

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY  
THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2013

At 10:00 A.M., The Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County met in special 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; Cynthia R. Ward, Executive Aide; Robin Street, Manager of Somerset County Sanitary District; Secretary Raymond Skinner and Cindy Stone, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

Secretary Skinner began by stating the purpose for today's visit – to view some of the damage incurred by Super Storm Sandy; and to have an opportunity to discuss the issues and concerns regarding the CDBG Disaster Recovery funding being allocated to qualifying individuals that sustained damage to their home or business. The main issue of today's discussion is in regard to the "buy-out" option. Public comment has been received as well as a letter from the County Commissioners expressing their opposition to the option. As a result of the overwhelming opposition, the "buy-out" option is being eliminated. Commissioner Fisher inquired about the proposed compensation for licensed watermen. Ms. Stone confirmed that the proposal is still a part of the plan, for an amount up to \$2,500 (per person). In regard to a question posed by Commissioner Laird regarding the submittal of claims for lost crabpots, Ms. Stone stated that although the process is very tentative, photographs should be included with any claims being submitted. Commissioner Boston inquired as to the income levels which would qualify/disqualify applicants. Ms. Stone replied that the income levels are set by HUD at 80%. They cannot be waived, but may be changed at a later date if necessary. Secretary Skinner also confirmed the program will follow a two-year time period, but can be extended if necessary. There are also other funding programs, in addition to CDBG, that will be utilized in the recovery process.

Mr. Taylor inquired as to the status of the transitional housing proposal. Ms. Stone confirmed that CDBG funding may be used to purchase homes for temporary housing for those individuals that are temporarily displaced while renovations are underway. At the conclusion of the Program, the temporary houses units could be sold or donated to a homeless organization.

Mr. Taylor also addressed landfill tipping fees and inquired if grant funding would cover this expense. According to Ms. Stone, this expense could be covered under project administration.

President Simpkins called upon Mr. Street for any questions or comments. Mr. Street did not offer any comment since the buy-out option has now been eliminated.

President Simpkins then expressed his appreciation to Secretary Skinner, on behalf of the Citizens of Somerset County, for their decision regarding the buy-out option; and to Ms. Stone for her assistance with this project. Secretary Skinner stated that he was still concerned, however, for the residents of Smith Island that suffer from health problems that would have been participants in the buy-out program. In conclusion, Secretary Skinner recognized several of his associates that accompanied him to today's meeting. Mr. Taylor also recognized several elected officials that were present today, including Delegate Charles Otto, Senator James Mathias, and representatives of Congressman Andy Harris and U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski. Everyone expressed their appreciation to the Secretary for their cooperation. Smith Island native, Eddie Somers, also expressed his appreciation to Secretary Skinner and Cindy Stone.

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 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Cynthia R. Ward  
Executive Aide

Approved By:

  
Board of County Commissioners  
For Somerset County