

(Tentative)



SPECIAL SESSION AGENDA
January 29, 2019
COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
11916 Somerset Avenue
Room 111/Meeting Room
Princess Anne, MD 21853
2:30 p.m.

Appointments:

- 2:30 p.m. - Employee Service Award- Jonathan Todd/20 years
2:35 p.m. - Ms. Julie Widdowson and Tourism Commission Members
- Burgess Rural Living Center
2:50 p.m. - Mr. John Redden, Public Works
- Fleet Management
3:05 p.m. - Sheriff Ronnie Howard/Donald Ford
- Dog Control Office Discussion

Correspondence:

Sent

Maryland Transportation Commission re: Letter of Support/Deal Island Bridge
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation re: Commitment of Funds
Mr. Jon Robertson re: Property Purchase Requests
Mr. Vincent Kenney re: Property Purchase Requests

Discussion:

- * 1. Great Bay Solar, Phase II- Request for Tax Abatement
- * 2. Surplus Property Purchase (1)
- * 3. Surplus Property Discussion
- * 4. Proclamation Request

Public Comments – (5 minute limit)

3:30 p.m. - CLOSED SESSION- Ralph D. Taylor, Louis Hickman

Authority of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland § 3-305 (b)(1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction.

* Denotes action item

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
SPECIAL SESSION
TUESDAY JANUARY 29, 2019

At 2:29 p.m., the Board of Somerset County Commissioners met in Special Session with Commissioner President Craig Mathies, Sr., Commissioner Vice President Charles Laird, Commissioner Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Randy Laird, and Commissioner Eldon Willing.

Also in attendance were County Administrator-Clerk Ralph D. Taylor and Executive Secretary Kimberly Lopez.

Closed Session Summary Report for January 29, 2019

On January 29, 2019, from 3:47 p.m. until 4:23 p.m., at 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 111, upon a motion made by Commissioner Willing and seconded by Commissioner Laird, it carried 5-0 to enter into Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Subtitle §3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction.

Present for the Closed Session Meeting were President Craig Mathies, Sr., Vice President Charles Laird, Commissioner Rex Simpkins, Commissioner Randy Laird, and Commissioner Eldon Willing. Also present were County Administrator Ralph D. Taylor, Executive Secretary Kimberly Lopez, Warden Louis Hickman, and Human Resources Director Erica Yeager. Topics discussed were: (1) Personnel. Actions taken: (1) Termination of Employment, (2) Hiring of Correctional Officer II (x2).

Mr. Jonathan Todd was asked to come forward to accept a Certificate of Recognition for twenty years of service. Mr. Taylor read the certificate into record and the board all thanked Mr. Todd for his commitment and years of service to Somerset County.

Ms. Julie Widdowson, Director of Tourism, Mr. Phil Riggan, and Mr. Duke Marshall were before the board to present an update on the Burgess Rural Living Center. Ms. Widdowson began by providing a brief summary of the project thus far for the new members of the board. In addition to this, Ms. Widdowson presented a rendering from the architect of the proposed building design for the museum and advised it would be attached to the existing visitor center (eliminating the need for additional plumbing, parking, and staff). It was advised that support

funding in the amount of \$500,000.00 has been appropriated in Governor Hogan's budget and the completed application was ready for the board's approval.

A brief discussion was held in regards to the future proceeds from the current museum (appraised at \$110,000.00 in 2018) when the building is sold (no set sale date as of now).

Upon a motion made by Vice President Laird, and seconded by Commissioner Willing, the board voted to proceed with the application for the state supported funding in the amount of \$500,000.00. This motion carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird to allow Design Atlantic Engineering firm to proceed with the project (dependent on the state funding). This motion was seconded by Commissioner Simpkins and carried 5-0.

Ms. Widdowson, Mr. Riggin, and Mr. Marshall left the meeting.

Mr. John Redden, Director of Public Works, was now before the board to discuss fleet management contractors and advised that, upon the conclusion of his research, Enterprise was consistent with bidding out all other vendors. Following this, the board came to a consensus to wait until budget time before coming to a decision.

Mr. Redden left the meeting.

Sheriff Ronnie Howard and Mr. Donald Ford, Supervisor of Dog Control, were now before the board to discuss the transfer of the Dog Control office from the County Commissioners to the County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Howard advised he is researching other counties' procedures in order to properly prepare a new policy for this proposed transfer. Sheriff Howard also advised that, should the transfer be completed, a deputy would be placed in the Dog Control Warden position, which is currently vacant.

Sheriff Howard and Mr. Ford left the meeting.

Mr. Gene Adkins, Director of Finance, was now before the board to request an extension for the J.M. Tawes Phase I Loan. Mr. Adkins advised that, upon speaking with Hebron Bank, terms of the loan would remain the same and be unaffected by the one year requested extension. My. Adkins further advised that this additional time would allow the county to utilize the 4 million dollars more adequately.

Upon a motion made by Vice President Laird and seconded by Commissioner Simpkins, the board voted 5-0 to authorize a one year extension on the J.M. Tawes Phase I Loan through Hebron Bank.

Mr. Adkins left the meeting.

Mr. Taylor advised the board of sent correspondence.

Under discussion items, Mr. Taylor advised that Great Bay Solar has requested a tax abatement or a payment in lieu of tax arrangement for Phase II of the solar project. It was further advised hat Great Bay Solar has drafted a payment in lieu of tax arrangement consisting of seven years in the amount of \$725,000.00. Great Bay has also offered a tax abatement plan to accept a 55% reduction in year 1 through 10, and a 20% reduction in year 11 through 20 of the personal property tax. Mr. Taylor reminded the board that there was no abatement or “pilot” for Phase I.

The discussion on the solar project continued with the board requesting Mr. Taylor to schedule an appointment for the board to meet with representatives from Great Bay Solar.

Next, Mr. Taylor presented a surplus property purchase request from Ms. Robin Cox in the amount of \$614.00 for property account #11-002161, located on Riley Roberts Road.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird and seconded by Vice President Laird to sell property account #11-002161 to Ms. Robin Cox in the amount of \$614.00. This motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Taylor then presented a surplus property purchase request from Mr. Edward Schuurman, Jr. and Mrs. Joyce Schuurman to purchase property account # 12-009151 in the amount of \$1,120.50 and property account # 14-005811 in the amount of \$254.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Laird and seconded by Commissioner Simpkins to sell surplus property account #12-009151 to Mr. Edward Schuurman, Jr. and Mrs. Joyce Schuurman in the amount of \$1,120.50. This motion carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Simpkins and seconded by Vice President Laird to sell surplus property account #14-005811 to Mr. Edward Schuurman, Jr. and Mrs. Joyce Schuurman in the amount of \$254.00. This motion carried 5-0.

An update was provided on remaining county owned surplus properties.

During this time Vice President Laird left the board room for a brief moment. Commissioner Laird also took a brief leave from the board room after Vice President Laird’s return.

Following the update on remaining county owned surplus properties, the board gave a consensus to list the available properties on the county’s website at full deed price (minus the properties adjacent to state owned land).

Mr. Taylor presented a proclamation request for Lieutenant Mike Daugherty who's retiring after 27 years of dedicated service to the Maryland State Police.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins, and seconded by Vice President Laird, the board voted 5-0 to approve the proclamation request for Lieutenant Mike Daugherty.

The meeting was then opened up for public comments.

Mr. Ron DeClemment addressed the board and requested they deny Great Bay Solar's tax abatement regardless of any figures presented. Mr. DeClemment continued by bringing awareness to various lawsuits, fines, and environmental violations against the solar company, as well as presenting the board with photo evidence of buffer concerns. Mr. DeClemment concluded by stating how the solar farm project has been a financial disaster for the county and reiterated his request to deny the tax abatement for Great Bay Solar for Phase II.

Commissioner Simpkins then replied to Mr. DeClemment's comment by advising that the county recently received a check from Great Bay Solar in the amount of \$1.6 million and would not consider that as a "financial disaster" for the county.

Ms. Tammy Truitt addressed the board, discussing Algonquin Power's assets and profit margins, how Phoenix Solar was contracted to complete Phase I, and the numerous environmental violations discovered by MDE during construction. Ms. Truitt also stated that Algonquin is a wealthy company of whom receives constant breaks regardless of the violations they make. Ms. Truitt then provided the board with handouts for the presented information before returning to the audience.

Mr. Mark Simmons addressed the board and discussed his findings on Yahoo Finance in regards to Algonquin's wealth and stated that the company basically runs on tax credits. Mr. Simmons proposed that the board should consider giving county owned businesses the tax credit instead.

Mr. Kevin Miller addressed the board, stating he did not come to today's meeting to comment on the solar project, however he was thrilled that a company worth \$9 billion wanted to do business in Somerset County and paid \$1.6 million in taxes. Following this comment, Mr. Miller addressed an issue with his neighbor's horse and the damage this animal has caused to his crops due to a defective fence. Mr. Miller advised that the neighbor has been spoken with on multiple occasions regarding this by himself as well as the Sheriff; however the animal continues to run at large.

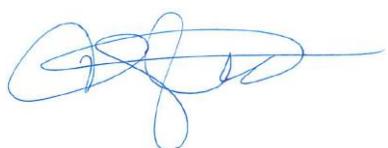
Mr. Miller was advised that the county only has authority over dogs and cats by statute and, furthermore, the county has only adopted a dog control ordinance. The board continued to discuss this matter with Mr. Miller and advised possible solutions for Mr. Miller to explore on his own.

With a concern for the animal's safety, Vice President Laird stated an interest (as a concerned citizen) in the horse and said he would be happy to contact Mr. Miller's neighbor about taking the horse with her permission and providing it with a stable home.

The board was then advised for the need of a Closed Session.

Therefore at 3:47 p.m., upon a motion made by Commissioner Willing and seconded by Commissioner Laird that carried unanimously, the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County met in Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Subtitle §3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction.

Approved by:



Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County

Respectfully Submitted:



Kimberly Lopez
Executive Secretary