



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEWS
RELEASE**

Review of Actions Taken in the Washington County
Board of County Commissioners Meeting
Tuesday, February 5, 2008

COMMISSIONERS' PRESIDENT JOHN BARR DELIVERED THE 2008 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS AT THE FOUR POINTS HOTEL AT THE BREAKFAST HOUR

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Terry Baker commended all involved in the State of the County Address for a job well done. The Community Action Council meeting last week focused on a report from the Energy Assistance Program and grants received to help low-income homeowners with bad mortgages. Baker also commented on attending Monday evening's Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Jim Kercheval thanked the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the State of the County Address. Last week's meeting of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) legislative committee heard a report from the Department of Legislative Services that highlighted state budget issues. The Commissioner and Public Works Director Joe Kroboth met with developers and residents concerning traffic issues on Bower Avenue. Solutions to those issues are being sought the Commissioner said. Monday evening's meeting of the Planning Commission saw approval of a site plan for Office Solutions, Incorporated that would construct office and warehouse space. A site plan was approved for a FedEx terminal on Route 63. A Planned Unit Development overlay for the South Pointe development was approved following submission of changes by the developer. The update of the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Department is due in August, and the Department is working towards that goal. A workshop on the Comp Plan is being held on February 18th at 80 West Baltimore Street. Public Hearings will be held before that update is finalized, Kercheval said.

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire reported on attending the Charter Home Rule debate last week at Hagerstown Community College. Monday's meeting of the Boonsboro Mayor and Council heard a report from the town's recycling task force. That group has been conducting door to door surveys on attitudes towards recycling. 50% of the 500 homes responding indicated a desire for curbside recycling, Aleshire said. Of those

homes that do not now recycle, a majority indicated a favorable response to curbside recycling, Aleshire reported. The Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT) meeting on Monday was attended by over 300 persons from the Cascade Area, Aleshire said. The meeting was positive with the COPT presentation well received by the citizens.

Commissioner Bill Wivell thanked the Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring the State of the County Address, and commented on rental properties not being subject to the cap on property assessments.

Commissioners' President John Barr reported on attending the MACo legislative meeting, the Charter Home Rule debate, the Smithsburg Fire Company's annual awards event, and a YMCA fundraiser. The Hagerstown Northstars hockey team is made up of students from all area High Schools. Barr spoke at the organization's Senior Recognition event recently. Barr also reported on attending the COPT presentation in Cascade.

OTHER BUSINESS

County Attorney Issues: Assistant County Attorney Kirk Downey brought zoning request RZ-07-005 before the Board for clarification. The applicants had requested rezoning from Rural Business to Environmental Conservation, but asked for a 90-day delay in finalization of that amendment, due to a possibility of the State purchasing the property. The Commissioners stated that the applicant has the right to withdraw the request.

Staff Comments: County Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik introduced William Ramon Gonzalez as the newest Deputy Sheriff in the Detention Division of the Sheriff's Department. Sonnik also requested approval to advertise an Emergency Communications Supervisor position and a Senior Plant Operator position. The measures were approved by unanimous vote.

Public Works Director Joe Kroboth told the Board that carpet has been installed at the Boonsboro Library and that the final contactor "punch list" should be completed by February 15th.

County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray reminded the Board that the annual meeting with the Local Delegation to the General Assembly in Annapolis is Wednesday morning, and that the Commissioners will leave the Administration Building at 6:00 a.m. The State of the County PowerPoint presentation will be available on CD for requestors and will also be available for download on the County website, www.washco-md.net.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Each week the Board of County Commissioners sets aside time to hear from citizens of Washington County on matters of importance to the community.

No one appeared to make comment on this date.

BID AWARD: VIDEO PRESENTATION SYSTEM

Assistant State's Attorney Joe Michael and County Buyer Rick Curry brought this request before the Board, to award a bid for a Nomad Multimedia PD2100A video presentation system. to the responsive, responsible low bidder, MTI Office Systems dba Nomad Technologies of Eden Prairie, MN for the lump sum bid of \$42,093.00, including Alternate No. 1, a two-year warranty, for \$4,189.00, for the total sum of \$46,282.00.

Michael told the Board that the system would be used for presentation of evidence in court proceedings. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC HEARING: PARENT CHILD CENTER FUNDING REQUEST

County Attorney John Martirano and Parent-Child Center Director Mille Lowman brought this request from the Exchange Club of Hagerstown Parent-Child Center to be added to the "1-108 List" to Public Hearing. Non-profit organizations may request to be added to the list of nonprofit organizations to which the Board of County Commissioners may contribute funds in its annual budget, pursuant to section 1-108 of the Code of the Public Local Laws of Washington County, Maryland. The Exchange Club Parent-Child Center, Inc. had submitted such a request, and the public has the right to comment on the proposal. Lowman and volunteer Jackie Barrett explained programs the Center hosts to the Commissioners. Approval by the Board of County Commissioners of the request of a nonprofit organization to be added to the list does not assure that the organization will receive funding from the Board. That decision is made separately as a part of the budgetary process. The decision of the Board on the requests need not be delayed for ten (10) days. The Board may, but need not, act on the request on the day of the public hearing. No one appeared in behalf of or in opposition to the request. After discussion, the measure was not moved forward, however the Commissioners could act on this request for addition to the 1-108 list, during the budget discussions later this spring.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PURCHASE: ELECTRONICS RECYCLING SERVICES

County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Recycling Coordinator Harvey Hoch brought this request, to approve an Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchase of Electronics Recycling Services for the Solid Waste Department from E-Structors, Inc. of Ellicott City, Maryland via an Allegany County, Maryland contract at the fee rate of \$.059 per pound. The Solid Waste Department is opening an electronics recycling area at the landfill soon. The contractor will remove the material for recycling and will be paid by the pound for its services. It is unknown how many pounds of such material would be harvested this fiscal year. Allegany County solicited quotes from companies in July of 2006. E-Structors was the lowest responsive, responsible bidder. Hoch told the Board that users would be charged minimum fee of \$8.00 up to 300 pounds. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

REVISED PERSONNEL POLICIES

Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik brought personnel policies PR-18 and PR-19 to the board for review and approval. Last week, the Board discussed several changes in the policies, and requested Sonnik return this week for approval. The policy for PR-18 - Wage and Salary Classification Program received review on January 29th. Discussion centered on language in a number of the policy's provisions necessitating changes to the document. Policy PR-19 - Performance Management System was reviewed. Adoption of the revised personnel policies was necessary to reflect changes incurred by adoption of the Salary Review Committee report last fall. Discussion of PR-19 centered on the use of the word "annual" rather than "consecutive" in measuring employee performance on succeeding evaluations. With minor changes, the policies were approved by a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Kercheval voting "no".

BUDGET DISCUSSION

County Administrator Greg Murray brought this preliminary discussion of Hotel-Motel revenue before the Board. The proposal would move funding for Economic Development Commission operations back to the General Fund, and allow revenues collected from taxes on room rentals to be shared with municipalities. State law requires half of the revenue received each year from the 6% Hotel-Motel (H-M) room taxes to be distributed to the Convention and Visitors Bureau, with the remaining funds to be used for local tourism and economic development projects. The FY 2009 proposed budget is \$1.64 million. Some \$821,500 would be available for Economic Projects and municipal distributions. After discussion of several options, the Board recommended placing \$300,000 in a pool, and solicit feedback from the local chapter of the Maryland Municipal League (MML), made up of Mayors and Councils of the 9 municipalities, as to the most equitable manner of distribution. Municipalities that have Hotels, Motels or Bed and Breakfast inns within town boundaries are expected to collect \$270,00 in Fiscal Year 2009. The Commissioners allocated additional funding based on the belief that the other municipalities attract tourism dollars through annual events, and contribute in that fashion to the H-M revenue collections. This would be the first direct distribution of these tax revenues to the towns. The proposal will be presented to MML at its next monthly meeting.

EAST OAK RIDGE DRIVE REHABILITATION: TEMPORARY BRIDGE DISCUSSION

Chief Engineer, Terry McGee and Joe Kroboth, Director of Public Works brought this discussion before the Board. The request was that the County not approve the inclusion of a temporary bridge into the planned bridge rehabilitation project and proceed with the project consistent with past bridges. The Engineers requested that the County commit to a 5 month closure period. Several local business owners approached the County regarding their concerns for adverse impact to their businesses should East Oak Ridge Drive be closed for the subject project. As a result of a meeting with the business owners the County agreed to explore the possibility of constructing a temporary bridge at the project site that would prevent closing the road to traffic during the course of the project. Due to the deteriorated condition of the East Oak Ridge Drive bridge over the Antietam Creek, this single lane stone arch bridge is scheduled for extensive rehabilitation this year. Due to the type of bridge, and the type of work required, the bridge must be closed to all traffic during the work. Approximately 9,000 vehicles per day cross the bridge. Consistent with recent similar projects, the normal contract time for this bridge would be 6 months. Staff feels the closure time could be compressed into a 5 month closure period, but a cost premium of about 5% or \$58,000 might be incurred. The actual road closure would be at the bridge only and the associated detour would be marked consistent with SHA guidelines (Sharpsburg Pike to Wilson Blvd. to Frederick Street). This is a federal aid project and as such various State and Federal requirements must be followed and incorporated into the project. As a result of a meeting between County staff and several local business owners, staff agreed to more fully explore the possibility of using a temporary bridge in order to avoid any road closure. The Chief Engineer met the project's design engineer (KCI) on site to discuss the possibility and

solicit a detailed cost proposal to more fully evaluate the idea as County staff has no experience with a temporary bridge being used in this fashion. Accordingly, the current estimates would put the total cost of a temporary bridge at \$672,000 plus RoW and utilities. Lacking detailed information at this time, staff has budgeted \$85,000 for RoW and utility impacts, bringing the total cost to \$757,000. As the Funkstown bridge is a stone arch, it is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is protected accordingly. Several options were discussed: proceed with the concept plan preparation and then render a decision regarding the temporary bridge; proceed with incorporating the temporary bridge into the project; proceed with the project as currently planned with a 6 month construction schedule and without a temporary bridge; or proceed with the project as currently planned but with a compressed construction schedule, with a 5 month construction schedule and without a temporary bridge. After considerable discussion, a motion to move forward with bidding an expedited 5-month contract, was approved on a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Barr voting "no".



YOUTH MERITORIOUS AWARD

Commissioners' President John Barr presented the Youth Meritorious High School award for November, to Jeremy Cress, an 11th Grade Student at North Hagerstown High School, son of Leon and Debbie Cress. Jeremy, who currently has a cumulative grade point average of 4.22, has been on the Honor Roll and Distinguisher Honor Roll throughout his school career. He is also a member of the National Honor Society. He is the president of the Calculus Club and tutors other students. He also serves as a Student Government Representative. Jeremy has been volunteering at Children in Need, Inc. for two years, including summers, and plans to continue through high school and during his summers while in college. He also has participated in service activities through the Key Club at North High. Jeremy was nominated by Guidance Counselor Anne Martin.

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