

**County Council of Dorchester County
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2018**

The County Council of Dorchester County met in regular session on May 1, 2018 with the following members present: Ricky C. Travers, President; Tom C. Bradshaw, Vice President; William V. Nichols; Rick M. Price and Don B. Satterfield. Also present were E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney; Jeremy Goldman, County Manager; and Donna Lane, Executive Administrative Specialist.

REGULAR SESSION

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Travers led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- APRIL 17, 2018

The Council approved the minutes of April 17, 2018.

APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

The Council approved the vouchers as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Travers reported total cash and investments as \$7,100,190.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

The Council convened into Regular Session on May 1, 2018 at 5:45 p.m. in Room 110, County Office Building, 501 Court Lane, Cambridge, Maryland 21613 and motioned to adjourn into Closed Session pursuant to Title 3 of the General Provisions Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, pursuant to §3-305(b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction. Present were: Ricky C. Travers, President; Tom C. Bradshaw, Vice President; William V. Nichols; Rick M. Price and Don B. Satterfield. Also present were E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney; Jeremy Goldman, County Manager; and Donna Lane, Executive Administrative Specialist. Voting in favor of the Closed Session were all of the present Council Members.

The Council convened in a Closed Session on May 1, 2018 at 5:46 p.m. to discuss the following items: 1) approved request of Soil Conservation District Manager to hire an individual to fill a

grant funded planner vacancy by a 5 to 0 vote; and, 2) approved the requests of Emergency Services Director, by a 5 to 0 vote to: a) change an on-call Paramedic to full time status to fill a vacancy; b) hire an individual to fill a Paramedic vacancy; c) hire three individuals as on call Paramedics; and; d) hire two individuals as on call Emergency Medical Technicians.

Present were: Ricky C. Travers, President; Tom C. Bradshaw, Vice President; William V. Nichols; Rick M. Price and Don B. Satterfield. Also present were E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney; Jeremy Goldman, County Manager; and Donna Lane, Executive Administrative Specialist. The purpose of the Closed Session is also set forth in the Written Statement of Closing a Meeting Under the Open Meetings Act, which will be provided upon request. Voting in favor of the Closed Session were all of the present Council members.

REGULAR SESSION

PROCLAMATION - DAY OF PRAYER

The Council presented a Proclamation proclaiming May 3, 2018 as the Day of Prayer in Dorchester County.

PROCLAMATION - CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WEEK

The Council presented a Proclamation proclaiming May 6 to May 12, 2018 as Correctional Officers Week.

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney, said this is the first of two public hearings on the proposed FY19 budget.

Katie Holbrook, resident, and President of the Dorchester Educators, said this is her tenth year as a teacher for the Dorchester County public school system. On behalf of Dorchester Educators she asked the Council to consider amending the proposed budget to fund the public school system above maintenance of effort. She expressed concern about safety in the public schools. She explained that the Dorchester Educators have advocated to the Board of Education for increased safety measures including training.

Mr. Merryweather said the public will have future opportunities to speak about the proposed FY 2019 budget. Jeremy Goldman, County Manager, noted that the next public hearing is scheduled for May 8th and the budget legislative public hearing/adoption will be on May 15th.

MANAGERS COMMENTS

REQUEST TO WAIVE STAND-BY AMBULANCE FEES-BOAT DOCKING EVENT-LONG WHARF-DORCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Council approved the request of Bill Christopher, President/CEO, Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, to waive ambulance stand-by fees for a Boat Docking event at Long Wharf Park on June 16, 2018 (June 17th rain date) from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. which this organization is hosting.

FY19 CRITICAL AREA GRANT AWARD ACCEPTANCE-PLANNING AND ZONING

The Council approved the request submitted by Brian Soper, Environmental Planner, on behalf of Steve Dodd, Planning and Zoning Director, to accept a FY 2019 Critical Area Grant award of \$13,000 that pays a portion of the Environmental Planner salary.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY LEGACY-STRATEGIC DEMOLITION GRANTS-TAX PROPERTY-FINANCE

Mr. Goldman advised that: 1) the County is currently foreclosing on two properties in the West End Avenue historic district which are large historically conforming homes that will need special purchases by those familiar with historic preservation matters; 2) the two properties are in need of stabilization; 3) the property for which funding is being sought, 321 West End Avenue, is assessed at \$47,500 which will be the County's match; and, 4) currently the home consists of three apartments and the plan is to convert it into one home.

Ms. Smith said she recently received inquiries about the house and provided the Council members a picture. She stated that Ron Barham from the Historic Preservation Commission: 1) contacted the City about the property for which a demolition order has been issued; 2) has been searching for the original farm buildings for the Oakley Farm; and, 3) he suspects this home may be part of one of the original farm houses. She explained that the Tax Lien Repurpose Property Re-Use Program allows for the acquisition and donation of these types of properties to nonprofit organizations for rehabilitation. She noted that Dorchester County was honored statewide for the program which is also being recognized nationwide. She said according to the individuals who toured the property it is in good shape. Councilman Bradshaw stressed the need to save historic structures.

The Council approved request of Ms. Smith to apply for funding through the Department of Housing and Community Development Community Legacy/Strategic Demolition fund to stabilize the house with a new roof and for some porch stabilization.

STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM GRANT-RAILS TO TRAILS CONVERSION PROJECT-FINANCE

The Council approved the request of Ms. Smith to apply for a State Highway Administration Alternatives Program Grant to fund the Rails to Trails conversion project at Cannery Park in the amount of \$210,000. The Council acknowledged that the cash match of \$90,000 consists of: 1) \$50,000 from a Maryland Heart of Heritage Area Authority Grant for which application was submitted on April 17, 2018; and, 2) \$40,000 from a Maryland Bikeways Grant for which the application is due on June 14, 2018. The Council further acknowledged that the County will provide an in-kind match in the form of labor from the Public Works Department totaling \$12,500 which includes five operators and a supervisor.

PRESERVATION MARYLAND GRANT ACCEPTANCE-HISTORIC BAYLY HOUSE-FINANCE

The Council approved the request of Ms. Smith to accept a Preservation Maryland grant for \$10,000 to stabilize the outbuilding behind the Bayly House on High Street which is thought to be one of the last remaining slave cabins in Maryland. The Council acknowledged that the match will be from a Bartus Trew Foundation grant for which the application is due in June 2018 and \$1,000 worth of in-kind services from the property owner.

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS-PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Goldman said the Traffic Safety Committee met on April 20, 2018.

Request for "Children At Play" signs on Town Point/Dailsville Road

He said the Committee's recommendation is to install a "Children At Play" sign on Townpoint Road and two of these types of signs on Dailsville Road. Councilman Price made a motion to approve the recommendation which was seconded by Councilman Bradshaw for discussion. Councilman Bradshaw expressed his understanding that one of the children in the area is deaf and one has Down Syndrome. In response to his inquiry, Ryan White, Public Works Director, confirmed that there is a "Dead Child" sign. Councilman Satterfield noted that the requestor, who is a relative of one of the children, requested "Children At Play" signs. The Council approved the Committee's recommendation.

Request-Decrease speed limit and traffic concerns on Puckum Road

The Council recognized that the Traffic Safety Committee requested that the following actions be taken and/or information gathered before making a recommendation to the Council regarding these concerns: 1) County Public Works staff will reach out to the Town of Eldorado to discuss decreasing the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph; and, 2) a traffic count of the area of Puckum Road will be conducted.

Request to clarify/post 35 mph signs on Thompsontown Road

The Council approved the Committee's recommendation that the entire length of Thompsontown Road should be 35 mph and signs should be posted accordingly.

Request to replace "School Bus Stop Ahead" with a more precautionary sign on Palmer Mill Road

Mr. Goldman said the Committee's recommendation is to replace the missing 35 mph sign and perform roadside maintenance on Palmer Mill Road to improve visibility of current signage and install a School Bus Stop Ahead sign. The Council approved the Committee's recommendation and directed Public Works staff to ask the Sheriff for enforcement, whenever possible, of this area, particularly after school ends for the day.

COUNTY RAILROAD CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS-PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Goldman said: 1) before Council is the request of Ryan White, Public Works Director, to review several locations for railroad improvements within the County; 2) the crossings are expected to be repaired over the summer months; and, 3) each will have a detour, the need for which will vary from 2 to 5 days. He explained that they are seeking any concerns the Council may have so they can be forwarded to the contractor/Maryland Department of Transportation.

In response to a question from Councilman Bradshaw, Mr. White said the work will include replacing track beds. Councilman Travers noted that Russell Paving has been contracted by MDOT to perform the repairs. Mr. Goldman expressed his understanding that some hot mix will be laid and timber removed on those portions of the rail line not being used. Pursuant to an inquiry from Councilman Bradshaw, Mr. White said the work will commence in a couple of weeks. Mr. Goldman noted that all of the improvements will not be done at the same time. Mr. White explained that the ones that affect travel the least will be completed first and then those for which bus drivers utilize will be scheduled. He noted that Russell Paving is still working in Easton. Councilman Travers said it is his understanding that this company will begin work in Dorchester County in the summer months. Councilman Bradshaw expressed concern that the closures will affect a logging operation on Beaver Neck Village Road. Mr. White said the best case scenario will be two days per crossing and at most one week. He noted that he only provided the Council information regarding the five crossings for which there will be road closures. He explained that two rail improvements will only require flagging operations.

SPECIAL EVENTS AGREEMENT

The Council agreed to enter into a Special Events Agreement between University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), the County Council and the Sheriff of Dorchester County to provide public safety services in the form of two vehicles and two deputies at the sum of \$300.00, which was calculated based on premium overtime, for the 2018 UMCES Commencement at the Horn Point lab on May 15, 2018 from noon to 3 p.m.

CONSTANT YIELD HEARING

Mr. Merryweather said a Constant Yield hearing is being held. He noted that no one placed their name on the sign in sheet to speak. He asked if anyone wished to make any comments. There was no response.

Councilman Price asked for clarification for the record on how the proposed property tax increase will affect tax bills in the County. Mr. Goldman said on average it will be \$5 per \$100,000 of assessed value increase. Michael Spears, Finance Director, concurred. Mr. Goldman noted that even with the increase the County is 6th out of the 8 Eastern Shore counties in tax rates. Based on inquiries from Councilman Price, Mr. Spears said: 1) in Cambridge and Hurlock there will be very modest changes in the tax rate; and, 2) he believes the difference is less than \$5 per tax bill.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

In response to a question posed by Alton Hooper, resident, Mr. Goldman said after submitting the Early Voting Agreement to Mr. Merryweather proposed changes have been sent to the Election's Office.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS/ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Councilman Satterfield, the Council agreed to nominate Diana Willey to serve as the alternate on the Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board for Dorchester County.

Councilman Satterfield announced that a press release was issued today announcing, that through the County's efforts, the beacon marker at Honga River was re-installed today with signage marking it number 10. He said the Coast Guard basically refused to re-install the No. 10 beacon. He noted that pictures. He personally thanked Mr. Gootee for his efforts and assistance in making this happen. He expressed his hope that this will enhance boater safety in this area.

Mr. Gootee thanked everyone who had a role in the reinstallation. Councilman Travers referred to the Council's persistence in ensuring that a marker was placed in this area. He explained that at a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) meeting representatives from the Army Corps of Engineer, the Coast Guard and DNR advised that they were not going to re-install or place a new marker there. He noted that Mr. Goldman, armed with the knowledge that the Council was determined to place a marker at the location: 1) advised them that the County would do so; and, 2) asked them to ensure that it will be placed on the navigational charts. He advised that with Mr. Gootee's assistance, and GPS coordinates that beacon was installed correctly. Councilman Travers said the Council hired the contractor and purchased the pole and beacon. He expressed his appreciation to all of those who assisted with this matter, including Mr. Gootee. Mr. Goldman thanked Mr. White for installing the sign and light.

Councilman Satterfield thanked law enforcement and emergency services personnel, noting his understanding they were very busy last week.

Councilman Price said the Hurlock Fire Company annual banquet was held since last meeting. He congratulated the company on its number of years and service and those members who were recognized. He referenced the wind and dry weather warnings and encouraged the public to be cautious when burning.

Councilman Bradshaw noted that it was a collaborative effort between Council, and working with Bill Anderson, Assistant Secretary, Aquatic Resources, DNR to re-install the marker. He thanked DNR staff who coordinated with the Coast Guard to expedite the process as well as Mr. Gootee. He said he understands there are safety issues in the area and the beacon serves as a landmark for those who are familiar with the area. He thanked Mr. White for his efforts in completing the installing of the marker.

Councilman Travers said on Saturday he attended the Guest Artist Gala at the Dorchester Center for the Arts (DCA). He said Mr. Goldman was a guest artist. He noted that Mr. Goldman created a "Water Moves Us" themed water foundation using local cherry lumber for the backboard. He explained that he worked with another artist at DCA to craft the pots for the water feature. He said he personally purchased the fountain and offered to loan it for display in County buildings for a period of time for public viewing. The Council accepted the offer. Councilman Travers stated that Dr. Diana Mitchell, Superintendent of Schools, crafted jewelry and a Dog Control employee made a hat. He noted that the items will be auctioned off with the proceeds going to DCA.

He announced that the next Council meeting will be held on May 8, 2018 which will be limited to a public hearing on the proposed FY19 budget and one legislative item; and, 2) a budget legislative hearing/adoption is scheduled for May 15, 2018.

With no further business to discuss, the Council adjourned.

ATTEST:




Jeremy Goldman
County Manager

DORCHESTER COUNTY COUNCIL:



Ricky C. Travers, President



Tom C. Bradshaw, Vice President



William V. Nichols



Rick M. Price



Don B. Satterfield

Approved the 15th day of May 2018.