

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
MAY 14, 2019
PUBLIC HEARING

At 7:00 p.m., in the Meeting Room of the County Commissioners Office, Commissioner President Craig N. Mathies, Sr., declared a Public Hearing open regarding Somerset County's Budget for Fiscal Year 2020. Also in attendance were Commissioner Vice-President Charles Laird, Commissioner Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Eldon Willing, Commissioner Randy Laird, County Administrator-Clerk, Ralph D. Taylor; Finance Director, Gene Adkins; Executive Aide, Lory E. Ebron, Executive Secretary Kim Lopez; and Internal Auditor, Sharon Muir.

Mr. Taylor began by stating that the Constant Yield advertisement had been published in the May 1, 2019 Daily Times newspaper and the May 1 and May 8, 2019 publications of the County Times and the Somerset Herald to announce the hearing tonight. The purpose of tonight's hearing is two-fold:

1. To receive public comment on the FY20 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 for FY 2020 as \$1.0017 and the tax rate for FY 2020 as \$1.00 per \$100 of full-value assessment. This proposed tax rate represents no change from last year's rate and it was noted that this is the fourth consecutive year that our tax rate is below constant yield.

The Budget, being discussed tonight, is the estimated income and planned expenditures as discussed by the Board through today, May 14, 2019. Final deliberation on the Budget will continue until Tuesday, May 28, 2019 (the regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners), at which time the tax rate for FY 2020 will be set. The procedure for the hearing was explained, and 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 Monday, May 28, 2019.

Next Mr. Adkins first reported that the Somerset County Board of Education budgeted appropriation included in this budget for FY 2020 will be \$10,088,825 to be paid from the County's General Fund. This compares to \$9,741,620 for FY 2019. The County has approved increased funding for the Board of Education due to a change in the formula for calculating local maintenance of effort.

Mr. Adkins then presented the budget highlights on a PowerPoint presentation. Handouts were also provided which included the complete budget detail. At this time, the Board of Commissioners

have proposed to retain the current tax rate for FY20 at \$1.00, which is less than the constant yield tax rate of \$1.0017. The presentation reviewed a very slight increase of .25% (or \$34,000) in real property tax revenues for FY20, with revenue remaining flat. Mr. Adkins continued, advising that Personal Property Tax revenue is projected to increase by \$1.1 million over last year's budget due to solar projects. Regarding capital projects, Mr. Adkins advised that \$11.3 million was approved, including \$4.95 million for the Bike Trail, and \$3.6 million in school construction. As previously mentioned, the formula for Maintenance of Effort regarding the Board of Education resulted in an increase to the Board of Education appropriation totaling \$347,000. The total appropriation approved for the County Roads Department totaled \$2.856 million, and will include road paving projects (using solar revenue Personal Property Tax revenue received) and a Federal Bridge Project. A total of \$1.81 million of fund balance will be used to balance the budget. Significant revenues and expenditures were also reviewed in detail, and in closing Mr. Adkins advised that the total FY20 budget is \$47,916,168.

President Mathies asked if there was anyone present wishing to speak.

Princess Anne Town Commissioner President, Mr. Garland Hayward asked to address the Board. President Hayward requested, on behalf of the Town Commissioners, consideration to reduce the town tipping fee from \$66.00 per ton to \$50.00 per ton. He noted that this reduction would result in a savings to the town of approximately \$13,850.00. He advised that the reason for this request is the Town Commissioners have reduced the town fee for citizens from \$125.00 to \$75.00, and this reduction would be a way to offset this loss of Town revenue.

President Mathies advised that consideration will be given to the request. It was noted that if perhaps the request had been received sooner, better consideration could have been given.

Mr. Buddy Ward, Crisfield Chamber of Commerce asked to address the Board. Mr. Ward advised he was present today as a follow up to a letter previously sent. He requested the Board of Commissioners consideration to partner with the Chamber regarding a proposal to purchase a new stage trailer at a total cost of \$140,000. He advised of the condition of the current trailer, which needs to be replaced due to safety aspects. He named other various entities who have committed to joining the partnership, explaining the rental benefits that will be included for those partners in the venture. He proposed a \$10,000 annual investment to the county for 5 years; explaining some of the many uses the trailer will have/provide. In closing, he noted that funding will be through Hebron Savings Bank, who have offered a good rate. The all-aluminum trailer will be ADA accessible and he feels will serve the county well.

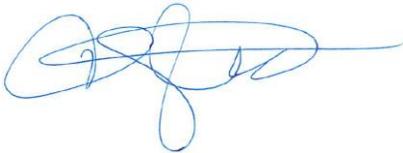
President Mathies declared the public hearing closed at 7:23 p.m. Written comments will be taken until May 28, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted:



Lory E. Ebron
Executive Aide

Approved By:



Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County