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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

County Administration Building  
100 West Washington Street, Room 226  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740-4834  
Telephone (Voice/TTY) 240-313-2200  
FAX: 240-313-2201

John F. Barr, *President*  
Terry L. Baker, *Vice-President*  
Kristin B. Aleshire  
James F. Kercheval  
William J. Wivell

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: NORMAN BASSETT**  
**240-313-2077**

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

Review of Actions Taken in the Washington County  
Board of County Commissioners Meeting  
Tuesday, January 29, 2008

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

Commissioner Jim Kercheval reported on the quarterly meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization last week in Martinsburg, WV. The MPO discussed Air Quality Standards and the soon to be released study of the possible locations for a new transfer station for Washington County's Transit system. A meeting with the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) in Annapolis last week focused on reuse of older buildings and the input DBED could provide to assist in that effort. The Emergency Services Council meeting discussed the EMS Master Plan and the application process for Phase I, which would hire 9 Advanced Life Support Technicians to provide fill-in services at EMS companies across the County. Applications have been taken, and qualifications testing is the next part of that process. That testing will be concluded in mid-to late February, Kercheval said, and hiring will take place shortly thereafter. Construction work on the renovated Emergency Communications Center at Elliott Parkway is underway with an opening date expected January 2009. The proposed Charter for Home Rule was the topic of discussion at the Maryland Municipal League county chapter meeting in Sharpsburg on Monday evening, the Commissioner said. Commissioner Kercheval also made notice of a program sponsored by M&T Bank to provide \$50 million in low interest loans to local governments to boost energy efficient government buildings in the State.

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire commented on an upcoming Planning Commission Agenda and a requested variance for a setback. The Commissioner asked if traffic studies were conducted on a proposed development off Oak Ridge Drive. Commissioner Kercheval stated that the final plan was for lower housing density in the development and that the original traffic study had been done on a higher proposed density. Aleshire reported on attending last week's meeting of the Republican Club. A representative for Senator John McCain was the featured speaker, Aleshire said. The North High School booster event last weekend raised funds for student extracurricular activities and was well-attended. Information printed in local media regarding Charter

Home Rule has been misleading, Aleshire said. Letter-writers should provide accurate information on such issues. The Commissioner stated that people should vote based on informed personal opinions and not on the opinion of another person. Aleshire commented on the Judge's ruling in the Morris case, stating that the sentence was improper.

Commissioner Terry Baker also commented on attending the Republican Club meeting recently. Hagerstown Mayor Bob Bruchey spoke on annexation, Baker reported. The Maryland Municipal League meeting in Sharpsburg heard Brien Poffenberger on Charter Home Rule. Baker commended Commissioners Wivell and Kercheval for agreeing to participate in the Charter Home Rule debate sponsored by the Herald-Mail newspaper on Wednesday.



#### CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION

Commissioners Vice-President Terry Baker presented the 2008 Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Recognition for Budget Presentation to Budget and Finance Director Debra Murray, and members of the department staff. GFOA awarded Washington County Government its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the Fiscal Year 2008 budget. GFOA says the award represents a significant achievement for the governmental entity, reflecting the commitment of the Commissioners and staff in meeting the highest principles in government budgeting. Nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentations must be met, and serve to show how well the budget serves as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and a communications device. The Certificate of Recognition is presented to the individual or department designated as primarily responsible for budget activities. Debra Murray accepted the award on behalf of the Budget and Finance Department, along with staff members Kim Edlund, Dawn Barnes and Paula Blenard. The Government Finance Officers Association is a professional organization serving 16,800 government finance professionals throughout North America. The GFOA award

program is the only one of its type in governmental budgeting. Baker congratulated Budget and Finance staff and Murray for a job well done.

#### CONTRACT AWARD: CLINICAL SERVICES TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Melissa Nearchos, Project Coordinator for the Washington County Community Partnership for Children & Families (WCCP) brought this request to approve a Contract Award for Clinical Services For Teens to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Washington County, to the Community Free Clinic of Hagerstown, in the amount of \$13,285.20. The contract is for an initial term tentatively to begin February 1, 2008 and end June 30, 2008, with the option to renew the contract for up to two (2) consecutive fiscal years through fiscal year 2010. The request was to award the contract as recommended by the Coordinating Committee contingent upon approval of the WCCP Board, which gave its approval on January 18<sup>th</sup>. After considerable discussion on prior program funding, and assurance that the remainder of the \$80,000 allocated for such programs would be rebid at a later date, the measure was approved on a 3-1 vote with Commissioner Bill Wivell voting "no".

#### FY 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT AND SUPPLEMENT

Verna Brown, Emergency Management Coordinator in the Division of Fire and Emergency Services brought this request, to authorize the Director of Fire and Emergency Services to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for the FY 2007 Emergency Management Performance Grant Supplements. MEMA distributes funding to all local jurisdictions on an annual basis to offset personnel, operational and training expenses for local emergency management. The FY 07 award total is \$45,342.54. Brown told the Board that the grant is fully funded with no County obligation. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING RESOURCES HOUSING COUNSELING PROGRAM

David Jordan, Community Action Council Executive Director and Sherry Neil, Deputy Director of CAC brought this request before the Board, to authorize application for funds under the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) Housing Counseling Program Application for fiscal years 2009-2011. Jordan told the Board that the purpose of the Program is to assist households who are experiencing a housing crisis such as homelessness or imminent danger of becoming homeless, to obtain and maintain permanent housing. The proposed funding would provide for the salary and fringe benefit cost of the Placement Housing Counselor and will provide limited customer assistance dollars. The Placement Housing Counselor is able to positively affect the lives of approximately 100 households each year. The total funding available for the Program for FY '09-'11 is \$110,748 or \$36,916 per year. These funds would be leveraged with Rental Allowance Program funding and local government funding. No new local government funds are required. The measure was approved by unanimous

vote.

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AGREEMENT TO CLAIM FEDERAL FUNDS

Washington County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) Director Dave Engel requested approval of an agreement between the State of Maryland, Department of Human Resources, and Washington County for claiming federal funds for the County's voluntary financial contributions to the programs operated by the WCDSS. Engel told the Board that he recently learned that the County's contributions to the Department of Social Services are eligible to receive Federal Financial Participation (FFP). The proposed Agreement would serve as an application for those funds. If approved, the Agreement would allow WCDSS to receive more than \$78,000 in retroactive claims for current and past County Funds appropriated to the Department. The Agreement would also allow WCDSS to receive FFP for future County contributions equal to approximately 30 percent of those contributions. Commissioner Wivell commended Engel for diligence in finding the reimbursements and the measure was approved by unanimous vote.

## CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Each week the Board of County Commissioners sets aside time to hear from citizens of Washington County on matters of interest to the Community

Earl Wassen of Rench Road commented on a proposed rezoning of the area around Rench Road and the impact commercial and residential development would have on the neighborhood.

County Administrator Greg Murray read an email from the President of the Maryland Municipal League local chapter, Jeff Cline, who thanked the Commissioners for attending the recent meeting of that group and for the support the Board has given to MML.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray told the Board that February 6<sup>th</sup> the Commissioners will hold the annual meeting with the Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly in Annapolis. Budget workshops will be scheduled soon, Murray reported.

Reports from County Staff: Buildings, Grounds and Parks Director Jim Sterling told the Board that matching funds for the \$100,000 grant given by the legislature to the Rural Heritage Museum will come due in March, but the private fund-raising effort by the Ag Museum Board is short of its goal by about \$29,000. Sterling requested a "bridge loan" of \$50,000 to meet that match, payable by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Friends of the AG museum have stated they expect to be able to raise the balance by that date. The funds would come from the Capital Improvement Projects contingency. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

## REVISED PERSONNEL POLICIES

Human Resources Director George "Bill" Sonnik and HR staff brought a request to adopt revised personnel policies before the Board. The policies were recently amended by the Commissioners. Policy PR-18 - Wage and Salary Classification Program and PR-

19 - Performance Management System were revised to reflect changes necessitated by the adoption of the Salary Review Committee report in December 2007. At that time, approval was given to adopt proposed changes to the performance appraisal system to be effective January 1, 2008; adopt the proposed Grade and Step Wage Classification Scale effective July 1, 2008; and adopt the proposed Grade and Step Transition effective July 1, 2008. As part of the Commissioners' 2007 goals, the Salary Review Committee, consisting of volunteer members approved by the County Administrator, including members of the employee union convened with a primary charge to review requests from the FY 2008 budget for reclassifications or upgrades and one-time pay increase requests. In addition, the Committee reviewed the current Wage and Salary Classification Scale and the current employee performance evaluation process. Recommendations included approval for the same overtime policy adopted several years ago for Highway Section Supervisors and their Assistants to be extended to all employees Grade 13 and below for emergency call-outs, only. The Committee examined performance appraisal systems, forms and related materials used by several local government employers in the area. Given the number of classifications within County government, the Committee felt that four basic appraisal forms were necessary and developed a hybrid between the existing County form and several from the Washington County Public School system. The new process would focus on job performance: job specific, job knowledge, and job application. In addition to being more efficient, it would hold employees more accountable at all levels by incorporating a disincentive for failing to perform satisfactorily. The Committee reviewed and discussed the current wage and salary scale and cited the difficulties with the system after studying salary and classification information from seven Counties in the region, three cities including Hagerstown, the Washington County Sheriff's Department, and the Washington County Public School System (WCPS). The Committee narrowed its focus on the City and WCPS pay scales and how they are used to compensate the employees of the two entities. The Committee recommended that the County convert to a scale with grade and steps similar to that of the Sheriffs Department. Such a system would be more equitable in that it would address recruiting and retention incentives as well as longevity and market factors. The Committee said that adopting a properly structured classification and pay scale would not resolve all of the challenges with recruitment and retention but believed it would go a long way toward restoring internal equity, reduce subjectivity with pay for performance, be consistent with surrounding jurisdictions and provide for more predictable budget projections. The Committee cited a need for a market based analysis of current, up-to-date job descriptions. Rohrer told the Board that the cost to implement the recommendations would actually be less than projected changes based on current methods, \$1.17 million as opposed to \$1.18 million. Sonnik was charged with making the necessary changes in the policies working in concert with the Legal Department and return to the Board for formal approval. Discussion centered on language in a number of the policies' provisions necessitating changes to the document. The policies will be revised and returned to the Board for approval in next week's meeting.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** Following discussion in closed session, the Board of County Commissioners returned to open session and appointed Kevin Collins, Curtis Fulton and Jeff Gladhill to the Washington County Disabilities

Advisory Committee. The appointments were approved by unanimous vote.

The PenMar Development Corporation Board of Directors requested that Sam Cool be appointed to that body. The request was approved by unanimous vote.

THE BOARD ATTENDED THE ANNUAL VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION BUDGET PRESENTATION AT THE NOON HOUR.

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