



**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 26, 2008



INTERIM SENIOR CENTER LEASE AND PROGRAM COSTS

Susan MacDonald, Executive Director of the Washington County Commission on Aging and Maureen Grove, Executive Director of Girls, Inc. brought this proposal for an Interim Senior Center Lease and Program Costs before the Board. The request was for approval of the expenditure of operating funds for Fiscal Year 2009 in the amount of \$328,000, to open a Senior Center at the Girls, Inc. location on Washington Avenue. Girls, Inc serves girls ages 5-15 after school and in the evenings. The Commission on Aging would like to lease space to operate a senior center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays in that location. The recently renovated facility includes a gym, auditorium, working kitchen, meeting rooms, office space, adequate parking, and other amenities. Washington County does not currently have a multi-service senior community center. The goal is to co-locate such centers with new library, youth or school facilities so as to provide cost-effective and comprehensive public services. In the interim, the proposed use of Girls, Inc. space would provide a focal point for wellness programs to maintain lifelong independence for seniors while providing important socialization and

civic engagement opportunities. In addition, this innovative intergenerational partnership provides for other benefits to the community. Annual operating costs of \$301,000 plus a one-time expenditure of \$27,000 for furniture and equipment were included in that request. The annual leasing cost, including all utilities, would total \$180,000, which would be below the average market square footage costs in the City of Hagerstown. Staffing costs, projected at \$74,000 for twelve months, are consistent with senior center staffing costs in comparable centers in other counties. Food costs of \$47,000 annually would include contributions from participants. Cost of square footage, furniture, staffing, transportation and the interim nature of the request were discussed. The request was for consideration in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget and the measure will receive further discussion.

AIRPORT FUND BUDGET DISCUSSION

Hagerstown Regional Airport Fire Chief Phil Ridenour and HGR Executive Assistant Janet Moats brought this review of the operating budget for FY 2009 before the Board for a first review. The total proposed budget for FY 2009 is \$2.72 million, a decrease of \$56,590.00 or 2.03% from FY '08. Ridenour told the Board that some of the projected decrease is due to lack of scheduled air service at the facility, and some is due to the conservative fiscal approach that the County is taking towards the upcoming budget. Airfield landing fees, terminal rent, and FAA rental property income would decline, while Corporate Hangar rental income would increase. The increase in aviation fuel costs has meant that private pilots are not flying as much as in previous years, Ridenour said. All budgets will be reviewed by line item prior to the Public Hearing in May.

GOLF COURSE BUDGET DISCUSSION

Jim Sterling, Director of the Department of Buildings, Grounds and Parks, Black Rock Golf Course Maintenance Supervisor and Director of Golf Darryl Whittington brought the proposed FY '09 budget for the Golf Course to the Board for a first review. Sterling told the Board that revenues and expenditures for Fiscal Year 2009 are balanced at \$1.24 million, a decrease of 3.38% or \$43,430.00. Some greens fees and cart rentals would be increased. All rate increases would be no more than one dollar in any category. Rates for Seniors and Senior Discounts, along with Twilight play fees and Tournament fees would not increase. Costs for maintenance equipment fuel and credit charge service fees have impacted the budget. Discussion included the possibility of additional advertising through tradeout in local media. Commissioner Jim Kercheval commended the Buildings, Grounds and Parks and Golf Course staffs for working well together during the first year of BG&P oversight. All budgets will be reviewed by line item prior to the Public Hearing in May.

PUBLIC HEARING; AMENDMENT TO 2006 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE ORDINANCE

Department of Permits and Inspections Director Dan DiVito brought to Public Hearing an Amendment to the Ordinance adopting the 2006 International Residential

Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, First Printing, with Local Amendments for Washington County, Maryland. This public hearing was being held for the purpose of considering the adoption of an Ordinance to amend "An Ordinance to Repeal the 2003 International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, Fourth Printing, with Local Amendments for Washington County, and to Enact the 2006 International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, First Printing, with Local Amendments for Washington County, Maryland" adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on December 17, 2007. Subsequent to the adoption of the 2006 Code, it was discovered that new language had been inadvertently omitted in Section R403.1, General, of the local amendments. Added to the section would be, "All structures requiring continuous footings shall be reinforced with a minimum of two #4 reinforcing bars, or as specified by a design professional." No one appeared to comment in favor of or against the amendment. The record will remain open for 10 days to allow for written public comment, and be returned to the Commissioners in two weeks for an official vote.

SERVICE LINKED HOUSING PROGRAM

Community Action Council Deputy Director Sherry Neil, and Housing Counselor Martha Burman brought this request for submission of the Service-Linked Housing Program (SLH) for Fiscal Years 2009-2011 Application before the Board.

The program provides linkages for low-income persons living in permanent housing to supportive services within the community. This funding pays the salary and benefit costs of two case managers. The Supportive Housing Specialist provides case management services to individuals residing in the Single Room Occupancies (SROs) at the Dagmar Hotel. The Service Linked Housing Case Manager works with other households residing in permanent housing in the community who are working toward self-sufficiency.

Proposed funding will cover the cost of the case manager's salaries, fringe benefits, and a percentage of the administrative cost associated with the provision of services by the provider. The total amount being requested for this application funding cycle is \$214,917 or \$71,639 per year for three years, for the two positions. This funding is leveraged with funding from the Rental Allowance Program, Gaming Commission, Freeman Trust, HUD Supportive Housing Program, and existing local government funding designated to serve the low-income population. No additional local government funding will be required.

The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

CONTRACT AWARD: TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAINTENANCE

County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Information Technologies Department Director Ron Whitt brought this request before the Board, to award a contract for Telecommunications Maintenance Services to the responsive, responsible proposer, Delta Telephone & Cabling Data Services, Inc. of Crofton, Maryland, for the Total Lump Sum Fee of \$36,675.00, contingent upon the approval of the final Agreement by the staff and County Attorney's Office. The contract includes full parts and labor maintenance services for a one-year period, tentatively beginning April 15, 2008 with an option by the County to renew for up to four additional consecutive one-year periods, subject to written notice given by the County at least sixty calendar days in advance of its expiration date. Funds in the amount of \$18,392.00 are available for the remainder of FY

'08 in the IT Department's budget for these services; funds in the amount of \$52,000.00 are requested in the FY '09 budget. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

CITY OF HAGERSTOWN ANNEXATION; BRK VENTURES LLC

Department of Planning and Community Development Director Mike Thompson brought this Annexation Request, from the City of Hagerstown before the Board. The request was that the Board agree that the proposed City zoning for the property requesting annexation is consistent with existing County Zoning and "express approval" for the development of the property is not necessary. The applicant, BRK Ventures, LLC has requested annexation of a parcel of land consisting of approximately 1.085 acres adjacent to the City of Hagerstown, located at 13015 Salem Avenue west of I-81. The property is located on the north side of the highway adjacent to the Collegiate Acres development, which is located within the corporate limits of the City. The owner anticipates constructing a limited retail operation on the property, but has no formal development plans at this time. The applicant is requesting C-2 (Commercial General) zoning upon annexation, which is consistent with the existing HI-1 (Highway Interchange) County zoning designation. The property is designated for Industrial Flex on the 2002 adopted Comprehensive Plan and HI-1 is consistent with this designation. Based on the information provided, staff believes the proposed zoning to be consistent with the existing county zoning and therefore, no express approval is necessary in this case. The Board reached consensus to agree with the staff recommendation.

BUDGET TRANSFER; EMERGENCY SERVICES OFFICE PROJECT

Public Works Director (DPW) Joe Kroboth and Project Manager Gary Pozzouli brought this request, for approval of a budget transfer from CIP Contingency to the "Renovate Emergency Services Office Project" in the amount of \$200,000, before the Board. DPW initiated a renovation contract in September 2007 to relocate the Division of Fire and Emergency Services into vacant office space at the Water Quality Building on Elliott Parkway. The original construction contract was awarded for \$1,485,000. During construction, various portions of the existing building have necessitated removal to accommodate the new construction. During the process, several quality assurance matters have been discovered that were unforeseen conditions at the time of contract design and bidding. These include inappropriate roofing insulation, inappropriate venting of the roof area that lead to moisture collection in the attic, and the most severe case, failure of the waterproofing material on walls exposed to the earth. A standard contingency value was established for the contract. However, these unforeseen conditions consumed more than the contingency value allowed. These issues will result in additional expenses from the contractor and the architect for services not included in the original contract. Kroboth told the Board that replacement of the ceiling insulation would save 50% of heating and cooling costs. The contractor has indicated cost for the project would be in a range from \$120,000-\$130,000. Considerable excavation would be needed around the building foundation. The work would delay the final completion of the renovation project by about one month. The building was built under the auspices of the old Sanitary District in 1990. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

THE BOARD ATTENDED AN EVENING MEETING WITH THE TOWN OF SHARPSBURG AT TOWN HALL IN THAT MUNICIPALITY
COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire commented on a communication from the League of Women Voters regarding affordable housing. The Commissioner is sending a memo to each of the Fire and Rescue companies setting up a schedule for his attendance at each company's meeting through the next year. A review of the Non-Profit section 1-108 list showed 30 agencies on the list. Aleshire noted what he called a "primary and secondary list" of agencies and cited increases in contributions of \$4 million since 1996.

Commissioner Bill Wivell thanked the Sharpsburg Mayor and Council for hosting the meeting.

Commissioner Jim Kercheval reported on addressing a meeting of retired teachers and administrators last week. Community Lobbying Day in Annapolis focused on Base Realignment and Closure "zones", on marketing of area biotech facilities, on reuse of vacant buildings, on Gaming issues, and on funding for Hagerstown Community College. The County, City of Hagerstown, Board of Education, Greater Hagerstown Committee, CHIEF and the Chamber of Commerce are partners in the lobbying effort, Kercheval said. The Main Library branch expansion project will be funded 50% by the State, Kercheval reported. The Commissioner also discussed foreclosure increases in the County, up by 177 in 2007. The Maryland Association of Counties' Legislative Committee heard about changes in funding to Health Departments statewide that will affect funding for Washington County programs. Employee benefit costs currently paid by the state may pass to the county level, and changes in Medicaid reimbursement practices could mean losses in revenue in the County for the Commission on Aging, the Board of Education's Autism programs, and Health Department programs for young child nutrition. Letters of support for a moratorium on changes to these programs and asking that funding cuts not be made are needed from the Counties, and Washington County will send such a letter to the state, Kercheval said.

Commissioner Terry Baker thanked the Town for hosting the meeting. The Commissioner said that community cooperation aided in the firefighting effort in Boonsboro last Friday. The Commissioners offered support and assistance to the Town, Baker said. Last week's Emergency Services Advisory Committee meeting discussed the public safety communications project. A public meeting is set for March 26th at 7:00 p.m. at Pleasant Valley Elementary School on Maryland Route 67 to discuss a communications tower planned for the Sandy Hook area. The Committee also discussed the Elliott Parkway 9-1-1 dispatch center project, dispatch consolidation issues, and a supervisory position announcement to be advertised soon. Open house at the Barr construction Institute last week was well-attended, Baker said. The facility will offer courses in construction trades including Concrete, Electrical, HVAC, Sheet Metal, Carpentry and OSHA safety, Baker said, and will be a boost to the construction industry in the area.

Commissioners' President John Barr also thanked the Mayor and Council for hosting the meeting. A number of County department heads and officials spent most of the past Friday in Boonsboro, helping the Town deal with the devastating fire at the Boone hotel. 32 Fire and Rescue companies responded to the blaze, which damaged or destroyed 7 buildings in the town's core area. A total community effort was seen as the Town, the

County, the State and the Federal Governments as well as the private sector all worked together. A letter of thanks will be sent to Allegheny Power for its thorough response to the outages in Boonsboro and Keedysville caused by the fire. A final walk-through of the new Boonsboro Library had been scheduled for Friday afternoon, but had to be cancelled. A meeting on that facility held on Thursday of last week ironed out final impediments to use and occupancy permits from the Town, Barr said. Barr Academy, named after the Commissioner's family, is a first-of-its-kind made possible through cooperative efforts of the Construction industry, the Board of Education and the non-profit Academy foundation in providing skilled trade training in a number of areas, which will serve Washington County and surrounding jurisdictions in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia.

TOWN COMMENTS

Mayor Hal Spielman thanked the Commissioners for visiting the Town and listening to citizen concerns.

Town Commissioner Jeffery Saylor thanked Commissioner Baker for working with the Town on street issues. Saylor asked for assistance for parking needs for a church adjacent to the Southeast Senior Center on Mount Vernon Drive in Keedysville. The County owns that property Saylor, who serves as Board President for that Center, said. The County will work with Saylor and the church on that issue.

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.

Missy DeHaven, representing the League of Women Voters' Affordable Housing Task Force asked the Board to hire a consultant to develop a report on 11 recommendations made by that group. Only one of the recommendations had been addressed, she said. Commissioner Kercheval stated that the Board had worked on a number of those issues, including providing Community Action Council with additional funding to deal with workforce and affordable housing, while making changes to zoning relative to location of modular housing. Additional changes affecting lower priced homes were made to the excise tax recommendations now before the legislature, Kercheval said.

Joe Wilhide of Harper's Ferry Road requested assistance with road conditions and traffic control.

OTHER BUSINESS

Appointments to Boards and Commissions: County Clerk Joni Bittner told the Board that the Mental Health Authority had requested appointment of Patrick Flickinger to a three-year term. The measure was approved by a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Aleshire voting "no".

Bittner also requested approval of appointments discussed in closed session earlier in the day, of Katie Carr and Jason Haupt as members of the Animal Control Authority, and Cindy Kalkbrenner as an Alternate to that Board. The measures were approved by unanimous vote.

County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray thanked Sharpsburg for hosting the meeting. On the issue of mortgage foreclosures, Murray said

that Community Action Council has services to assist those faced with mortgage problems. The Capital Improvement Projects final plan will go to the Board for review soon and will contain those projects moved out of the 6-year CIP and those remaining in that 6-year plan. Operating budgets for larger departments will begin to see initial review next week, starting with the Sheriff's Department. In the legislature, House Bill 639 would give the Commissioners local control over appointments to School Board positions that become vacant. Currently the Governor makes those decisions. The Bill is slated for discussion on the House Floor in Annapolis on Wednesday. County assistance to Boonsboro during last week's fire included portable emergency generators providing power for the Fire Station. Murray commended all County staff involved in that effort. A meeting on Monday with State and Federal representatives in Boonsboro was held to determine what aid is available. The County is supplying landfill disposal at no charge and accelerated demolition permits. The agreement for the permitting process with Sharpsburg must be discussed, Murray said. Currently, a communications tower project has been delayed that would install an antenna on the Town water tower and construct an equipment shed. The town has placed a moratorium on all permits until its zoning regulations have been rewritten, but will work with the County to ensure that the Public Safety Communications project is not delayed. Improvements to the Sharpsburg Water System are nearing completion, Murray said. Townspeople will have enhanced water quality as a result, he said.

Comments from County Staff: Washington County Sheriff Doug Mullendore stated that a critique of public safety response to the Boonsboro incident will be held soon, looking at what was done and how better response could have been effected. Mullendore cited installation of a firewall between two of the buildings during rehabilitation of business space, as saving that business, Town Hall and the Library from major damage. The firewall issue will be discussed with all the municipalities, Mullendore said.

Human Resources Director Bill Sonnik requested permission to advertise two positions. The Director of Emergency Communications position, necessitated by consolidation of all public safety dispatching, would be advertised in-house among County and City of Hagerstown public safety organizations. A Skilled Trades Worker position is available at the Department of Water Quality, Sonnik said. The measures were approved by unanimous vote.

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