

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY  
TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2013

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 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 and asked Commissioner Fisher to lead those attending the meeting in the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Laird, it carried 3-0 to approve the Minutes of the meetings held May 21, 2013 as presented.

Mr. Gene Adkins, Finance Director, appeared before the Board to present the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget for adoption. After a brief summary of the budget process, including the public hearing, held Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Adkins reported on a few changes that have been made since the hearing:

- Workmen's Compensation Increase - \$40,000 (approx.)
- Restored Library Capital Account - \$50,000
- Restored Capital for Tri-County Council, but reduced Operational budget - \$0
- Roads Board Personnel Reduced - \$16,000

No written comments have been received following the public hearing. In conclusion, Mr. Adkins reported on the final revenues and expenditures for the County Commissioners budgeted for Fiscal Year 2014: \$37,289,382. The revenues and expenditures for the County Roads Board is \$4,637,801.34; and the proposed tax rate for FY14 is \$ .915 per \$100 of the full assessed value of real property. At this time, the following action was taken by the Board to adopt the County's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget and set the tax levy:

"On a motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried 3-1, with President Simpkins in opposition, that it be adopted and resolved, that for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2014, the property tax rate be \$.915 per \$100.00 of the full assessed value of real property and \$2.2875 per \$100.00 of full assessed value of personal and public utility property in Somerset County, except such property as may, by provision of the laws, be exempt from this rate.

On a motion made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Laird, it carried 3-0, that it be adopted and resolved that for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2014, the property tax rate of \$.28 per \$100.00 of the full assessed value of public utility property; and, \$.112 per \$100.00 of the full assessed value of all other real property in Somerset County, excepting such property as may, by provisions of the laws, be exempt from this rate, be levied and imposed for the State of Maryland.

On a motion made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried 3-0, that it be adopted and resolved that for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2014, the local income tax rate for residents of the County be at the rate of 3.15% of Maryland's taxable income for Tax Year 2014.

On a motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried 3-0 that it be adopted and resolved for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2014, that a service charge of 0.48% be applied to the second installment amount of semiannual tax payments.

On a motion made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried 3-1, with President Simpkins in opposition, that it be adopted and resolved that the proposed Levy, reflecting total revenues in the amount of \$37,289,382.00 and total appropriations in the amount of \$37,289,382.00, be adopted as the Official Levy of Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

On a motion made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried 4-0 that it be adopted and resolved that the proposed Somerset County Roads Budget, reflecting total revenues in the amount of \$4,637,801.34 and total appropriations in the amount of \$4,637,801.34 be adopted for Fiscal Year 2013-2014."

Ms. Jennifer Ranck, Director of Somerset County Library Systems, was now present before the Board to request a funding commitment for FY2015. Ms. Ranck began by expressing her appreciation to the Board for the letter of commitment regarding funding in FY14 for the Crisfield Library Project. In an effort to wrap up the construction, Ms. Ranck asked for a commitment of \$180,000 in matching funds in Fiscal Year 2015 if a county library capital grant is awarded.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to sign a letter of commitment for Fiscal Year 2015, as described above. The motion carried 3-0.

Mr. Danny Thompson, Director of Economic Development, was now present before the Board to introduce Mr. Jerry Sanders, of LVI Power; and Mr. Mark Schroeder, Castle Bridge Group. Following the introductions, Mr. Sanders proceeded with a PowerPoint Presentation regarding Somerset Utilities and the proposal to bring natural gas to Somerset County.

At the conclusion of the presentation, President Simpkins asked for questions from the Board. Commissioner Laird questioned the installation of the pipelines along the roadway and the power plant capacity. Mr. Sanders confirmed the pipeline installation and reported on the plan to operate a twenty (20) megawatt power plant. Commissioner Fisher inquired as to the

term of the franchise agreement. The Non-Exclusive Franchise Agreement would include a twenty-five (25) year term.

President Simpkins also asked for any questions or comments from the audience.

Mr. Sam Parker, of Mountaire Farms, expressed his support of the project, stating that it would represent a cost savings for them and would allow them to remain competitive in the poultry industry. Mr. Parker also advised that most of their other facilities are already operating with natural gas, with the exception of the Princess Anne Hatchery and the Westover Grain Facility. Mountaire Farms is considering the expansion of the Westover Facility and the availability of natural gas would be greatly beneficial. Mr. Parker asked for the Board's support of this project.

Mr. Thompson concluded by reporting that several other agencies within the County have echoed this support for natural gas, such as: University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Anderson Farms, Sysco, and Eastern Correctional Institution.

The Board thanked Mr. Sanders for his presentation.

At this time, the County Administrator reviewed correspondence and discussion items with the Board.

A letter from Dr. Marjorie Miles, Superintendent of Somerset County Public Schools, requesting to transfer funds among major categories was reviewed. The transfer was approved by the Board of Education at their May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The categories are as shown below:

<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
\$35,184.00	Student Transportation	Administration
\$11,731.00	Other Instructional Costs	Instructional Salaries

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to approve the transfer of funds among major categories as requested by Dr. Miles. The motion carried 3-0 with Commissioner Fisher abstaining from the vote.

Mr. Charles Cavanaugh, Director of Solid Waste and Maintenance, was now present before the Board to discuss the acceptance of storm related waste at the County Landfill. The Board was reminded that (as of June 1<sup>st</sup>) tree and brush debris from Hurricane Sandy is no longer being accepted at the Messick Farm, as previously approved by the Board. House demolition material is still being received at the Landfill. As previously instructed, the property owner is required to submit a letter requesting the tipping fees be waived, if they do not possess

homeowners insurance. The Board agreed to continue this policy; however, the request will be forwarded to the Board and a decision will be made on each individual case. The County Administrator will obtain information on CDBG Disaster Recovery Funding to ascertain if tipping fees would be covered. Mr. Cavanaugh also reported on a vacant building in Crisfield, owned by William Slipper, which was being used as a storage facility prior to Super Storm Sandy, and is now full of debris, and asked if the County would be accepting it. The Board agreed to accept the debris if it was storm-related damage.

The Board returned to reviewing correspondence, and took the following action on two letters of request:

- 1) A letter was submitted by the University of Maryland Extension Office/4-H Program asking for the Board's consideration to contribute funds that would allow a 4-H Member to attend Camp. This action would be in-lieu-of a contribution to the Dorchester Soil Conservation "Land and Water Connection Camp" that is scheduled for the same week. Upon motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried 3-0 to contribute \$250 for a 4-H Member to attend Camp.
- 2) A letter was submitted to the Board by Mr. Don Hanna, Sr. requesting financial assistance with the funeral expenses for his deceased wife, Dinah Hanna. Upon motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried unanimously by all present to contribute \$250 from the pauper burial fund as requested by Mr. Don Hanna.

With no further agenda items, President Simpkins asked for any questions or comments from the audience.

Mayor Percy Purnell expressed his support for the introduction of natural gas to Somerset County and believed it could be utilized by several businesses in Crisfield such as McCready Hospital, and the Carvel Hall building. He also thanked the Board for their funding commitment for the new Crisfield Library.

Mr. Phil Riggin, of Crisfield, also thanked the Board for the Crisfield Library funding commitment and for their contribution to Freedom Fest. Mr. Riggin also expressed his appreciation to Mr. Taylor for his letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Mayor Purnell reported that the first phase of the Great Point and Janes Island project has received funding approval. They are, however, seeking matching funds for Phase II.

Mr. Dan Kuebler, of Crisfield, reported that Charter Communications is tapping into Fiber Optic which should remove many of the issues surrounding their services, in addition to providing high definition for their customers in the Crisfield area. Mr. Kuebler also spoke on services that are currently provided by Comcast at a reduced rate for qualifying customers, and would like to see Charter Communications offer the same.

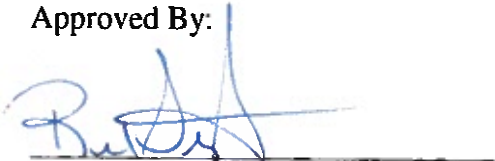
At 3:10 p.m., the County Administrator advised the Board of the need for a Closed Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Jerry Boston, seconded by Commissioner Charles Fisher, to go into Closed Session authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 10-508 (a) (1) (i) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction. The motion carried unanimously by all present. Also present for the Closed Session were Commissioner President Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Randy Laird, County Administrator-Clerk, Ralph D. Taylor; Executive Aide, Cynthia R. Ward; Detention Center Warden, Louis Hickman; and Human Resources Director, Erica Quillen.

At 3:25 p.m., upon motion made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Laird, it was carried unanimously by all present to adjourn the Closed and Open Sessions.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Cynthia R. Ward  
Executive Aide

Approved By:

  
Board of County Commissioners  
For Somerset County