



**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, April 8, 2008



**PROCLAMATION, NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK**

Commissioners' President John Barr proclaimed the week of April 7-11, 2008 as National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week in Washington County. Safety Coordinator Brian Overcash and Dave Shrader, Highway Department Traffic Safety Supervisor accepted the proclamation on behalf of County employees. In making the proclamation, Barr said that awareness of work zones helps add to the safety of our construction, maintenance, utility and traffic incident workers as they perform daily tasks. Drivers and pedestrians have the responsibility to be alert and obey traffic laws, to reduce the number of work zone incidents, recorded as three per day nationwide. Workers are actively pursuing improved work zone safety through engineering, education, enforcement and coordination with public safety agencies to reduce congestion and accidents due to work zones. Tips for work zone safety include; Expect the unexpected; Slow down; Don't tailgate; Keep a safe distance between vehicles and construction workers; Pay attention to signs; Obey road crew flaggers; stay alert and minimize distractions; Stay with the traffic flow; Schedule enough time to drive safely and reach destinations on time; and Be patient

and stay calm. All County departments will highlight the importance of “Work Zone Safety”, and the County will continue to train all departments in safe work zone establishment and visibility. Dave Schrader, who deals with work zone safety on a day-to-day basis in his role with the Highway Department, is keenly aware of the importance of work zone safety, and designed this mechanism to stress this importance to others.



#### PROCLAMATION, NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT WEEK

Commissioners' President John Barr proclaimed April 6-12, 2008 as County Government Week in Washington County. The National Association of Counties sponsors National County Government Week (NCGW), an annual celebration of county government. First held in 1991, the goal of county government week is to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the nation's counties. In 2008, the National County Government Week theme is “Protecting Our Children.” Tom Kline of the Community Partnership, Debbie Green of The Family Network, and Chief Sheriff's Deputy Colonel Randy Wilkinson accepted the proclamation. In Washington County a number of programs exist to protect our children. Funding for many of these is awarded and monitored by the Washington County Community Partnership for Children and Families, a Local Management Board Initiative of the State of Maryland. The Community Partnership strives to ensure that program funding from the Governor's Office for Children, and other funding sources, is allocated properly, and that those funding recipients use the funds for programs as intended. The Family Network provides experienced Family Navigators to assist families in accessing services for their children from all systems of care. They are a local chapter of The Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health which is a statewide family voice for children's mental health and is dedicated to building a family-driven network of information and support, and improving services in all systems of care for children, youth and their families. The Washington County Sheriff's Department provides aid to children through programs on computer safety, Children's Village, Teen Driver Safety Class Learning for Life, Safety Presentations in the schools, Drug Education, Project Lifesaver, and Tours of the Sheriffs Office. Soon Youth Court will begin, featuring Peer on Peer Court, which are actual court cases run by youth. The proclamation honors these and

many other programs of County government that daily serve to protect the Children and Youth of Washington County.

#### COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Terry Baker reported on attending last week's Recreation and Parks Board meeting. Requests for Program Open Space funds from municipalities were heard including Keedysville's request for acquisition funds to purchase land fronting on the Little Antietam Creek for park development there. That Board honored retiring member Jerry Poffenberger for his years of service. Baker commented on need for a public meeting to receive comment on the proposed communications tower at Sandy Hook, and review National Park Service offers of alternate tower sites. The Commissioner relayed consolation to the Family of Bernie Moser, longtime member of the County Planning Commission, who passed away recently.

Commissioner Jim Kercheval also cited Bernie Moser as instrumental in the operation of the County Planning Commission, especially those years that he served as Chair of that Commission. On Monday evening, the Planning Commission heard requests for expansion of a church educational facility, Cushwa Brick's Williamsport Facility and on a new retail and medical facility planned on U.S. 40. On the tower issue, Kercheval said that 75% of the 83 emails he had received came from out-of-county or out-of-state citizens and agencies. Minutes of meetings between the County and the National Parks Service showed that options put forth did not meet the needs of public safety in the County. Viable options would be discussed, Kercheval said. County Administrator Greg Murray said that a general Question and Answer session with Parks Service officials will be held in next week's Commissioners' meeting. The call for an additional citizen information meeting on the Funkstown Bridge was a surprise, Kercheval said, and stated he did not get either a phone call or an email from Delegate Myers on that issue on Saturday. The bill that would have required an impact study before the project could be begun died in legislative Committee last week. The Commissioner asked about inspection procedures on warranty issues and "punch lists" after residents receive Use and Occupancy permits for homes, citing an inquiry from a County homeowner.

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire commented on attending a meeting of the Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company in Hagerstown recently as well as a meeting of the Funkstown Fire and Rescue Company on Monday. As additional paid personnel are added to the volunteer companies, insurance issues increase. Aleshire asked if these personnel could be included under the County's insurance policies. On the Sandy Hook tower issue, Aleshire commented on the calls taken by Pleasant Valley Fire and Rescue company in Dargan last year as first responders. No communication is possible between hand-held radios when personnel are on the river engaging in a water rescue. The river excursion companies pay National Park Service for use of Park land for launching and retrieval of inner tubes. Donations NPS made to fire and rescue companies for response on federal lands are no longer being made. He requested that issue be included in any meeting to be held with the federal agency. A letter from the U.S. Department of the Interior to the County cites dates of meetings in February and July of 2007. The Commissioner asked why opposition is only now being brought forth. Aleshire attended the Keedysville Mayor and Council meeting on Monday, and reported the Town will purchase the old bank building for its Town Hall and Library. Aleshire also commented

on attending a Parent-Child Center telethon and the kickoff of the School for the Arts fundraising campaign.

Commissioner Bill Wivell reported on Monday's meeting of the Water Quality Advisory Committee. The DWQAC reviewed current and proposed budgets, voted to support the proposed budget as well as the BOCC acceptance of the Cedar Springs Pump Station project bid award.. The Committee also discussed the City of Hagerstown's proposed utility rates and will write a letter to the City requesting information on its proposed increase in water and sewer rates to customers outside the City, Wivell said.

#### WATER QUALITY OPERATIONAL BUDGET AND COST OF SERVICE –

Division of Environmental Management Director Julie Pippel and Utility Engineer Mark Bradshaw brought this review of the Water Quality budget to the Board for review. Pippel told the Board that the Utility Administration Fund budget is balanced for Fiscal Year 2009 at \$3.64 million, an increase of 3.23%. The proposed Water Fund budget would be balanced at \$1.78 million, an increase of \$495,620, or 38.77 percent. The proposed Sewer Fund budget would be balanced at \$10.6 million, a decrease of 2.05%. The proposed Pretreatment Fund budget would be balanced at \$695,600 and is the same amount as budgeted in Fiscal Year 2008. The Utility Model as presented would see Residential Water rates for the Base 6,000 gallons per month use at \$80.20 per quarter, an increase of 30 cents per 1,000 gallons, or \$4.50 per quarter. Each additional 1,000 gallons would cost \$7.85. Residential Sewer rates would be \$86.00 per quarter with each additional 1,000 gallons priced at \$4.90. The base rate would rise \$2.70, and the change in the over 1,000 additional gallon rate would be 26 cents. The rates would be taken to Public Hearing on April 22<sup>nd</sup> if approved, and the motion to take the issue to the public was approved by unanimous vote.

#### PROPERTY ACQUISITION: LONGMEADOW ROAD

Joe Kuhna, Real Property Administrator in the Department of Public Works and Acting Deputy Director of Public Works for Capital Projects Rob Slocum brought this request for approval of a property acquisition at 19331 Longmeadow Road to the Board. Three homes along Longmeadow Road will interfere with the future widening efforts. The property at 19331 Longmeadow Road has been appraised and the department is ready to execute an option to purchase the property. Plans are underway to design the future intersection improvements and widening at Longmeadow Road and Marsh Pike. The realignment will place the road improvements too close to the current property. The current owners at 19331 Longmeadow Road have approached the County with their intention to sell the property to the County for the future road improvements. \$310,000 is available in the FY 2008 Capital Improvement Project budget for this acquisition. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

#### BID AWARD: CEDAR SPRINGS PUMP STATION

County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Mark Bradshaw, Deputy Director of Engineering Services in the Division of Environmental Management brought the bid award for the Cedar Springs Pump Station to the Board for approval. C. William Hetzer, Inc. of Hagerstown, Maryland was the responsible low bidder for a Grand Total Bid of \$2,191,489.00, contingent upon US Department of Agriculture approval, and to approve

the Budget Transfer Request of \$300,000.00 dated March 26, 2008. The project is for the construction of the Cedar Springs Pump Station to include, but not limited to: clearing, grubbing, excavation, backfill, surface restoration, furnish and install 10", 12" and 18" PVC gravity sewer pipe, furnish and install 14" PVC force main, manholes with frame & covers, 14" plug valves, force main flushing connection, furnish and install comminutor, manholes, jack & boring under existing roadway, furnish and install pump station building with pumps and controls along with all appurtenances, remove and reset existing fence, seeding disturbed areas, and placing salvages topsoil as shown and described in the contract documents to provide a complete and useable facility for the conveyance of sewer. The project is to be completed within one hundred eighty consecutive calendar days after Notice to Proceed is issued. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

#### GENERAL FUND BUDGET WORKSHOP

Budget and Finance Director Debra Murray brought this review of General Fund Expenditures before the Board. Murray told the Board that recent figures from the state Assessment Office reduced the Real Estate tax projection for the coming fiscal year from \$11.3 to \$11.2 billion based on appeals, and that the Fiscal Year 2009 budget will be adjusted to meet the projection. Additional changes to revenue included a \$200,000 increase to the Fire and Rescue budget from reimbursements from the City of Hagerstown for salary for 9-1-1 dispatch operators in the consolidated dispatch center. The General Revenue budget would increase by \$95,000 due to rents from tenants in Administration Building II on West Washington Street and from parking lot fees for the recently purchased lots on Franklin Street.

The K-12 Public Education funding request of \$87.3 million would be fully funded, including \$2.5 million above and beyond the Maintenance of Effort level, including amounts for Crossing Guards and the Judith Center. The Board of Education would not purchase new school buses in FY 2009.

#### 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.

Jack Parkin, a businessman in the East Oak Ridge Drive area, commented on the Funkstown bridge issue.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray requested permission to purchase equipment for wireless infrastructure upgrades at amounts greater than \$25,000 through the use of state contract piggy-back. Murray said that one of the projects, at Sideling Hill would cost \$39,000 and that there are several like projects as the County upgrades wireless technology. The equipment would be installed on existing structures, such as the Sharpsburg Water Tower, Murray said, and time and money would be saved by having the ability to make such purchases. The request was approved by unanimous vote.

Reports from County Staff: Real Property Administrator Joe Kuhna and Civil Engineer Randy Edwards brought this request, for advertisement of abandonment of a strip of County-owned property at the intersection of I-70 and Maryland Route 68 in

Clear Spring, for private development purposes. The strip of land, approximately 20 feet by 140 feet, is not currently maintained by the County. Commissioners wanted to know if the land had value, and if so, would the developer make the County an offer. The measure, to advertise the intent to abandon the road, was approved on a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Baker voting "no".

Charles Strong, State's Attorney, and Sharon Showe, Director of the Alternate Sanctions Program, brought this Grant Application, to the Board for approval. The Grant, in the amount of \$30,950.00 would come from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for the salary of the Work Crew Supervisor. The Supervisor oversees persons who have received community service through the court system. He is responsible for arranging the work, monitoring the hours performed, maintaining equipment and serving as a liaison to various agencies and organizations. The Work Crew supplies labor to the County, City, and non-profit organizations. The measure was approved by unanimous vote.

#### GENERAL FUND BUDGET WORKSHOP: continued

Budget and Finance Director Debbie Murray continued this workshop. Total spending for Education would be \$102.3 million, with the largest amount for K-12 public schools, at 87.65 million. Board of Health Nurses would account for \$3.38 million, an increase of \$332,530 or 10.9%. County support for Hagerstown Community College is recommended at \$2.6 million for the coming fiscal year, an addition of \$754,550 or 9.5% over FY 2008. Under the library category, the budget request is 2.06 million, up 4.4% or \$100,970.00.

The Public Safety-Sheriff total would be set at \$22.2 million, a reduction of \$524,570 due in part to half-year salaries for new staff for Central Booking that would not be hired until January of 2009. Public Safety Fire and Rescue would be budgeted at 9.31 million, an increase of 2.04 million or 28.06%, with the increase coming primarily from salaries for 22 new staff positions to implement Phase II of the Emergency Services Master Plan. Animal Control services' budget would increase by 4% to \$1.1 million. The grand total for Public Safety expenditures for Fiscal year 2009 would be 32.7 million.

#### ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

County Health Officer Earl Stoner and Tom Pianta, chair of the Advisory Commission to the County Board of Health brought this review of the Bylaws for the Advisory Commission and discussion of goals and objectives to the Board. Under discussion were number of members, criteria for nomination, and County Commissioners' expectations for the group. The possibility of conducting needs assessments on health matters and public comment at the Advisory Commission meetings were also brought forth. The Commission will review its bylaws and discuss its mission and send additional information to the County Commissioners for review.

#### GYPSY MOTH SPRAY PROGRAM

Maryland Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Earl Hance and County program Coordinator Tom Lupp visited the Board to discuss the need for the Gypsy Moth Spray program in the County. The gypsy moth is the most destructive pest of forest and shade trees in Maryland. The caterpillars eat the leaves of oaks and other hardwoods

in May and June. Heavy populations of caterpillars will eat most or all leaves in a tree. Large outbreaks have affected hundreds of thousands of acres statewide. Heavily defoliated trees may refoliate, but are still weakened, especially if defoliation occurs again the next year. Weakened trees are more vulnerable to other forest pests, diseases, drought and other stresses, and may die. The Forest Pest Management Section conducts an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program for the gypsy moth to minimize unnecessary losses as the result of the gypsy moth, through monitoring, assessment, information and education, and pest control actions. The state had requested for a commitment of \$109,000 in County funds for the Annual Gypsy Moth spraying program, up from \$26,000 in previous years. On March 25<sup>th</sup> the request was presented to the Board and the Commissioners requested additional information relating to number of acres sprayed. Deputy Secretary Hance was invited to make a presentation to the Board on the program and its effects on the environment. There were 175,000 acres of forest infested last year, the majority in Western Maryland. Program funding comes from Federal, State and County sources, with the County contribution making up 30% of the cost share. This year's program is funded at \$3.6 million from the state. The County participation would mean that 17,700 acres in Washington County would be sprayed. Lupp told the Board that 8,900 acres had significant defoliation in 2007. If trees are defoliated a second year, they may die due to stress factors or plant diseases. A problem with the program is that the County budget is set in June of each year, and the Gypsy Moth program does not know how much funding will be necessary until March of the following year. The program is primarily geared toward residential areas that are forested and high use recreational areas. The Board thanked the state officials for their time and stated the request would be discussed at a later date. As part of the General Fund Budget- Other Government Program discussion held following the presentation, the Gypsy Moth program was discussed. A compromise was reached that would place \$100,000.00 in the budget category for FY 2009 and set that number as a program limit in coming years, while utilizing \$86,000 from the Commissioners' Contingency Fund for this year, to bring the program request to \$112,000 for FY '08, to fully fund the request.

#### GENERAL FUND BUDGET WORKSHOP

Budget and Finance Director Debra Murray continued this first review of General Fund Expenditures for the coming Fiscal Year. Operating and Capital Transfers show a total of \$42.8 million including \$2.15 million in tax setoff funds for the municipalities, an increase of \$160,000 or 8% over FY 2008.

Other Government Programs showed an overall increase of 5.72% or \$11.2 million to a grand total of \$206.93 million. The category includes Courts, State programs, Non-profits, General Operations, Planning and Permits, Buildings, Other, Medical Examiner, Public Works, Parks and Recreation and Economic Development. Most non-profit programs held the line and requested a zero budget increase. Memorial Recreation Center requested \$24,080 for one-time repairs to its Swimming Pool. The Commission on Aging was recommended to receive a 5% increase or \$28,690. CASA had requested an total of \$288,380 in County support, which was reduced by \$21,160. CASA Director Vicki Sadehvandi told the Board that the increase constituted a 3% overall increase for wages and health benefits for staff. The Board reached consensus to restore that amount to the CASA budget. The total requested expenditure for Other Government Programs

was \$29 million. The Grand Total of all County General Fund Expenditures, balanced with Revenues would be \$207 million. All budgets will receive line-item review prior to the Public Hearing set for May 13 at Hagerstown Community College.

THE BOARD ATTENDED THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET WORKSHOP  
AT THE WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEADQUARTERS AT 823  
COMMONWEALTH AVENUE IN HAGERSTOWN

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