

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY  
SPECIAL SESSION  
TUESDAY JUNE 10, 2014

At 2:00 p.m., the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County met in Special Session. Present for the meeting were Commissioner President Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Vice President Charles F. Fisher, Commissioner Jerry S. Boston, Commissioner Randy Laird and Commissioner Craig N. Mathies Sr.

County Administrator-Clerk Ralph D. Taylor and Executive Secretary Lory E. Ebron were also present.

Mr. Taylor asked the MACo representatives, present for today's meeting to come forward. Mr. Thomas Duncan, President, Mr. Michael Sanderson, Executive Director and Ms. Andrea Mansfield, Legislative Director stepped forward to address the Board.

Mr. Duncan began by thanking the Board for seeing them today, as well as providing their support of MACo. He advised the Board to contact MACo to share any thoughts or idea's they may have, noting that it is especially important to express idea's early on. He then asked Mr. Sanderson to review this past year's highlights.

Mr. Sanderson also thanked the Board for their time, and distributed the 2014 Legislative Session/MACo Highlights sheet. Mr. Sanderson reviewed several initiatives MACo has been involved with this past year. Some of the initiatives noted in the report provided included leveraging Bay Restoration Funds to target failing septic systems, and the establishment of a Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board to give counties a voice relating to collaborative public safety radio systems. It was also noted MACo was successful in securing \$10 million for county-only pothole repairs, restored cumulative inflationary increases for local health departments, and protected funding for Program Open Space. Additionally, budget language was adopted to create a workgroup to study issues affecting local property tax revenues, and requires a report on "nonrecurring costs" to provide greater transparency and incentivize additional education spending.

Ms. Mansfield then reviewed legislative actions adopted. Additionally she noted that it is a positive note that all running candidates have vowed to restore Highway User Revenue. Transportation funding will be a top issue and she also stated that a work group will be created to address the property assessment process.

Lastly, Mr. Sanderson advised the Board that MACo is working with a financial advisor regarding an investment trust opportunity regarding post-employment benefits. It was noted that a session is being planned for the summer conference in August, and he encouraged the Board's attendance. Mr. Sanderson then opened the floor to the Board to answer any questions they may have.

Commissioner Fisher expressed his concern regarding the changes FEMA intends to make, and the detrimental impact those changes will have for Somerset County specifically the increases to flood insurance rates. He stated the area's impacted will need all of the support available to defend the issue. Mr. Sanderson agreed, noting that this issue goes beyond county levels, and is truly a national problem. He advised that this will also be a topic offered during their summer conference.

Commissioner Boston thanked Ms. Mansfield in addressing State Highway User Revenue, and he echoed Commissioner Fisher's concern relating to FEMA and flood insurance increases.

Commissioner Mathies relayed a concern expressed to him by an older constituent relating to the lack of septic program funding available for those who can't afford upgrade and/or replace outdated septic systems. He asked for assistance in finding revenues and/or resources to help those individuals, in light of funding that has been cut.

Mr. Sanderson responded that the state's commitment is through the Bay Restoration Fund, which is over pledged. The thought is to expand the program to use septic system monies within the fund that can be used to extend public sewer towards failing sewer systems.

Commissioner Laird commented that it would be nice if there were to be a way to "lock" Highway User Funding, if returned to counties in the future, so that it cannot be withdrawn again as was done in the past. It was noted by Mr. Sanderson and Ms. Mansfield that the loss of funding was due to a provision allowed under the Board of Public Works.

President Simpkins questioned what the State's plan was to pay back the employee pension plan funds that were borrowed this past year. Mr. Sanderson explained how the process was managed by the state, and that as he understands, the state plan was to essentially over-contribute (by continuing to pay into the plan prior to the adjustment). President Simpkins asked about submitting legislation to pass laws criminalizing government employees found guilty of stealing, thereby revoking their retirement benefits. Such legislation has already been passed in 32 states who have implemented laws to keep that from happening.

County Administrator Taylor asked the MACo representatives present today to keep the dialog open regarding Waters of the United States. He noted that it could have a dire impact on our county,

and he would appreciate all efforts to keep it going. Mr. Sanderson explained that there are specific issues (such as regulating tax ditches) that would be specific to the Eastern Shore, however this is a broader issue of coalition building that goes beyond us. He also noted that this is a bipartisan political issue, noting the important part is to keep the issue focused on the “nuts and bolts” of the matter. Mr. Duncan, Mr. Sanderson and Ms. Mansfield were thanked for attending our meeting today, and they were excused from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Gail Sheldon, Director of Somerset County Library System was asked by Mr. Taylor to come forward.

Ms. Sheldon was present today to request a letter of support addressing the statewide contingency funds, allocated to the Princess Anne Library Project, to be used for the budgeted shortfall that exists regarding the Crisfield Library Project. It was explained that originally the request was presented to the Board during their meeting held on March 25, 2014. If approved, the funds would be used to complete the fiber optic line to the new library, as well as the purchasing of long, durable furnishings such as tables and chairs. Cost share would be a 90/10 split, and would more than likely fall under FY2016 budgeted funding. Mr. Taylor noted that the letter drafted for the library would not be a commitment, only a request to the State to reallocate the funds towards the Crisfield Library Project. Ms. Sheldon added that the funding request she will be submitting will be for approximately \$700,000.

Therefore, a motion was made by Commissioner Laird, and seconded by Commissioner Boston, to authorize the president’s signature on the letter presented to Irene M. Padilla, Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries, to support the libraries re-allocation request. The motion carried 4-0.

Next, Ms. Sheldon requested the Boards consideration to provide a resolution. It was explained that in order to apply for a Community Investment Tax Credit grant, a resolution from the local governing agency is a requirement to be provided in support of the application. The application will be a funding request to approve a project that will complete, furnish and outfit the new Crisfield Library. Mr. Taylor read the resolution (#1075) as drafted into the record.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird, and seconded by Commissioner Boston, to approve the resolution (#1075) as presented. The motion carried 4-0.

Ms. Sheldon was excused from the meeting at this time.

Mr. Steve Marshall, Emergency Services Director, was now present before the Board. Mr. Taylor explained that Mr. Marshall was present today to discuss a possible funding opportunity for the county.

Mr. Marshall advised that MEMA has closed out the 2011-2012 Homeland Security Funds Program with remaining funds available. At this time, he would like to propose a potential project that would benefit the county, especially Smith Island. The project he is proposing today would be for the purchase of a boat for use by the county. It was noted that the time and salaries spent on required trips to Smith Island accumulate, and the governing authority for the island is dependent on others to get the island, at a significant cost. If purchased, the boat would be 100% funded, at no cost to the county. Commissioner Laird expressed his support of the purchase, noting that Smith Island falls under the county umbrella, and in a case of an emergency situation it would be beneficial for the county to have a vessel if other boats are not running. Commissioner Mathies asked what size boat was being considered. Mr. Marshall replied 25', so that it can be trailered. Mr. Taylor added that he would recommend possibly training 2 county employees who would be certified to drive the boat. It was stated that they were looking for approval from the Board to submit the project to inquire if it would receive approval. Commissioner Boston asked what the cost to purchase the vessel would be. Mr. Marshall replied \$80,000, which would include everything. President Simpkins stated that all aspects of the project need to be considered, such as liability. Additionally, the President expressed his concerns, noting that a boat had been purchased previously for use by the county, and was not managed properly, resulting in the loss of the vessel. He questioned if the funds could be used for a better purpose.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Mathies, who suggested the feasibility of owning a boat be investigated, including the expense figures to determine if the purchase would be a good investment for the county. Commissioner Laird seconded the motion, stating that he would be in favor of Mr. Marshall applying for the grant, but agreed that the feasibility be explored. The motion carried 4-1 with President Simpkins opposed. Mr. Marshall was excused from the meeting at this time.

Mr. Taylor presented a draft resolution related to the Burn Ban Ordinance currently in place (#1070). The revisions, highlighted in yellow, stated fine amounts for violations, as well as language changes recommended by the Health Department. It was Mr. Taylor's recommendation that Resolution be approved, especially in light of the dry weather conditions that we have currently been experiencing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, and seconded by Commissioner Mathies to adopt the Resolution as presented. The motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Joe Chelton, IT Director, and Ms. Erica Quillen, HR Director were now present before the Board to present Employee Handbook revisions and additions. Ms. Quillen distributed a handout and read the recommended wording changes to be effective July 1, 2014. Next, the Board was presented

with a new Computer, Email, Internet & Network Use Policy. Mr. Chelton explained the need for the policy, stating that he used his years of experience to review the policy, and agreed with what was being presented today. Commissioner Mathies recommended that Department Heads verbally explain the basics of the policy if passed, to insure employees know and understand the policy.

The Board was in agreement with the policy as presented. A Resolution will be prepared and adopted at next week's meeting. Mr. Chelton and Ms. Quillen were excused from the meeting at this time.

Next, Mr. Taylor read aloud a proposed resolution relating to school bus monitoring cameras, and requested the Board permission to move forward in scheduling a Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathies, and seconded by Commissioner Laird, authorizing Mr. Taylor to proceed in scheduling a Public Hearing to adopt a resolution relating to school bus monitoring cameras. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Commissioner Fisher agreeing, but abstaining from the motion.

Lastly, Mr. Taylor discussed Coast Smart Council with the Board, and made the recommendation that Somerset County have a representative serve on the council. Director of Planning and Zoning, Gary Pusey, made the recommendation to have employee Tom Lawton serve.

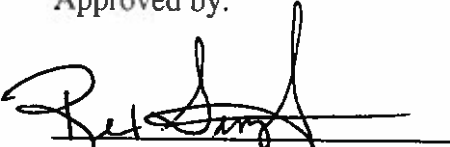
Therefore, a motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, and seconded by Commissioner Mathies to submit Mr. Tom Lawton to serve on the Coast Smart Council as representative for Somerset County. The motion carried 4-0.

With no further business, at 3:26 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Fisher, and seconded by Commissioner Boston to adjourn. The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
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Lory E. Ebron  
Executive Secretary

Approved by:

  
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Board of County Commissioners  
For Somerset County