

Due to State regulations with COVID-19, social distancing will be observed during the meeting and members of the public in attendance must wear a face mask. Live audio of the meeting will be available by clicking on the link provided on the County's website, or by entering this web address in your internet address bar: [http://mixlr.com/somerset\\_county\\_commissioners/](http://mixlr.com/somerset_county_commissioners/) Minutes will be made available to the public via the County's website upon approval. We thank you for your cooperation during this time.



**AGENDA**  
**September 29, 2020**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**FOR SOMERSET COUNTY**  
**11916 Somerset Avenue**  
**Room 111/Meeting Room**  
**Princess Anne, MD 21853**  
**2:00 p.m.**

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2:00 p.m. - Service Award Appreciation:  
- Ms. Carol Sturgis/20 Years

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**Appointments:**

2:05 p.m. - Ms. Julie Widdowson, Tourism Director, Duke Marshall, Phil Riggin, Tourism Commission  
- Burgess Museum Deaccession Items

\* 2:15 p.m. - Mr. Gary Pusey, DTCS  
- CDBG Covid-19 Funding Resolution Approval  
- Request for Two Lien Releases/ 32333 Perryhawkin Road

\* 2:25 p.m. - Mr. John Redden, County Engineer/Airport Obstruction Removal Project  
- MAA Grant Application  
- AECOM Scope of Work  
- Change Order #3

**Correspondence:**

**Received:**

Secretary Gregory Slater, MDOT re: Grant Funding/Crisfield-Somerset County Airport Obstruction Removal Services

Ms. Ashley Walters, Greenwood Elementary School re: Letter of Appreciation

\* St. of MD, Critical Area Commission re: Permission to Access Wetlands/Map 0040 Parcel 0018

\* St. of MD, Critical Area Commission re: Permission to Access Wetlands/Map 0058 Parcel 0163

**Sent**

The Honorable Andrew P. Harris re: Pocomoke River Dredging

**Public Comments:** Members of the audience who have signed up to address the Board will be permitted to do so at this time and allotted 5 minutes.

\* **2:40 p.m. - Closed Session-** Mr. Ralph Taylor, Ms. Morena Corbin, Ms. Yvette Cross, Mr. Clint Sterling, Mr. Charles Cavanaugh, Mr. Kirk Simpkins

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; and (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

\* Denotes Action Item

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY  
September 29, 2020

At 2:00 p.m., President Craig N. Mathies, Sr., called the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County to open in Regular Session. Also present for the meeting were Vice President Charles Laird, Commissioner Eldon Willing, Commissioner Randy Laird, and Commissioner Rex Simpkins.

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

President Mathies asked Commissioner Willing to lead those present in Devotion and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Closed Session Summary Report**

On September 29, 2020, from 2:28 p.m. (following a brief recess) until 3:36 p.m., at 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 111, upon a motion made by Commissioner Randy Laird, and seconded by Vice President Charles Laird, it carried 4-0 (Commissioner Simpkins was absent at this time) to enter into Closed Session by 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; and (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Present for the Closed Session Meeting were President Craig N. Mathies Sr., Vice President Charles Laird, Commissioner Eldon Willing, and Commissioner Randy Laird and Commissioner Rex Simpkins.

Also present were County Administrator Ralph D. Taylor, Executive Aide Lory Ebron, and Attorney Kirk Simpkins, Emergency Services Director Yvette Cross, and Assistant Director Gary Powell, Recreation and Parks Director Clint Sterling, HR Director Morena Corbin, and Director of Solid Waste and Maintenance Charles Cavanaugh.

Topics discussed: (1) Consult with Counsel (2) Disciplinary Action (3) Employee Termination (4) Probationary to Permanent Employee status (5) Hiring of PT Golf Shop Assistant (6) Hiring of Motor Equipment Operator I (MEO 1). Actions taken during closed session: (1) Approval to implement disciplinary action (2) Hiring of PT Golf Shop Assistant (3) Hiring of MEO 1 (4) Employee Termination (5) Approval to move probationary employee to permanent status.

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Minutes from the Commissioner and Closed Session meetings held on September 15, 2020, were approved as presented upon a motion made by Commissioner Eldon Willing and seconded by Commissioner Rex Simpkins. The motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Taylor asked Ms. Carol Sturgis to come forward to accept recognition for her 20 years of service to the County. The Board expressed their appreciation for her many years of dedicated service.

Ms. Julie Widdowson, Tourism Director and Mr. Phil Riggin, Tourism Commission, came forward at this time to further discuss the exit strategy regarding the Burgess Rural Living collection, which is currently housed at the Westover location. Ms. Widdowson relayed the following recommendations suggested by the Tourism Commission as follows:

- Nonprofit organizations who have existing exhibit capacity be invited to the museum and identify artifacts that they would like gifted to their organization (a copy of the "Deed of Gift" document was presented later in the meeting). The following nonprofit organizations were mentioned to be included: Crisfield Heritage Foundation (J. Millard Tawes Museum and Ward Brothers Workshop), Crisfield/Smith Island Cultural Alliance (Smith Island Cultural Museum), Fairmount Academy Historical Association (Fairmount Academy), Skipjack Heritage Inc. (Skipjack Heritage Museum) and Somerset Historical Society (Teackle Mansion).
- Have a certified appraiser identify any items of a particular value and set it aside for resale.
- Contact Somerset Historical Society, Somerset Choice Antiques and Rusty Rooster to see if they are interested in purchasing items for resale.
- Any remaining items insufficiently valued (\$20,000 total value) will be sold with the building (as-is with contents).
- The importance of having the Westover building available for sale by the Spring of 2021, as those proceeds will be used for operational expenses and exhibit design.

Ms. Widdowson then asked for the Boards approval to move forward with the strategy as presented; or suggest any changes to the plan as presented.

Mr. Riggin asked the Boards consideration, noting that they do not want to lend items out, as has been done in the past because there is no place to store the items. Distributing the items as gifts to the previously noted organization is recommended, and he stressed the importance of getting the current museum to get it sold as quickly as possible so the money can be used for interior design of the new center. It was also noted that the new building is framed and is being prepared to have the concrete floor poured soon.

Commissioner Randy Laird thanked Ms. Widdowson, Mr. Riggin and the Tourism Commission for the work they have done and not giving up on the project, and made a motion to approve moving forward with the strategy plan as presented. Vice President Charles Laird seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Gary Pusey, Ms. Ashley Bedsworth and Mr. Marcus Murray, Department of Technical and Community Services came forward.

Mr. Pusey first presented Resolution No. 1158, a resolution to support the submittal of an application requesting Round 2 Community Development Block Grant funding for projects awarded through the federal CARES Act in Somerset County. A public hearing was held two weeks ago, on September 15, 2020. No comments have been received in the ten-day period. This grant will be used for emergency rental assistance only, totaling \$210,000; \$200,000 for rental assistance and \$10,000 for administrative expenses, and Mr. Pusey advised that phone calls for rental assistance continue to come in. The application is due by Friday; and Mr. Pusey requested approval for Resolution No. 1158, and the grant application forms requiring the President's signature.

A motion was made by Vice President Charles Laird to approve Resolution No. 1158 approving the grant application for Round 2 CARES Act funding. Commissioner Simpkins seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Next, Mr. Pusey presented a request for the release of two liens under the Housing Rehabilitation grant program for William E. Stewart (32333 Perryhawkin Road, Princess Anne, MD) found by Ms. Bedsworth and Mr. Murray. The first grant was funded in 1999 for \$12,773 and the second in 2014 for \$4,531. Both grants had a five-year lien period, and therefore have since expired and can be released.

Commissioner Simpkins made a motion to release the two liens against 32333 Perryhawkin Road as presented. Commissioner Willing seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Simpkins, Mr. Pusey, Ms. Bedsworth and Mr. Murray left the meeting at this time.

Mr. John Redden, County Engineer, came forward.

Mr. Redden advised that the Alonso Easement offer was accepted and is proceeding to settlement. With this being said, he explained that he would like to add this easement to the others in process and apply for Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) State Funding for Special Projects and explained the documents being presented today with this application:

1. The MAA Grant Agreement totaling \$60,500 relating to Runway 14-32 Obstruction Removal (Construction) Project
2. The AECOM Amendment No. 3/Local share totaling \$3,000 for professional engineering services
3. Change Order No. 3 (Construction/Economy Tree)/Local share totaling \$14,375

Mr. Taylor advised that the timing is good, as the MAA has advised that funds had just been returned from another county and are currently available for reallocation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Randy Laird to approve the MAA Grant Application. Vice President Charles Laird seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0 (Commissioner Simpkins was absent from the meeting at this time).

Vice President Charles Laird made a motion to approve AECOM/Scope of Work Amendment No. 3 as presented. Commissioner Randy Laird seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Willing made a motion to approve Change Order No 3/Economy Tree Service as presented. Vice President Charles Laird seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Redden advised the Board that with the Boards approval, he will send the Notice to Proceed to AECOM.

Mr. Taylor continued with correspondence and discussion items.

Correspondence was received from MDOT Secretary Gregory Slater acknowledging approval of recent airport grant funding in the amount of totaling \$61,700; State portion being \$46,275.

A letter was received from Greenwood Elementary School principal Ashley Walters, thanking the Board of Commissioners for the allocation of CARES grant funding that went towards the Food Pantry at their school.

Next, letters were received regarding Critical Area Mapping Updates, and permission has been requested by the Critical Area Commission to perform field reviews regarding wetlands encroachment on two county properties; Great Hope Golf Course and the Burgess Museum in Westover.

A motion was made by Vice President Charles Laird to approve proceeding with the field reviews regarding wetland delineation on both county properties. Commissioner Randy Laird seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.

Last, a letter was sent to The Honorable Andy Harris asking for his assistance with funding regarding the dredging maintenance on a portion of the Pocomoke River Federal Channel, also known as the "Muds". Roads Director Woody Barnes has also been speaking with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding this very much needed dredging project which we have been trying to do for many years. The lack of a dredge spoil site was noted as one of the hang-ups regarding this project; and the County has been working with DNR on this issue. It was noted that dredging projects generally occur on a 10-year cycle, and the last dredging performed in this area was in 2003, so it is therefore well overdue.

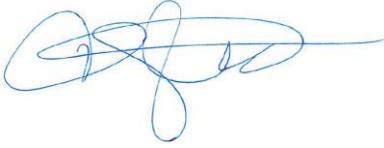
Mr. Bob McIntyre requested to address the Board. First, he noted that the last time he was here, Commissioner Simpkins was worried about the Johnson grass problem, and he asked if there

has been any word. It was noted that the County Roads Department is spraying and working with the State Highway Association (SHA). Additional updates may be provided during the Roads Board meeting scheduled for next week. Vice President Charles Laird mentioned the conversation he had with the SHA regarding the cutting mistake that occurred regarding sprayed grass. Mr. McIntyre advised that he has spoken with Anthony Calao, Department of Agriculture, Noxious Weed employee, who has been working with the Lower Shore Land Trust. They are looking for county help and suggested the Commissioners attend a meeting. In another meeting he attended, where the former Walmart property was discussed, Mr. Pusey mentioned 2 problems with the initial application Mitchell Bonneville filed, which is not addressed within the meeting minutes. He asked what those problems were. Mr. Taylor advised he would get back to Mr. McIntyre on that question. Mr. McIntyre again noted the people (staff) leaving the room and no longer in the meeting to answer questions. He also spoke about changing the format of the meeting, asking the Commissioners to be in more contact with people they represent to ask questions, holding evening meetings or having meetings once per month in their district to talk to people. He asked if a vote had been taken on changing the program. President Mathies said no decision has been made yet. He also revisited his previous comments regarding Eastern Shore Forest Products and the Golf Course. He said both are incurring deficits every day, and he hopes the county gets on top of that and lets the people know about it. He said we need to address that problem (golf course) and Mr. Johnson who is beating us out of \$100,000 every year.

With no further business, at 2:28 p.m., the Board was advised of the need to enter into Closed Session. Therefore, upon a motion made by Commissioner Randy Laird and seconded by Vice President Charles Laird, the Board entered into Closed Session by 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; and (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. The motion carried 4-0 (Commissioner Simpkins was absent at this time).

The Commissioner and Closed Session meetings were adjourned at 3:36 p.m., upon a motion made by Commissioner Eldon Willing and seconded by Vice President Charles Laird. The motion carried 5-0.

Approved by:



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Board of County Commissioners  
For Somerset County

Respectfully Submitted:



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Lory E. Ebron  
Executive Aide