

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
SPECIAL SESSION
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2015

Following a brief recess, at 3:18 p.m., the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County opened in Special Session on a motion made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Fisher. The motion carried unanimously.

Present for the meeting were Commissioner President Randy Laird, Commissioner Vice President Charles F. Fisher, Commissioner Jerry S. Boston, Commissioner Rex Simpkins and Commissioner Craig N. Mathies Sr.

County Administrator-Clerk Ralph D. Taylor and Administrative Aide Lory E. Ebron were also present.

Mr. Taylor explained that based on a letter received from It Takes a Village to Help our Children, Inc. (ITAV), presented during the November 3, 2015 Commissioner Meeting, Ms. Brown, requested to discuss how the unused Sandy funding allocated to ITAV could be used to support their efforts as the terms presented to them were not an acceptable long term solution for their organization. Therefore, the Board was in agreement to have the representatives from ITAV attend the meeting today to further discuss the matter.

Ms. Darlene Taylor, Executive Director, ITAV Board Members Ms. Catherine Brown, President, and Mr. Vernel Cottman, Vice President were now before the Board.

Ms. Brown explained that it was their organization that initially requested Hurricane Sandy funding assistance for \$3 million dollars, describing how the terms of the funding has changed and been dictated to them since that time. The last project proposal presented for their consideration at Crisfield High School (CHS) left no room for expansion, which is strong concern. Points noted by ITAV for being opposed to the CHS location were as follows:

- No room for growth
- Not enough classrooms to serve the number of children they serve, no kitchen and recreation space
- They are not receiving what will be needed to run their program at this location, noting they are the only after school program offered in Crisfield

Ms. Taylor stated they were here to discuss how their allocated funding of \$1 million can be used to support their needs. Ms. Taylor stated there are options available to ITAV for new build or rehab of an existing structure.

The Board expressed their concerns that based on Hurricane Sandy funding regulations, the county would bear the responsibility of insuring that a similar program, should ITAV dissolve or vacate, be in place for 20 years. The number of children participating in the ITAV program was questioned, as well as if the space being offered will adequately serve their needs. It was questioned if Ms. Taylor was offered use of a shared classroom, the kitchen and recreation room with Head Start. Ms. Taylor replied they serve 60 to 100 children depending on the time of year. She also stated that by Head Start regulations, she is not permitted to share space with the Head Start Program, as they must remain totally separate. Another concern noted during the discussion was funding that ITAV receives, and concerns that this funding may cease. Ms. Taylor stated this has been a concern for over 10 years, and funding continues to be provided for her program through the LMB.

Also discussed was the process that has yet to be determined to either find an existing facility or build a facility, as no decision has been made by ITAV for how they would like to proceed. It was noted submission and approval for a plan must be obtained in order to receive the \$1 million in funding. Concerns were also expressed that if this funding is not adequate to complete the project where will additional funding come from.

Ms. Laverne Johnson, Crisfield City Counsel spoke from the audience. She expressed her support of ITAV, and explained the Counsel vote (2-3) opposed to supporting an \$800,000 block grant request to obtain additional funding. She also stated that it was her understanding that Ms. Stone, from DHCD was going to attend a meeting scheduled for November 18 to further discuss this additional funding request with City Counsel in order to obtain more information, so that there may be reconsideration by City Counsel regarding the vote made.

Mr. Taylor reminded the Board of shortfalls that exist with other projects, and that tear down of the Whittington school needs to be included as part of this project. The discussion concluded with the Board in consensus to discuss the matter further with Ms. Stone to obtain additional advisement as to the allocation of funds for either the \$1 million of Hurricane Sandy funding, or the \$800,000 block grant funding.

Mr. Pusey, Director of Community and Technical Services noted from the audience that specific details are needed to get state approval. Any amendments to the current project will also

require state approval. Additionally, the deadline date for completion of these projects is September 2017.

The Board closed in asking Ms. Taylor to proceed immediately in getting her project plan in place due to the tight timeline remaining. They would like the plan for either grant to be ready should the project proceed to move forward. Ms. Taylor, Ms. Brown and Mr. Cottman left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Taylor presented the request for a proclamation, honoring the retirement of Mr. Ronnie Dryden from ECI after 32 years of service.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins, and seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried unanimously to approve the proclamation request as presented.

Mr. Taylor presented a letter drafted to Ms. Cindy Stone, DHCD which provided a progress updated on Somerset County Hurricane Sandy Projects. He requested the Boards approval for the President's signature on the letter as presented.

On a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins, and seconded by Commissioner Mathies, it carried unanimously to authorize the President's signature on the letter to Ms. Cindy Stone as presented.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins, and seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried unanimously to approve the Special Session and Closed Session meetings held on October 27, 2015 and the Closed Session meeting held on October 13, 2015 as presented.

With no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Fisher and seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4: 18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Lory E. Ebron
Executive Secretary

Approved by:



Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County