 18, 2025.