

County Council of Dorchester County
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2024

The County Council of Dorchester County convened in Open Session in Room 110 of the County Office Building at 6:01 p.m. on the 18th day of June, 2024. A roll call of the members was conducted. Present in Room 110 were: George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President; Mike Detmer, Vice President; Rob Kramer, Jr.; William V. Nichols; Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; Charles MacLeod, County Attorney; Donna F. Lane, Clerk to Council; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Administrative Specialist.

REGULAR SESSION

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Pfeffer led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

Councilman Nichols left the meeting.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

After publication of the agenda, the following items were added: 1) Letter of Support – National Fish & Wildlife Federation National Coastal Resiliency Fund Grant – Hoopersville Shoreline – BayLand Consultants & Designers, Inc.; 2) County Property Tax Exemption Requests – Multiple Properties – Finance; and, 3) Notification of Introductions – Resolutions to Amend County Charter.

The Council approved the amended agenda.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Pfeffer reported total cash and investments as \$22,084,738.72.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

The Council convened into Regular Session on June 18, 2024 at 5:04 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; and, pursuant to §3-305(b)(3) to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

Present in Room 110 were: George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President; Mike Detmer, Vice President; Rob Kramer, Jr.; William V. Nichols; Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; Charles MacLeod, County Attorney; Donna F. Lane, Clerk to Council; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Administrative Specialist. Voting in favor of the Closed Session were the present Council Members.

The Council convened in a Closed Session on June 18, 2024 at 5:05 p.m. to discuss the following items:

- 1) Notifications of recent personnel changes within the County were provided.
- 2) Received legal advice from the County Attorney regarding the following specific items:
 - a. Lease of County properties;
 - b. Disclosure agreement;
 - c. Board appointment;
 - d. Transition of a District;
 - e. Proposed amendments;
 - f. State loan; and,
 - g. Disposition of State property
- 3) Discussions regarding the acquisition of real property for public purposes and matters directly related thereto.

Present in Room 110 were: George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President; Mike Detmer, Vice President; Rob Kramer, Jr.; William V. Nichols; Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; Charles MacLeod, County Attorney; Donna F. Lane, Clerk to Council; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Administrative Specialist.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Council approved the minutes of June 4, 2024.

APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

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

CONTINGENCY FUND REQUEST – EASTERN SHORE INNOVATION CENTER HVAC REPLACEMENT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Council approved the request of Susan Banks, Economic Development Director, to use contingency funds to pay for the urgent purchase of an HVAC unit at the Eastern Shore Innovation Center, due to limited availability and supply and demand, which was installed by Gannon's Refrigeration Services, Inc. on May 13, 2024 at the cost of \$8,375.00.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAY – LANDFILL EVENT – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Dave Edwards, Public Works Director, to hold a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday, August 3, 2024 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Beulah Landfill using the services of MXI, Inc. at the cost of \$50,000.00, which will be funded by the Landfill Fund Balance account.

BUDGET TRANSFER REQUESTS – PUBLIC WORKS – RECREATION & PARKS

The Council approved the FY24 budget transfer requests for Public Works and Recreation & Parks.

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION REQUEST – HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHOPTANK – FINANCE

The Council approved the request of JoAnn Hansen, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity Choptank, to grant 2024-2025 County property tax exemptions on 23 properties owned by the tax-exempt charitable organization.

EVENT REQUEST – YOUNG EAGLES DAY – AIRPORT

The Council approved the request of Steve Nuwer, Airport Director, to host Young Eagles Day on August 10, 2024 (rain date August 11, 2024) from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., sponsored by Experimental Aircraft Association, at the Airport Terminal facility, with the understanding that:

The EAA will provide:

- Estimated 10-12 pilots that have been vetted by the EAA for proficiency and qualification.
- Estimated 10-12 aircraft which are pilot-owned and licensed.
- Notice to pilots that they are responsible for their own fuel costs.
- Registration/pre-flight briefing.
- Blanket insurance for Young Eagle flights and events that cover the pilots, aircraft, volunteers and participants.
- Social media promotion and flyers to be distributed through the public school system, organizations, etc.

The CGE Airport will provide:

- Lunch for the pilots/volunteers only at an estimated \$350.00. Tents/grill/chef/coolers provided by Mr. Nuwer at no cost.
- Use of the terminal training room for pre-flight briefings.
- Orange cones to create a space immediately outside the terminal for parents of Young Eagle participants.
- Ambulance/EMT presence.
- Additional 3-4 adult volunteers to escort parents of participants to and from aircraft.
- A \$0.50/gal discount on Avgas to participating pilots.
- No additional staff or overtime costs will be required for this event.

LEASE RENEWAL – QUONSET HANGAR – AIRPORT

Based on the recommendation of Mr. Nuwer, the Council agreed to renew a lease with B&B Sport Aviation for an additional five-year term, beginning July 1, 2024, for the Airport Terminal Quonset Hangar at a total cost of \$62,280.

LEASE EXPANSION – SOUTH HANGAR – AIRPORT

Based on the recommendation of Mr. Nuwer, the Council approved the expansion of a current lease with Eastern Shore Sport Aviation to include Space A of the South Hangar, effective June 1, 2024 with an expiration date that aligns with the current lease for Space D in 2025 and a rent structure consistent with commercial operations of this facility, totaling \$6,900.00 over the 18-month term.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PUBLIC HEARING – BUILDING EXCISE TAX SUSPENSION

BILL NO. 2024-6 AN ACT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND PURSUANT TO MD. CODE ANN., LOCAL GOV'T § 20-805 TO REPEAL AND REENACT SECTION 144-36.1 TO CHAPTER 144 (TAXATION) OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY CODE, ARTICLE X (BUILDING EXCISE TAX) FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING THAT THE BUILDING EXCISE TAX IS SUSPENDED FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR COMMENCING ON JULY 1, 2024, AND ENDING ON JUNE 30, 2025, AND THAT THE BUILDING EXCISE TAX DOES NOT APPLY TO BUILDING PERMITS FILED BETWEEN JULY 1, 2024, AND JUNE 30, 2025; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS BILL SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY, AND GENERALLY RELATING TO THE BUILDING EXCISE TAX IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND.

Ms. Lane said a public hearing is being conducted on Bill No. 2024-6 to repeal and reenact Section 144-36.1 to Chapter 144 (Taxation) of the Dorchester County Code, Article X (Building Excise Tax) for the purpose of providing that the Building Excise Tax is suspended for a period of one year commencing on July 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2025, and that the Building Excise Tax does not apply to building permits filed between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025; providing that the title of this bill shall be deemed a fair summary, and generally relating to the Building Excise Tax in Dorchester County, Maryland.

Councilman Pfeffer asked for public comments, hearing none, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Pfeffer said this tax has been suspended for some time, but with the County's financial hardships it may not continue in future years.

The roll call on Bill No. 2024-6 was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – aye; Nichols – absent; and, Travers – aye.

The Council adjourned into regular session.

Councilman Nichols reentered the meeting.

REGULAR SESSION

COMMENDATIONS

RETIREMENT – MICHAEL MARSHALL

The Council presented a Commendation to Michael Marshall for 14 years of service to Dorchester County and congratulated Mr. Marshall on his retirement.

PROCLAMATIONS

STROKE SMART

The Council presented a Proclamation declaring Dorchester County as Stroke Smart.

COMMENDATIONS

TORI WILLIS, JR. – 300 METER HURDLE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP – CAMBRIDGE SOUTH DORCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL

The Council presented a Commendation to Tori Willis, Jr. of Cambridge South Dorchester High School for claiming the 300 Meter Hurdle State Championship.

KASSIDY YOUNG – DISCUS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP – CAMBRIDGE SOUTH DORCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL

The Council presented a Commendation to Kassidy Young of Cambridge South Dorchester High School for claiming the Discus State Championship.

CAMBRIDGE SOUTH DORCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL MEN’S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD TEAM – STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

The Council presented a Commendation to Cambridge South Dorchester High School Men’s Outdoor Track & Field Team for claiming the State Championship title.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION ADOPTIONS

Juneteenth Day – County Paid Holiday

The Council adopted Resolution 664, a Resolution of the County Council of Dorchester County, Maryland to amend the Dorchester County Personnel Rules and Regulations to include Juneteenth Day as a County paid holiday effective July 1, 2024. The Council acknowledged that the FY25 Holiday Schedule will be amended to include Juneteenth.

Ms. Lane said no employee comments were received.

The roll call on Resolution 664 was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – aye; Nichols – absent; and, Travers – aye.

Bereavement Leave

The Council adopted Resolution 665, a Resolution of the County Council of Dorchester County, Maryland to amend the Dorchester County Personnel Rules and Regulations to change granted bereavement days to 5 (max 40 hours) and refer to as bereavement leave (not funeral leave) effective July 1, 2024.

Ms. Lane said no employee comments were received.

The roll call on Resolution 665 was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – aye; Nichols – absent; and, Travers – aye.

Remove Correction Personnel from Overtime Threshold

The Council adopted Resolution 666, a Resolution of the County Council of Dorchester County, Maryland to amend the Dorchester County Personnel Rules and Regulations to remove Correction personnel from the hours in excess of 171 in a 28-day work cycle sentence effective July 1, 2024.

Ms. Lane said one employee comment was received, which was provided to the Council.

The roll call on Resolution 666 was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – aye; Nichols – absent; and, Travers – aye.

REQUEST TO SOLE SOURCE – LANDFILL EQUIPMENT GPS – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to sole source with SITECH Chesapeake LLC for a GPS system for the Landfill compactor which will include the base station, the rover, the data collector, and a full upgrade to the new CAT 836k Compactor at the cost of \$89,168.30 which will be funded by the FY25 Capital Budget Landfill Compactor GPS. The Council acknowledged: 1) the GPS will provide a large cost savings for the Landfill; and, 2) the reason for the sole source is because SITECH is the only GPS system in the Mid-Atlantic region that is compatible with CAT equipment.

In response to Councilman Detmer's inquiry, Mr. Edwards said the GPS must be CAT compatible.

REQUEST TO SOLE SOURCE – LANDFILL LITTER FENCE – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to sole source with METTA Technologies Inc. to purchase nine portable litter fence sections at the cost of \$69,980.00 to be funded by the FY25 Capital Budget Landfill Litter Fence. The Council acknowledged that a sole source is being requested because the company offers the type of fencing that the Landfill currently operates with, and it is compatible with its current litter fence.

In response to Councilman Pfeffer's inquiry, Mr. Edwards said this fencing is compatible with the current litter fence and interlocks, which can be moved with a dozer as the wind changes.

REQUEST TO SOLE SOURCE – ELEVATOR REPAIRS – COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to sole source with Delaware Elevator to repair the elevator at the County Office Building at the cost of \$95,886.00 to be funded by the FY25 Capital Budget County Office Building Elevator Repairs. The Council acknowledged that a sole source is being requested because this is the only local company that can complete the work.

REQUEST TO PURCHASE – LONG REACH LANDFILL EXCAVATOR – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to purchase a long reach excavator for the Landfill from the lowest bidder, Komatsu at the cost of \$552,016.13 which will be funded by the FY25 Capital Budget Landfill Long Reach Excavator.

In response to Councilman Pfeffer's inquiry, Mr. Edwards said the long reach is 65' versus 20', allowing for deeper digging when completing the top cover required by the State, extending the life of materials and making the Landfill more sustainable.

PIGGYBACK REQUEST – MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION CONTRACT – BESTPITCH FERRY BRIDGE REPAIRS – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to piggyback on a Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration contract with Covington Machine to complete repairs to the Bestpitch Ferry Bridge at the cost of \$538,384.37 which will be funded by the FY24 Capital Budget bridge repairs (\$280,083.38) and FY25 Capital Budget Infrastructure Repairs (\$258,300.99).

In response to Councilman Detmer's and Councilman Pfeffer's inquiries, Mr. Edwards said: 1) to replace this bridge would be very complicated because the County does not have the necessary real estate and it is historical; 2) it is more cost efficient to repair the bridge than it is to decommission because the County will still be required to maintain the bridge; 3) the bridge should last for the foreseeable future, however, the lifespan of the bridge cannot be truly determined due to the undercurrent; and, 4) the pilings are being repaired which were originally driven in the 1950s. Councilman Kramer added that this is one of the last wooden bridges in the County.

PIGGYBACK REQUEST – SOURCEWELL CONTRACT – A-BOOM TRACTOR – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to piggyback on a Sourcewell contract with Diamond Mowers, LLC to purchase an A-Boom tractor at the cost of \$202,779.00 to be funded by the FY25 Capital Budget A-Boom Tractor Replacement. The Council acknowledged that this purchase will not include a trade or replace a current tractor.

In response to Councilman Pfeffer's inquiry, Mr. Edwards said an A-Boom tractor has an arm that hangs off the side to cut the backside of ditches, high vegetation and trees.

PAVING REQUEST – GLASGOW COURT – PUBLIC WORKS

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to award the bid to pave Glasgow Court to the lowest bidder, Russell Paving Company, at the cost of \$17,200.00, to be funded by the Highway Division FY24 Operating Budget.

In response to Councilman Detmer's inquiry, Mr. Edwards said it is not curbed.

CUL-DE-SAC PAVING REQUESTS – PUBLIC WORKS

Woodland Acres

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to award the bid to pave Woodland Acre to the lowest bidder, Russell Paving Company, at the cost of \$19,250.00, to be funded by the Highway Division FY24 Operating Budget.

Aeberle Road

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to award the bid to pave Aeberle Road to the lowest bidder, Russell Paving Company, at the cost of \$10,994.00, to be funded by the Highway Division FY24 Operating Budget. In response to Councilman Detmer's inquiry, Mr. Edwards said these road repairs are typical with the extra truck traffic from shipping companies.

North Court

The Council approved the request of Mr. Edwards to award the bid to pave North Court to the lowest bidder, Russell Paving Company, at the cost of \$8,200.00, to be funded by the Highway Division FY24 Operating Budget.

FY25 CATEGORICAL BUDGET – BOARD OF EDUCATION

Based on the request of Laurie K. Dale, Assistant Comptroller, Dorchester County Public Schools, the Council approved the: 1) Board of Education (BOE) FY25 Categorical Budget based on the County's FY25 allocation to the BOE of \$23,740,838.00 for operating expenses and \$0 for capital expenses; and, 2) execution of the Annual Budget Certification Statement for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

Councilman Detmer expressed concern about the State mandated Blueprint requirements on local governments which may result in a tax increase and/or budget shortfalls, noting that there are facility needs for Dorchester County that need to be addressed. Councilman Pfeffer added that the County receives \$54 million in revenue from property taxes (\$35 million) and income taxes (\$19 million), which \$24 million funds the Board of Education. He said, to put it into perspective, when a constituent reviews their paystub, 100% of the income tax deduction is utilized to fund the Board of Education, plus a portion of property taxes. Councilman Detmer expressed his appreciation of the BOE for their diligence in calculating the budget.

POLL CONFIRMATIONS

The Council confirmed its decisions in the interim of meetings, via poll to:

- Agree to provide a letter of support for a Reinvestment Fund grant application, submitted by David Beverley, under the Health Food Financing Initiative to assist with opening a general store in Toddville, Maryland, by a 3 to 2 vote, Councilman Kramer and Councilman Nichols opposing.
- Vote to reappoint Christopher M. Corchiarino, Shelley Heller and Abigail McNinch to the Local Government Insurance Trust Board of Trustees, by a 5 to 0 vote.

LETTER OF SUPPORT – NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE FEDERATION NATIONAL COASTAL RESILIENCY FUND GRANT – HOOPERSVILLE SHORELINE – BAYLAND CONSULTANTS & DESIGNERS, INC.

Based on a request from Anna Johnson, BayLand Consultants & Designers, Inc., the Council agreed to provide a letter of support for a National Coastal Resiliency Fund grant application through the National Fish and Wildlife Federation for additional funding for the design of a living shoreline to protect about 8,000 feet of shoreline in Hoopersville.

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION REQUESTS – MULTIPLE PROPERTIES – FINANCE

The Council deferred the request of Karen Tolley, Finance Director, to allow for legal review prior to making a decision on the following County property tax exemption requests for the 2024-2025 tax year:

07-105118	Glenburn Associates	\$19.46
07-160216	Cambridge Skeet & Gun Club, Inc.	\$1,629.67
07-175086	Woman’s Auxiliary of DGH	\$1,301.39
07-239653	Cambridge Commons LLLP	\$26,345.78
14-001158	Cedar Meadows Rod & Gun Club, Inc.	\$1,525.33
15-028262	Homes for Hurlock Limited Partnership	\$5,561.56

Further, the Council agreed to have the Finance Department work with Mr. MacLeod to draft a letter notifying the property owners that are under review.

The Council acknowledged that: 1) the above figures are from the 2023-2024 tax year; and, 2) the exemptions were previously approved and adopted by either a Resolution or Bill.

NOTIFICATION OF INTRODUCTIONS – RESOLUTIONS TO AMEND COUNTY CHARTER

The Council notified the public that the following Resolutions to amend the County Charter, based on the Charter Review Commission recommendations, have been drafted and will be introduced at the July 2, 2024 Council meeting.

- Councilmember Term Limits
- County Manager Residency
- Director of Finance Residency
- Budget Preparation Date
- Budget Adoption Date
- Administrative Review

- County Manager Responsibilities
- Governmental Transparency

ANNOUNCEMENT

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAY – LANDFILL EVENT – PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. Lane announced the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day event on Saturday, August 3, 2024 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Beulah Landfill.

Councilman Pfeffer thanked Mr. Edwards for holding the event. Mr. Edwards said this is an ongoing need, and once the new landfill site improvements are completed, it will be able to manage more than it currently does.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS

The Council deferred the request of Josh Hastings, Wicomico County Councilman, to provide a letter of interest to the Rural Utilities Service at the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development regarding a Power Purchase Agreement with Shore Community Energy regarding a proposed portfolio of solar energy projects on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Councilman Detmer mentioned the following: 1) the potential of an Airport Advisory Board; 2) the Board of Education made recent decisions and he is looking forward to the plan in handling student behavior; 3) congratulated Dr. Jymil Thompson on being appointed as the new Superintendent of Schools; concerns regarding the conditions of Elliott Island Road; 4) support of the Wicomico County bamboo ban; 5) support of the Talbot County Right-to-Farm court case; 6) efficiency of Public Works in completing the repairs of his neighbor's culvert; and 7) concerns surrounding Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc. (CWDI) and the YMCA.

Councilman Pfeffer: 1) thanked Dr. Susan Morgan for her service on the Board of Education (BOE) and notified the public of her resignation; 2) said per the BOE Charter, this vacancy is to be filled by the County Council; 3) congratulated Dr. Jymil Thompson on being appointed as the new Superintendent of Schools; and, 4) notified Roger Harrell, Health Officer, about Environmental Health complaints.

Councilman Nichols expressed concerns regarding a specific BOE meeting and the delay of submitting its budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

In response to Susan Dukes, Mayor of Secretary, Mr. MacLeod stated that the ballot questions will be drafted and available for review after the Resolutions have been introduced and have gone through the public hearing process, if approved, then submitted to the State for approval before they will be provided to the public. Ms. Dukes said the Charter Review Commission (CRC) is willing to educate

constituents on the ballot questions once available. Councilman Pfeffer added that some of the amendments are straightforward, whereas others are broader and the CRC will have a couple of months to educate the public.

Sharon Smith, resident, expressed concerns regarding CWDI and the proposed YMCA.

Alice McKenna, resident, expressed concerns regarding CWDI and the proposed YMCA, and the County's financial standing.

Mr. Edwards applauded Vaughn Evans for his excellent leadership at North Dorchester Middle School and said he would be a great mentor to younger teachers. Councilman Pfeffer concurred, adding that Mr. Evans is on the Administrative Charging Committee. He said he will relay this information to the Board of Education.

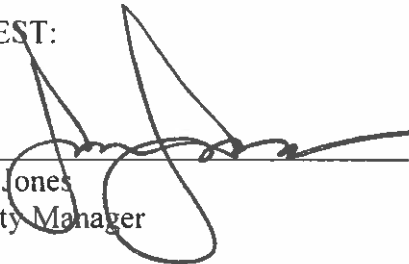
On behalf of Public Works, Mr. Edwards thanked the Council, Directors and staff for their hard work. Councilman Pfeffer concurred, adding that without the people to do it we cannot get it done.

Ms. Tolley said there will be a pamphlet in the property tax bills which will show the breakdown of expenditures and revenues and that an external dashboard to relay more information to the public is in the works.

ADJOURNMENT

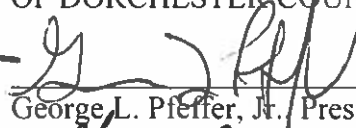
With no further business to discuss, the Council adjourned.

ATTEST:

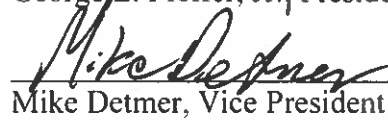


Jerry Jones
County Manager

THE COUNTY COUNCIL
OF DORCHESTER COUNTY:



George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President



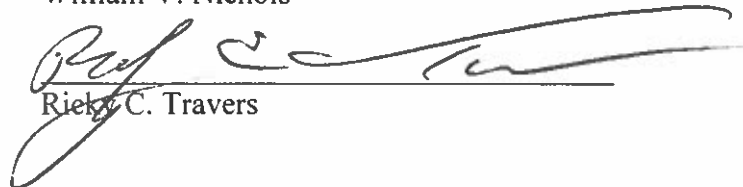
Mike Detmer, Vice President

Absent

Rob Kramer, Jr.



William V. Nichols



Ricky C. Travers

Approved the 2 day of July, 2024.