



**BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY**
11916 Somerset Avenue
Room 111/Meeting Room
Princess Anne, MD 21853
February 13, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Appointment:

- 2:00 p.m. - Bid Opening- Charles Cavanaugh, Maintenance Director
 - Princess Anne Library HVAC Unit Replacement
- 2:05 p.m. - Mr. Woody Barnes, Mr. Charles Cavanaugh
 - BRIC/DTA Application
- 2:15 p.m. - Mr. Jesse Drewer, Department of Technical and Community Service Director
 - Cannabis Zoning Code Text Amendment-Adoption of Ordinance
 - FY24 CDBG Application/Ewell Recreation Center
 - Nuisance Code Amendment/Non-Migratory Birds
 - MD-20-CD-25 Blight Grant- Final Extension Request
 - Request for Lien Release/4 Potomac Street, Crisfield, MD

Correspondence

Sent:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church re: Building Permit Fee Waiver
Michelle Cable, MD Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation re: Local Matching Program

Discussion:

- * 1. Formal Proclamation Approval- PFC. Michael Anthony Carter Jr.
- * 2. Somers Cove Marina Commission Appointment
- * 3. Somerset County Dog Control Spay/Neuter Grant Application
- * 4. US Army CORPS – Local Sponsor Statement of No-Objection
- * 5. Proclamation Request/Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay – 2024 Girl Scout Week

Public Comments: Members of the audience who have signed up to address the Board will be permitted to do so at this time and allotted 5 minutes.

2:45 p.m. - Closed Session- Mr. Ralph Taylor, Mr. Ernest Leatherbury, Attorney Robin Cockey, Mr. Clint Sterling, Ms. Amber Baker

Authority of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland § 3-305 (b)(1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; and (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

- * *Denotes Action Item*

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
REGULAR SESSION
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

At 2:00 p.m., President Charles Laird called for the Board of Commissioners for Somerset County open in Regular Session. Present for the meeting were President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing. Commissioner Darryl Webster was absent from today's meeting.

Also in attendance were County Administrator Ralph D. Taylor, Deputy County Administrator Ernie Leatherbury, and Executive Secretary Kimberly Lopez.

Closed Session Summary Report for February 13, 2024

On February 13, 2024, from 2:42 p.m. until 4:12 p.m., at 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 111, upon a motion made by Vice President Randy Laird, seconded by Commissioner Craig Mathies, and voted in favor by a show of hands by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing to enter into Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Subtitle §3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; and (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Present for the meeting were President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing. Commissioner Darryl Webster was absent from today's meeting. County Administrator Ralph D. Taylor, Deputy County Administrator Ernie Leatherbury, Attorney Robin Cockey, Director of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Clint Sterling, Human Resource Specialist Amber Baker, and Executive Secretary Kimberly Lopez were also present. Topics discussed were: (1) Legal; Actions Taken: None; (2) Personnel; Actions Taken: Hiring.

President Charles Laird asked Commissioner Eldon Willing to lead those present in Devotion and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes from the January 23, 2024 Open and Closed Meetings and the January 30, 2024 Open and Closed meetings were presented for approval.

Vice President Randy Laird made a motion to approve all the minutes as presented. Commissioner Craig Mathies seconded. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing; the motion carried.

Mr. Charles Cavanaugh, Director of Solid Waste and Maintenance, was before the Board to present sealed bids for the replacement of the Princess Anne Library's HVAC unit. The bids were opened and read aloud by President Charles Laird as follows:

- Gary Justice/EASI - \$53,871.05
- Hancock & Sons - \$54,700.00 (\$52,500.00 based bid + optional \$2,200.00 premium time, 8 hours, for sitting air handler)

Mr. Cavanaugh advised he would review the submitted bids and report back to the Board with his recommendation.

Before the Board now was Mr. Woody Barnes, Director of Roads, joining Mr. Cavanaugh to request authorization to submit BRIC/DTA grant application. An information packet from FEMA was provided for the Board's review; however, Mr. Cavanaugh explained that this would be a technical assistance program the County would apply for to bring the Crisfield Tidal Dike back to a fully functioning capacity.

Following a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Craig Mathies and seconded by Vice President Randy Laird to authorize the County to apply for the BRIC/DTA grant and submit the application. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Mr. Barnes and Mr. Cavanaugh left the meeting.

Now before the Board was Mr. Jesse Drewer, Director of Technical and Community Services to request the adoption of the Ordinance #1195 for the Cannabis Zoning Code. As discussed at the previous meeting, this would restrict cannabis to the I1 and I2 zones.

A motion was made by Vice President Randy Laird and seconded by Commissioner Craig Mathies to approve the Board's signatures on Ordinance #1195. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Next, Mr. Drewer advised that no comments have been received from the public hearing held on January 30th with regards to the Ewell Recreation Center. With that said, Mr. Drewer requested the Boards authorization for Resolution #1196 for the submission of the FY24 CDBG

Applications (in the amount of \$120K) and the President's signature on the statement of assurances and any further required documents that need to be executed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Craig Mathies and seconded by Vice President Randy Laird to approve Resolution #1196 as presented. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

A discussion was then held regarding an amendment to the Nuisance Code with regards to "non-migratory birds, backyard birds, and birds" with Mr. Drewer inquiring if there were any additional amendments the Board would like to address. The Board advised that it would be beneficial to change "chickens" to "fowl" as that would cover domesticated geese and ducks under the ordinance as well. Mr. Drewer advised it will be updated as requested and that the public hearing to present these amendments will be scheduled.

Following this, Mr. Drewer advised of the need to submit for a final extension request for the MD-20-CD-25 Blight Grant to accommodate the demolition of four blighted structures. Mr. Drewer advised that, per Ms. Cindy Stone of CDBG, no further extensions will be granted (following this one) and the firm deadline will now be June 30, 2024. The Board expressed concerns for the funds of this grant not being fully exhausted (and being returned to CDBG—a sum of approximately \$70K) and how this will affect any future grant applications to address blighted properties. Mr. Drewer advised that if the County were to hold this current grant open any longer than we could not apply for anything new; therefore, with this final extension request and firm deadline, the County can apply for a new grant in the spring. A discussion was then held regarding the remaining blighted properties to be addressed and the issues being presented due to the five (5) year stipulation attached to the property that comes with this program.

A motion was made by Vice President Randy Laird and seconded by Commissioner Eldon Willing to authorize Mr. Drewer to submit for the final extension request for the MD-20-CD-25 Blight Grant. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Mr. Drewer then presented a request for a release of lien for 4 Potomac Street in Crisfield. In 2013, \$5,241.90 of CDBG funds were used to remove a blighted home and the family of the property owner (who has passed) has recently contacted the County to release the lien that has expired.

A motion was made by Vice President Randy Laird and seconded by Commissioner Craig Mathies to release the lien. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

With no further business, Mr. Drewer left the meeting.

Mr. Taylor then advised the Board of sent correspondence.

Under discussion items, Mr. Taylor requested formal approval of the proclamation presented to the family of PFC Michael Anthony Carter Jr.

A motion was made by Commissioner Craig Mathies and seconded by Vice President Randy Laird to approve the proclamation. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Next, Mr. Taylor advised of a vacancy on the Somers Cove Marina Commission and advised that Ms. Vendetta Young has been nominated to fill that vacancy.

A motion was made by Vice President Randy Laird and seconded by Commissioner Eldon Willing to appoint Ms. Vendetta Young to the Somers Cove Marina Commission. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Mr. Taylor advised that Mr. Sturgis, Director of Dog Control, has requested to apply for a Spay/Neuter Grant to assist low income families with this service.

A motion was made by Commissioner Craig Mathies and seconded by Vice President Randy Laird to authorize Mr. Sturgis to apply for the Spay/Neuter Grant. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Next, Mr. Taylor advised that the US Army CORPS has requested a Local Sponsor Statement of No-Objection with regards to the bulkhead replacement project for Somers Cove so the USAC can complete the work (as Somers Cove is a Federal Channel and the County is the authority).

A motion was made by Vice President Randy Laird and seconded by Commissioner Eldon Willing to approve the President's signature on the Local Sponsor Statement of No-Objection for the USAC. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Mr. Taylor then advised of a proclamation request for the Girl Scouts of America.

A motion was made by Commissioner Craig Mathies and seconded by Vice President Randy Laird to approve the proclamation for the Girls Scouts. By a show of hands in favor by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the motion carried.

Under Public Comment, Ms. Tammy Truitt of 5144 Whittington Rd addressed the Board with regards to a concern she and other citizens have with mail-in election votes. Ms. Truitt advised of issues with invalid addresses and dishonest voters using this to their advantage to commit voter fraud—calling it a “license to steal an election.” Ms. Truitt further advised that she has brought these concerns up to the Board of Elections office; however, their responses yield toward not being able to remove voters with a signed statement from the voter, and voters cannot be removed due to inactivity for eight years. At the conclusion of her public comment, Ms. Truitt presented a Statewide Petition to remove the vulnerability for mail-in voting and asked for the Board’s consideration to sign it.

Following this, the Board was advised for the need of a Closed Session meeting.

Therefore, at 2:42 p.m., on a motion made by Vice President Randy Laird, seconded by Commissioner Craig Mathies, and voted in favor by a show of hands by President Charles Laird, Vice President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig Mathies, and Commissioner Eldon Willing, the Board entered into Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Subtitle §3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; and (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Approved by:



Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County

Respectfully Submitted:



Kimberly Lopez
Executive Secretary