

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
MAY 20, 2014

At 7:00 p.m., in the Meeting Room of the County Commissioners Office, Commissioner President Rex Simpkins declared a Public Hearing open regarding Somerset County's Budget for Fiscal Year 2015. Also in attendance: Commissioner Vice-President Charles F. Fisher, Commissioner Craig N. Mathies, Sr., Commissioner Jerry S. Boston, Commissioner Randy Laird, County Administrator-Clerk, Ralph D. Taylor; Finance Director, Gene Adkins; Executive Aide, Cynthia R. Ward; and Internal Auditor, Sharon Muir.

Mr. Adkins began by stating that the Constant Yield advertisement had been published on May 7, 2014 and May 14, 2014 in The Crisfield-Somerset County Times, The Somerset Herald and The Daily Times to announce our hearing. The purpose of tonight's hearing is two-fold:

1. To receive public comment on the proposed budget; and
2. Pursuant to the provision of Section 6-308 of the Property Tax Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, to present the Constant Yield Rate of 96.27 cents; and proposed tax rate of 91.5 cents. The proposed tax rate is the same as the current year's tax rate.

The Budget being discussed tonight is the estimated income and planned expenditures as discussed by the Board through May 20, 2014. Final deliberation on the Budget will continue until Tuesday, June 3, 2014, at 2:00 p.m., at which time the new tax rate for FY15 will be set. The procedure for the Hearing was explained. Anyone wishing to make comments will be asked to come forward, state their name and address, and present their testimony. Written comments on the proposed budget will be accepted until Tuesday, May 27, 2014.

Mr. Adkins reported that the Somerset County Board of Education budgeted appropriation included in this budget for FY15 will be \$8,785,412 to be paid from the County's General Fund for operations for Maintenance of Effort.

At this time, Mr. Adkins presented the budget highlights on Powerpoint as currently drafted. Handouts were provided which included the complete budget detail. The presentation included a review of estimated revenues (totaling \$36,266,102) and planned expenditures (totaling \$36,266,102) for Fiscal Year 2015. At the conclusion of the budget review, Commissioner President Simpkins asked if there was anyone wishing to give testimony.

Mr. Phil Riggin, of 4930 Thomas Long Road, Crisfield, began by asking for clarification on the budget appropriation for Wor-Wic Community College. Mr. Riggin then asked for the

Board to consider a more interactive relationship with the municipalities during the budget process to better understand their issues; and possibly a revised revenue sharing arrangement. He concluded with congratulating the County for their limited spending and stated that he will be submitting his comments in writing after the hearing.

President Simpkins asked for any further testimony or questions.


Mr. Richard Crumbacker, Editor of the Crisfield-County Times, asked the Board to consider extending the comment period for an additional three days to allow for his publication to be viewed by the County's Citizens. Mr. Crumbacker then inquired as to how much of the fund balance was being in the current fiscal year. Mr. Adkins could not provide an exact amount, stating that it would depend on the amount of property taxes received at year end. Mr. Crumbacker concluded by asking for clarification for comparing the two fiscal years.

President Simpkins asked for any further testimony or questions. There were none.

President Simpkins concluded the hearing by reminding everyone that the County has made budget cuts in recent years, but as the State also continues to make cuts, the County will be forced to make more "noticeable changes" in the near future, such as services provided and in the tax rate. The Commissioners will be forced to take a more drastic approach.

With no further testimony, President Simpkins declared the public hearing closed at 7:35 p.m. Written comments will be accepted until Friday, May 30, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted:


Cynthia R. Ward
Executive Aide

Approved By:


Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County