

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY  
DECEMBER 20, 2011

At 2:00 P.M., the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County met in regular session with Commissioner President Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Vice-President Charles F. Fisher, Commissioner Craig N. Mathies Sr., Commissioner Jerry S. Boston and Commissioner Randy Laird.

Also present was Ralph D. Taylor, County Administrator-Clerk, and Cynthia R. Ward, Executive Aide.

President Rex Simpkins called the meeting to order. Commissioner Mathies led those in attendance in the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it was carried 4-0 to approve the Minutes of the meetings held Tuesday, December 6, 2011, and December 13, 2011.

Mr. Taylor began with a review of correspondence and discussion items.

The Board reviewed a letter from Mr. Gary Pusey, Director of Technical and Community Services, regarding the term expiration of Robert Fitzgerald and Steve Megronigle, who currently serve as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Somerset County Planning Commission. Both individuals have indicated they would like to continue serving.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to re-appoint Mr. Robert Fitzgerald and Mr. Steve Megronigle to serve as members of the Planning Commission for another five-year term. The motion carried 4-0.

The Board also reviewed a letter from Ms. Julie Widdowson, Director of Tourism, regarding the term expiration of the existing Tourism Commission members. The current members have indicated they are willing to continue to serve, if re-appointed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to re-appoint Ms. Marilyn Cottman to serve as member of the Somerset County Tourism Commission, representing District 2, for another three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to re-appoint Mr. Earl Smith to serve as member of the Somerset County Tourism Commission, representing District 3, for another three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathies, seconded by Commissioner Laird, to re-appoint Ms. Cora Widdowson to serve as member of the Somerset County Tourism Commission, representing District 1, for another three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Fisher, to re-appoint Ms. Bonita Porter to serve as member of the Somerset County Tourism Commission, At-Large, for another three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board was advised of the upcoming Maryland Agriculture Council Dinner, scheduled for February 2, 2012, in Glen Burnie, Maryland.

At this time, the Board addressed the proposed redistricting of Somerset County. Mr. Taylor reviewed the recommendation received from the Redistricting Committee, as presented during the public hearing December 13, 2011, known as proposal "1a". The County also received correspondence from American Civil Liberties Union in opposition to "1a". The ACLU also submitted their proposal for redistricting. Since the public hearing, a new proposal has been drafted for the Board's consideration, which is a comprise of "1a" and the ACLU's version, now entitled "1aa". Mr. Taylor reminded the Board that once a map (showing the new boundaries of all five districts) has been approved, emergency legislation will be introduced in Annapolis for consideration by the General Assembly.

Commissioner Mathies questioned the difference in the inmate population at ECI vs. the student population at UMES, and how is it configured in the new map "1aa"; and also asked for clarification on the voting population of UMES. Mrs. Cornelius advised that there was a difference of approximately 500 people, and they are located in District 2.

Commissioner Laird inquired about the student population census count, if they are not Somerset County citizens. Mr. Tom Lawton advised that all census counts are based on a person's actual location on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Laird also inquired if another public hearing was required. Mr. Massey reported that another hearing would not be necessary since the Committee's original map is still being considered, along with an amended version which incorporates the ACLU recommendations.

Commissioner Boston questioned if any census blocks were divided. Mrs. Cornelius replied no – all blocks were left intact. Roads, streams, etc. were used as boundary lines.

The Board inquired if anyone was present today from the ACLU. Mr. Kirkland Hall, now before the Board, stated that Deborah Jeon (ACLU) was unable to attend. Mr. Hall

addressed a pending lawsuit in Mississippi to remove the college students from the census count, and that a similar occurrence may take place in Somerset. Mr. Hall went on to state that two minority districts were approved and adopted in the 2001 Redistricting Plan. Mr. Massey corrected Mr. Hall's statement by saying that the 2001 Redistricting Plan was not based on two minority districts, however, the final counts simply resulted in two majority/minority districts. Commissioner President Simpkins referred to "1aa" which is a compromise of the Redistricting Committee's original proposal (1a) and ACLU's proposal, resulting in the formation of two minority districts (District One and District Two). President Simpkins asked for Mr. Hall's opinion of this new proposal (1aa). Mr. Hall gave his concurrence.

President Simpkins asked for any further questions from the Board or from the public.

Mr. Dan Kuebler noted the historical boundaries have been greatly changed and congratulated the ACLU for bringing this issue to our attention; and for the County Commissioners addressing the issue.

With no further questions or comments, the following action was taken on the adoption of a new redistricting map:

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to adopt "1aa" as the Redistricting Plan for Somerset County. The motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Mathies abstaining from the vote.

At this time, Resolution No. 1035 was presented for the Board's consideration.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to adopt Resolution 1035 which establishes an acceptable population for each commissioner district, based upon the 2010 U.S. Census, and provides for two minority districts (District One: 73.40% minority and District Two: 58.12% minority); and authorizing the approved plan to be filed with the Maryland General Assembly for their concurrence to change the commissioner district boundaries in the Somerset County Code of Local Public Laws. The motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Mathies abstaining from the vote.

The Board took this opportunity to thank Mr. Charles Massey, Mrs. Audrey Cornelius, and Mr. Tom Lawton for their hard work and dedication to this project.

At this time, the Board reviewed an inventory list of items that still remain at the Burgess Museum. Before authorizing their sale, the Commissioners will visit the Museum and inspect the listed items.

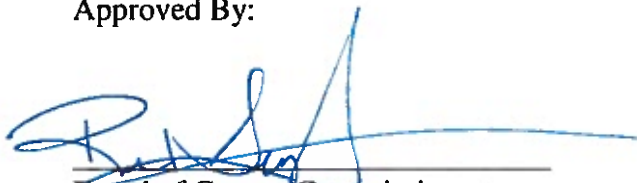
With no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Cynthia R. Ward  
Executive Aide

Approved By:



Board of County Commissioners  
For Somerset County