

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

November 1, 2022

Joseph M. Mitrecic, President  
Theodore J. Elder, Vice President  
Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.  
Madison J. Bunting, Jr.  
James C. Church  
Joshua C. Nordstrom  
Diana Purnell

Following a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, seconded by Commissioner Elder, the commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting 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, Human Resources Director Stacey Norton, Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados, and Parks Superintendent Jacob Stephens. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: rehiring Larry Lynch as a natural resources inspector II within Environmental Programs; advertising to fill the position of Human Resources deputy director; reviewing a personnel summary update and certain personnel matters; acquisition of real property for a public purpose; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions, including receiving an FY22 monthly financial update and discussing potential board appointments.

Following a motion by Commissioner Bertino, seconded by Commissioner Nordstrom, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:24 a.m.

After the closed session, the commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Mitrecic called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Reverend Mary Haggard, senior pastor of the Snow Hill-Newark United Methodist Church Circuit, 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 October 18, 2022 meeting as presented.

The commissioners presented a years-of-service commendation to Anne C. Turner who is retiring following 24 years of service to the Worcester County Circuit Court.

The commissioners presented a proclamation to Worcester County Department of Social Services staff recognizing November as National Adoption Month to raise awareness of County youth in foster care who need stable homes and to honor those who have dedicated their lives to serving these children.

In a related matter, the commissioners also presented a commendation to Christine Brown to honor her and her husband, Michael, for being named the 2022 Worcester County Adoptive Parents of the Year by DSS.

The commissioners presented a proclamation recognizing November 13-19, 2022 as American Education Week to Worcester County Teachers Association President Beth Shockley Lynch and Board of Education (BOE) Superintendent Louis H. Taylor.

The commissioners presented a proclamation to Lauren Blair of Coastal Hospice recognizing November as Coastal Hospice Month and honored this outstanding group of healthcare professionals for providing four decades of care to County residents and their families.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously approved by consent agenda item numbers 2-4 as follows: out-of-state travel for three Recreation and Parks staff members to attend the National Recreation and Parks Association Event Management School in Wheeling, West Virginia; awarding the low bid of \$5,170 to rehabilitate a house in Berlin to Poseidon Plumbing and Home Services, contingent upon approval of a waiver from the Department of Housing and Urban Development; bid documents for consulting services to implement a public engagement program as part of the State-mandated update to the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan.

The commissioners met with Mr. Taylor to review the BOE's proposed FY24 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) request, which includes planning and design funding for Buckingham Elementary School (BES) and future roof replacement projects for Snow Hill Middle School and Cedar Chapel Special School, Pocomoke Elementary School, and Worcester Technical High School. Mr. Taylor stated that verification that the commissioners have approved the FY24 CIP must be submitted to the Maryland Interagency Committee for Public School Construction (IAC) no later than November 30, 2022. He further advised that the CIP is consistent with the Worcester County CIP and incorporates all prior recommendations of the commissioners regarding future school construction needs.

In response to questions by Commissioner Bunting, Mr. Taylor advised that they will develop a stakeholders committee for the BES project. Commissioner Bunting noted how well the stakeholders committee worked during the Showell Elementary School replacement project and expressed interest in serving on the BES stakeholders committee. Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously approved the BOE FY24 CIP as presented.

The commissioners met with Mr. Thompson to review a proposed bond resolution. Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously adopted Resolution No. 22-26, approving the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland Consolidated Public Improvement Bonds, 2022 Series, which provide \$28,625,000 to finance all or a portion of the costs of construction of the Stephen Decatur Middle School addition project, phase 2 improvements to the Worcester County Jail, public safety logistical storage facility, and Ocean Pines Service Area belt filter press. Mr. Thompson advised that the bond sale will occur two

weeks from November 1, 2022. In response to questions by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Thompson advised that it is likely the County will secure an interest rate of about 4.5% based on current rates.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, the commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Mitrecic to sign the Agreement of Sale for the purchase of a Rural Legacy Area (RLA) easement between Truitts Landing Farm, LLC (Seller) and the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland (Buyer), with FY21 Coastal Bays RLA funds to cover the cost of an easement on approximately 90.44 acres of land located on the northeast side of Truitts Landing Road in Snow Hill and identified on Tax Map 80 as Parcel 10. This property, is to be purchased at a cost of \$2,302 per acre. Mr. Mitchell stated that the property is located in the Chincoteague Bay watershed and is nearly surrounded by adjacent protected farmlands, and the owner will surrender all subdivision and development rights, save the boundary line adjustment removing 1.7 acre, which will be added to Parcel 53.

The commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Elder, the commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint Kerrie Bunting to the Local Development Council for the Ocean Downs Casino.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on November 15, 2022.