

County Council of Dorchester County
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2020

By conference call, open to the public, the County Council of Dorchester County convened in Open Session at 6:30 p.m. on the 15th day of September 2020. A roll call of the members was conducted. Present on the conference call were: Jay L. Newcomb, President; Libby Handley Nagel, Vice President; George L. Pfeffer, Jr.; and, Ricky C. Travers. Also present via telephone were E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney; Keith Adkins, County Manager, and Donna F. Lane, Executive Administrative Specialist. Councilman Newcomb was present in Room 110.

REGULAR SESSION

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Travers led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Keith Adkins, County Manager, said after publication of the agenda, the following items were added: Polling Location Discussion, Payroll Tax Holiday Discussion and a Planning and Zoning Workgroup to review operations. The Council approved the amended agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Council approved the minutes of September 1, 2020.

APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

The Council approved the vouchers as presented with Councilman Travers abstaining for payments made to Simmons Center Market.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Newcomb reported total cash and investments as \$10,207,208.59.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

By conference call, the Council convened into Regular Session on September 15, 2020 at 4:30 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; pursuant to §3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter; and, pursuant to §3-305(b)(10) to discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans. Present on the conference call were: Jay L. Newcomb, President; Libby Handley Nagel, Vice President; William V. Nichols; and, George L. Pfeffer, Jr. Also present via the conference call were Keith Adkins, County Manager and Donna F. Lane, Executive

Administrative Specialist. Voting in favor of the Closed Session were the present Council Members. Councilmen Newcomb and Nichols were also present in Room 110.

By conference call, the Council convened in a Closed Session on September 1, 2020 at 4:33 p.m. to discuss the following items: 1) agreed to hire an individual as an on call Paramedic by a 4 to 1 vote and an individual to fill a full time Paramedic position by a 5 to 0 vote; 2) agreed to promote a current employee to fill a vacant 911 Shift Supervisor position by a 5 to 0 vote; 3) agreed to hire three individuals as on call Hourly Clerks for the Visitor Center by a 5 to 0 vote; 4) discussed personnel matters relating to a County Department; 5) conducted an interview for a Planning and Zoning position; 6) obtained legal advice from County Attorney regarding a fiscal matter; and, 7) discussed a legal and public security matter with County Attorney. Present on the conference call were: Jay L. Newcomb, President; Libby Handley Nagel, Vice President; William V. Nichols, George L. Pfeffer, Jr.; and Ricky C. Travers. Also present via the conference call were Keith Adkins, County Manager; and Donna F. Lane, Executive Administrative Specialist. Councilman Newcomb was also present in Room 110. E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney, joined the meeting later.

ANNUAL TRANSPORTATION MEETING TOPIC DISCUSSION

The Council agreed that the following, provided by Dave Edwards, Public Works Director, will be topics for the Annual Transportation Meeting with Maryland Department of Transportation Officials on October 20, 2020:

- MD 16 (Mount Holly Rd) from 50 to MD 392 needs to be milled and paved. A few years ago, MDOT applied a thin lift pavement to this section of roadway. This pavement type is failing and has rutting and holes throughout this section of highway. This is a major highway for Dorchester County. The current condition of this roadway is also a safety concern.
- MD 392 and MD 14 Intersection needs safety improvements. This intersection handles a lot of traffic including many of Dorchester County's children. Crossing this intersection with the current design is dangerous.
- MD 392 and MD 331 Intersection in the Town of Hurlock needs safety improvements. It currently has a flashing light that needs to be changed to a fully functional traffic light. The current design causes safety and traffic flow concerns during peak travel times. Additionally the current placement of the traffic light structure causes sight distance issues when stopped on MD 392 looking right towards MD 331. This intersection receives a lot of commercial truck traffic and the current design makes for difficult and dangerous travel for truck traffic.
- US 50 at Bucktown Rd Intersection needs safety improvements. We have many accidents at this intersection. With the traffic volume at this intersection the traffic lights need to have turning arrows added to the function of the light at all four directions.
- US 50 at Bucktown Rd Intersection needs drainage improvements. The cross-over area in this intersection holds water from rain and winter events. Standing water in a major intersection is a safety issue.
- US 50 at Woods Rd Intersection on the West Bound side holds water. Causing traffic traveling on Woods Rd to merge around the water into the opposite lane of travel. This is safety issue.
- US 50 West Bound Intersection of MD 16 (Gypsy Hill Rd) needs the left turn lane extended. Wal-Mart, Cambridge High School and Beach Traffic all lead up to traffic

backing up into the fast lane of US 50. Causing motorist to change lanes to go around or having to sit in the fast lane of oncoming traffic. This is a safety issue.

- US 50 West Bound Intersection of Maryland Ave needs the left turn lane extended. Traffic turning left onto Maryland Ave gets backed up causing traffic to stack up into the fast lane of US 50. This is a safety issue.
- An active wind restriction system needs to be developed for the Malkus Bridge. During high wind events tractor trailers are often flipped on their sides from high wind speeds. Causing a major safety issue for the vehicles traveling over this bridge. In addition, this causes major commute issues for Dorchester County and Talbot County citizens.
- MD 14 at Cloverdale Rd we have a drainage issue. During rain events water often backs up at this intersection causing high water/standing water at this intersection which handles much of the school traffic. In addition, this water has caused property damage to a Dorchester County Citizen. The drainage system along MD 14 needs improvements to resolve this issue.
- Intersection of MD 16 at Maple Dam Rd and MD 341 needs repaving. This intersection has very bad rutting.
- Intersection of MD 16 at Pig Neck Rd needs repaved. This intersection is falling apart.
- Intersection of MD 16 at Laurie Lane Rd needs repaved. MD 16 was recently repaved in this area but none of the intersections within MDOTS right of way got paved. This intersection along with several others within this paving project are in need of paving.
- MD 307 from the Town of Hurlock to the Caroline County Line was recently paved several years ago. This highway is a major truck route. This Highway has very bad rutting and wash boarding already causing for unsafe travel.
- Many of the yellow county roadway signs and enforcement signs along the highways in Dorchester County are faded and not reflective at night.

Councilman Newcomb expressed his understanding that the project from Maple Dam to Church Creek may be completed soon.

MANAGERS COMMENTS

UPPER SHORE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD APPOINTMENT

The Council approved the request of Daniel McDermott, Executive Director, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, to appoint Domenick Grande, the Manager of Delmarva Works Day and Employment Programs and Maryland and Delaware Transformation Coordinator for Delmarva Community Services, as the private sector representative. The Council acknowledged that: 1) he is currently the Community Action Agency representative; 2) Mr. Dermott is amicable to him serving in both capacities at the same time; and, 3) his term will expire on June 30, 2023.

RESERVE DOCKAGE REQUEST-ANNUAL CHOPTANK HERITAGE SKIPJACK RACE-SKIPJACK COMMITTEE

The Council approved the request of Lou Hyman, Race Committee Chair, to reserve dockage along the bulkhead of the County Office Building on Friday, September 25, 2020 and Saturday, September 26, 2020 for visiting skipjacks for the Annual Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race.

MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY LOGISTICS TRAINING REQUEST-EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Council approved the request of Dozia Rahilly, Emergency Services Director, for authorization for Julie Schuler and Mike Bramble, supply team leaders for Emergency Services to attend Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Logistics training in Annapolis from September 28, 2020 to October 2, 2020. The Council acknowledged that: 1) food and lodging will be paid by MEMA; and, 2) staff will not use a County vehicle nor will they seek mileage reimbursement.

FY2020 HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT-GRANT ADJUSTMENT NOTICE- EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Council approved the request of Ms. Rahilly to accept a FY2020 Homeland Security Grant in the amount of \$107,033.95 for the performance period of September 1, 2020 to February 28, 2023 with no match. The Council recognized that the funds will be used for: 1) expenses relating to enhancing cyber security including elections security; 2) enhancing protection of soft targets/crowded places including election security; 3) enhancing information and intelligence sharing in cooperation with federal government agencies including Homeland Security; 4) addressing emergency threats; 5) 25% to law enforcement; and, 6) enhancing citizens' awareness and emergency preparedness; and, 7) Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergency capabilities.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL-RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT-PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards, to enter into a Roadside Right of Way Agreement for Federalsburg Builders on Bailey Store Road. The Council recognized that the County proposes to improve, widen and relocate the public county road leading from Finchville-Reliance Road (Maryland Route 392) to Eldorado-Federalsburg Maryland Road (Maryland Route 313) known as Baily Store Road. The Council also acknowledged that Federalsburg Builders, LLC, has land that borders this road and wishes to grant to the County a perpetual right-of-way easement.

POINT SYSTEM-HONORABLE LOUIS L GOLDSTEIN VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE AND EMS PERSONNEL SUBTRACTION MODIFICATION PROGRAM

Mr. Adkins said Councilman Pfeffer wishes to discuss with Council adjusting the points system for the volunteer fire companies in Dorchester County to qualify for a tax benefit on their Maryland state taxes under the Honorable Louis L. Goldstein Volunteer Police, Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel Subtraction Modification Program.

Councilman Pfeffer advised that he was approached by numerous volunteer fire company members and the Points Coordinator about not being able to qualify for a State income tax deduction this year due to COVID-19, which he believes will be \$4,500 which is taken of their gross salary. He explained that each active volunteer fire company member must have 50 points to qualify for this deduction. He noted that since the County does not have a LOSAP program for the volunteer fire companies, pursuant to the State the Council can adjust them if they so choose to do so. The Council agreed that for this calendar year only to change the point total from one to two for the following activities: formal training, drills, standbys, meetings, alarms

and collateral duties. The Council recognized that the points for an appointed or elected position will remain the same.

MEDICAL SERVICES CONTRACT AMENDMENT-DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The Council approved the request of Joseph Hughes, Director, Department of Corrections, to accept and execute an amendment to the Contract for Medical Services for Inmates at the Dorchester County Detention Center between Dorchester County and Conmed, LLC which: 1) amends staffing; 2) includes a consumer adjustment rate increase of 2.8% through June 30, 2023; and, 3) divides the \$40,000 a year Midshore Behavioral Health pays towards the County's non-formulary medication costs into monthly amounts of \$3,400; and, 4) to amend the section relating to the term of contract.

REQUEST FOR RETROACTIVE APPROVAL-MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST GRANT-FINANCE

The Council approved the written request of Cindy Smith, Assistant Finance Director, for retroactive approval of the submission of a Maryland Historical Trust Grant for fund of \$75,000 with a 50% (\$16,000) match of cash and in-kind services of \$400 which includes volunteer time, donated materials, reduced cost of professional services. The Council also approved Ms. Smith's request to submit a letter of support with the grant application. The Council acknowledged that the grant monies will be used as a match to a Bartus Trew Fund grant of \$20,000 for a Preservation Plan and National Registry Nomination for the Appleby Mansion.

BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT-LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Council approved the request of Nancy Shockley, Local Management Board Director, to submit a Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant application to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services (formerly GOCCP) in the amount of \$194,000 with no County match. The Council acknowledged that funds will be used for children and youth, law enforcement and COVID-19 funding priorities to address short and long term barriers due to the coronavirus and will be distributed to the following: 1) New Beginnings, \$32,000 for staff salaries, food and supplies for 12 months; 2) State's Attorney's Office, \$6,000 for up to six laptops; 3) Dorchester County Drug Task Force, \$36,000 for six pole cameras for surveillance and computer software; 4) Meals till Monday, \$70,000 for food purchase and distribution to children; and, 5) Dorchester Family YMCA, \$50,000 for staff salaries and equipment.

POLLING LOCATION DISCUSSION

Councilman Newcomb noted that there will only be three polling places which are Cambridge South Dorchester High School, North Dorchester High School and the County Office Building. He expressed concern about not having polling places for residents in the outlying areas of the County. He said although Governor Lawrence "Larry" Hogan expressed a desire for all polling places to be opened, the Maryland State Board of Election chose to significantly reduce the number of polling places. The Council agreed to send a letter in opposition to that Board's decision with copies to the local State delegation and the Governor.

PAYROLL TAX HOLIDAY DISCUSSION

E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney, said out of a survey of Human Resources Directors, 11 of them advised that they are not implementing the President's Payroll Tax Holiday since if employees do not repay those funds, the local jurisdictions will have to assume that responsibility. Based on his recommendation, the Council agreed not to implement the Presidential Payroll Tax Holiday.

PLANNING AND ZONING WORKGROUP

The Council approved the request of Herve Hamon, Planning and Zoning Director, to form a Workgroup with two Council members serving on the workgroup. The Council agreed that Councilwoman Nagel, Councilman Pfeffer and Councilman Newcomb will alternate their attendance with Councilwoman Nagel and Councilman Pfeffer attending the first meeting.

OTHER

Councilwoman Nagel stated that she received a telephone call from Rose Murphy, resident, about the status of placing another Emergency Medical Services unit in service for a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift. She asked for Mr. Adkins for information regarding this additional unit so that she may respond to Ms. Murphy's inquiry. Pursuant to a query from Councilman Travers, Councilman Newcomb expressed his understanding that the new ambulance delivery has been delayed due to COVID-19. Mr. Adkins said they are waiting for the second ambulance which will be purchased with Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funding that is scheduled for delivery by the end of the December.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the Council adjourned.

ATTEST:



Keith Adkins, County Manager

THE COUNTY COUNCIL
OF DORCHESTER COUNTY:



Jay L. Newcomb, President



Libby Handley Nagel, Vice President



William V. Nichols



George L. Pfeffer, Jr.



Ricky C. Travers

Approved the 6th day of October, 2020.