

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

August 18, 2026

Theodore J. Elder, president (Absent)
Madison J. Bunting, Jr., vice president
Caryn G. Abbott (Absent)
Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.
Eric J. Fiori (Absent)
Joseph M. Mitrecic
Diana Purnell

Following a motion by Commissioner Bertino, seconded by Commissioner Mitrecic, with Commissioners Abbott, Elder, and Fiori absent, the commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room to discuss legal and personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions (GP) Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions permitted under the provisions of Section GP 3-104. Also present at the closed session were Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Candace Savage, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, and Human Resources Director Stacey Norton and Deputy Director Pat Walls. Topics discussed and actions taken included the following: a personnel update, hiring Allison Smullen as a license permit clerk I within Development Review and Permitting; transferring Roads Worker III Caleb Jackson to office assistant III within the Roads Division; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions.

Commissioners Abbott, Elder, and Fiori were absent from the open and closed session meetings.

Following a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, seconded by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:28 a.m.

After the closed session, the commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Elder called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Pastor James Area of First Baptist Church in Pocomoke and pledge of allegiance, announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously agreed to remove agenda item 24 regarding a proposed one-year moratorium on rezoning applications for properties along the MD Rt. 589 corridor.

The commissioners reviewed and approved the open and closed session minutes of their August 4, 2026 meeting as presented.

Commissioner Bunting opened the floor to receive public comments.
Attorney Hugh Cropper, representing Turville Creek Farms and other property owners,

spoke in response to the commissioners' action earlier that morning to remove from the agenda consideration of a proposed one-year moratorium on rezoning applications along the MD Rte. 589 corridor. He urged the commissioners to allow his clients' pending rezoning application to proceed, noting that they have invested tens of thousands of dollars in the process, including conducting a July 4 traffic count, meeting with Public Works, and participating in a sewer study involving the property. He stated that, regardless of the ultimate decision, the commissioners should allow the application to be heard.

There being no further public comments, Commissioner Elder closed the floor.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved by consent agenda item numbers 1-15 as follows: a \$100,000 State Bond Initiative grant to help fund design costs for the Recycling Facility Expansion Project; a 120-day extension through October 2026 to meet the 50% expenditure requirement for the \$300,000 Maryland Affordable Housing Trust Plumbing Poverty Program Grant; letters to Maryland's federal delegation opposing legislation to increase truck size and weight because of potential impacts to infrastructure, traffic, and public safety; a Small Project Agreement with Coastal Square, LLC to extend public water and sewer service through the Riddle Farm Service Area to the Coastal Square commercial shopping center; grant-funded housing rehabilitation projects for three qualifying properties using Maryland Affordable Housing Trust and Community Development Block Grant funding, along with an \$8,650 loan for one project; purchasing four Toro commercial mowers from Burke Equipment for \$46,531.66; USDA financial documents for the Lewis Road sewer project associated with a \$618,000 loan and \$3.373 million grant; funding of \$199,185.39 to upgrade Mystic Harbour Sewer Pump Station G; a three-year salt utilization agreement with State Highway Administration to obtain salt for winter storm operations; purchasing four roll-off containers from Mid-Atlantic Truck & Equipment for \$45,797 for the Homeowner Convenience Centers; the sole-source procurement of the PatTrac Electronic Medical Record System for the Worcester County Health Department for \$29,480, funded entirely with State funds; scheduling a public hearing on 11 proposed FY27/28 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation easement applications; scheduling a public hearing on the proposed 2026 Worcester County Comprehensive Plan; the FY27 Tourism and Economic Development media plan and advertising expenditures, including vendors exceeding the County's \$25,000 procurement threshold; and awarding the purchase and installation of a replacement intercom system at the Worcester County Jail to Absolute Security Group for \$45,000.

Bill Early, Jr., CPA, principal for CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, presented the FY25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and audit results, issuing unmodified opinions on the County's financial statements and compliance for each major federal program. Following the presentation, Commissioner Bunting thanked Mr. Early for the presentation.

Pursuant to the request of Public Works Director Dallas Baker and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the commissioners unanimously adopted a new Consolidated Public Works Agreement for future roads and water and wastewater development projects, including new escrow requirements and a two-year warranty period for road improvements. Mr. Baker said that projects already in the review process will remain subject to the requirements in effect when

they were submitted.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously approved a \$365,915 contract with Modern Controls to replace the Government Center cooling tower before it reaches the end of its useful life.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved a 60-month lease of a 2025 XL4100-V Gradall at \$9,457.85 per month for use by the Roads Division.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously agreed to schedule a public hearing on a \$331,300 budget amendment to fund the installation of a water booster pump station connecting the Ocean Pines and Riddle Farm water systems. The project will improve the County's ability to maintain water storage and system pressure in Riddle Farm.

Enterprise Fund Controller Quinn Dittrich presented the estimated fiscal impact of retroactively applying Resolution No. 26-13 adopting policies and procedures for adjustments to water bills dating back to July 1, 2025. Mr. Dittrich advised that an analysis identified 2,406 potentially eligible accounts with an estimated net fiscal impact of approximately \$142,000.

In response to a question from Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Baker estimated that approximately a dozen customers had appealed their high water bills through the Grievance Committee during the past year. Commissioner Bertino stated that any retroactive consideration should focus on those customers rather than potentially extending eligibility to more than 2,000 ratepayers.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the commissioners unanimously tabled the matter and directed staff to return with a revised proposal limited to customers who had previously pursued their bills through the County's appeals process.

Pursuant to the request from Procurement Officer Ed Welch and upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved the \$498,216 purchase of five Juniper core network devices and related equipment, software, and services from Skyline Technology Solutions to support the Worcester County Public Network.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitrecic, the commissioners unanimously approved an over-expenditure of approximately \$50,000 to support instructors for the Worcester Technical High School Fire/EMS Program for the 2026–2027 school year. The funding will allow the Ocean City Fire Department to provide instructors needed to continue the program.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on September 1, 2026.