

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2014

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 Simpkins called the meeting to order and asked Commissioner Mathies 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 Mathies, it carried 4-0 to approve the Minutes from the Open and Closed Sessions held September 23, 2014 (with correction made on the third page, second paragraph from the bottom of the page, changing "Commissioner Boston" to "Commissioner Laird").

Mr. Woody Barnes, Director of County Roads, appeared before the Board to review the bid information from the meeting held September 16, 2014, a bid opening for Contract No. : MF-1922F-14A, Deal Island Marina Improvements. A letter was provided from the Project Engineer (George E. Young, III, P.C.) recommending the bid be awarded to the low bidder, Somerset Paving & Marine for their bid of \$316,904.00. Mr. Barnes noted that the low bid exceeded the budgeted amount of \$275,000. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has agreed to cover 50% of the overage (\$20,952) from the General Maintenance Grant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to award the contract for the Deal Island Marina Improvements to the low bidder, Somerset Paving & Marine for \$316,904.00, and approve the overage. The motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Gary Pusey and Mr. Mark Konapelsky, of the Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services, were now present before the Board to revisit a discussion regarding a recommendation for the awarding of a bid, from the Board's September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Konapelsky reported on his research of Vernon Esham's credentials and recommended Mr. Esham be awarded the contract for the construction of a replacement house (funded through CDBG -Disaster Recovery) at 26371 Old State Road in Crisfield, for his bid of \$144,835.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathies, seconded by Commissioner Laird, to award the building contract to Vernon Esham for his bid of \$144,835.00. The motion was carried 4-0.

In other business, Mr. Pusey reminded the Board that we are still in Phase I of the \$8.6 Million Dollar CDBG Disaster Recovery Program. The initial allocation of \$4.2 Million was devoted to housing and economic development. Mr. Pusey recommended the following amendment to the grant, to be considered as Phase II:

- Increase the Crisfield Housing Authority's allocation, from \$700,000 to \$1 Million, to cover the replacement of transformers; antennas; utility rooms; six housing units; and for mitigation use.
- Allocate \$100,000 to authorize a Housing Study be performed to analyze housing needs throughout the County.

Recommendations for Phase III will be discussed at a later date. At that time, the Board may consider any unmet needs. Mr. Taylor recommended the Board consider using the Phase III funds for economic development in the Crisfield area, and inquired if the funds can be used for the removal of blight. Mr. Pusey will research the issue. The deadline to allocate the funds of Phase III is September 2016.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Mathies, it carried 4-0 to approve an amendment to the grant, as outlined above.

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

A letter was received from the Ewell Volunteer Fire Department requesting the reimbursement for medical assist calls for Fiscal Year 2013. According to Chief Eddie Evans, the request was submitted late because of a communication error within the Department.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried unanimously to approve the request for Ewell Volunteer Fire Department.

The Board reviewed a Memo from Gary Pusey, Director of Technical and Community Services, regarding the expiration of term for three members of the Building and Plumbing Code Appeals Board: William Bates, William Drewer, and George Walston.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried 4-0 to reappoint William Drewer to serve another three-year term on the Building and Plumbing Code Appeals Board.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried 4-0 to reappoint William Bates to serve another three-year term on the Building and Plumbing Code Appeals Board.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Mathies, it carried 4-0 to reappoint George Walston to serve another three-year term on the Building and Plumbing Code Appeals Board.

A letter submitted by the Mayor of the City of Crisfield was reviewed by the Board. In the letter, Mayor Lawson requested the County waive landfill tipping fees for the demolition material from 329 Cove Street. In October of 2012, a fire at this location rendered this house uninhabitable.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to waive the landfill tipping fees as requested. The motion carried 4-0.

A request was received from Shiwonna Hardy (wedding coordinator) for the use of county property, located directly adjacent to the Civic Center in Princess Anne, on behalf of Miss Tabe Kendema & Mr. Andre Battle. The couple has reserved the Civic Center on May 2, 2015 to serve as the venue for their wedding reception and the adjacent property would serve as the ceremony site.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Laird, to approve the request. The motion carried 4-0.

A request was also received from the Skipjack Heritage, Inc., an organization of about 125 citizens who are working to preserve the heritage of Skipjacks and the waterman's culture on the Deal Island Peninsula. The organization is seeking a letter of support for two proposals submitted to the National Maritime Heritage Program: the development of a Skipjack Museum and Heritage Center in Chance Maryland; and the development of heritage materials related to skipjacks and the watermen's culture in the area.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Boston, to approve the request for a letter of support. The motion carried 4-0.

The County Commissioners were provided an update on the cable franchise renewals (Charter/Comcast) with information supplied by Tom Robinson, of CBG Communications, Inc.

Mr. Taylor reported on the population recovery of the Delmarva Peninsula Fox Squirrels and a proposal to remove them from the protection of the Endangered Species Act, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.


With no further agenda items, President Simpkins called on the audience members for any questions or comments.

Mr. Phil Riggin, of Crisfield, stated that he agreed with the question posed by Commissioner Laird in regard to the Crisfield Housing Authority, as to why they did not have to conform to any housing standards in regard to flooding protection, while homeowners were held to a certain standard. He also agreed with the proposal to utilize remaining CDBG – Disaster Recovery funds (from Phase I) towards economic development in Crisfield. Mr. Riggin also discussed the importance of proceeding with a housing study in Crisfield, as part of the City's Disaster Recovery initiatives, and plans to address it at the next Task Force meeting. In conclusion, he encouraged everyone to attend the next Candidates Forum in Crisfield on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

With no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Craig Mathies, seconded by Commissioner Charles Fisher, to go into Closed Session by 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 4-0. Also present for the Closed Session were Commissioner President Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Randy Laird, Commissioner Jerry Boston, County Administrator, Ralph D. Taylor; and Executive Aide, Cynthia R. Ward.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Laird, seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried 4-0 to adjourn the Open and Closed Sessions at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Cynthia R. Ward  
Executive Aide

Approved By:

  
Board of County Commissioners  
For Somerset County