

**Public Business Meeting
Minutes**

*Thursday, May 16, 2024 - 5:00 PM
Allegany County Fairgrounds Mutli-Purpose Building
11400 Moss Ave
Cumberland, Maryland 21502*

WE ASK THOSE CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD TO REGISTER ON THE SIGN-UP SHEET AND CONDENSE THEIR COMMENTS TO FIVE MINUTES OR LESS. THIS WILL ALLOW AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE WISHING TO COME FORWARD TO HAVE A CHANCE TO SPEAK. WE WILL CONDUCT OUR MEETING IN AN ORDERLY FASHION AND ASK THAT EVERYONE WISHING TO SPEAK FIRST BE RECOGNIZED BY THE PRESIDENT, COME TO THE MICROPHONE, AND GIVE HIS OR HER NAME AND ADDRESS PRIOR TO THEIR COMMENTS.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

2. Call to Order & Roll Call

The regular meeting of the County Commissioners of Allegany County was held at the Allegany County Fairgrounds in the Multi-Purpose Building, 11400 Moss Ave, Cumberland, at 05:03 PM on 5/16/2024. Present: County Commissioner Creade V. Brodie, Jr., County Commissioner William R. Atkinson, County Commission President David J. Caporale, County Administrator Jason Bennett, Assistant County Attorney Ramon Rozas

3. Approval of Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

4. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes

Upon Motion made by County Commissioner Creade V. Brodie, Jr., seconded by County Commissioner William R. Atkinson, and duly carried, the Minutes from the previous public business meeting were approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

5. Presentations

A. Citation - Allegany County Teacher of the Year, Mr. David Buskirk

The Commissioners presented an official citation to Mr. Buskirk, who is a kindergarten teacher at Beall Elementary, to thank him for his commitment and dedication to the citizens and students of Allegany County. Mr. Buskirk serves as the co-chair for the school's ELA team, and is a member of both the school improvement team and the attendance team. He has also served as a coach and volunteer for Allegany County Special Olympics and is a mentor for student interns.

B. FY2025 Allegany County Utility Rate Presentation - Adam Patterson, P.E., Director of Public Works

Mr. Patterson presented the updated recommended rates based on the City of Cumberland's 20% increase, which is part of the agenda packet. This final version will be presented for approval at the next public meeting.

C. FY2025-2029 Allegany County Capital Improvement Program Presentation - **Dan DeWitt, P.E., County Engineer**

Mr. DeWitt presented the recommended outline for the Allegany County Capital Improvement Program for FY25, which is part of the agenda packet. The Commissioners will be asked to take action at the next public meeting.

6. Public Hearing

A. Resolution 24-09 - Amending the 911 Fee for Allegany County from \$0.75 per month to \$2.00 per month - **Jason Bennett, CPA, County Administrator**

At the current rate, we collect approximately \$450,000 and moving it to \$2.00 will generate \$750,000 more revenue. Mr. Bennett opened the hearing, after which the Commissioners took action to adopt the resolution.

Motion: Approve, By: Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Seconded: William R. Atkinson. Yes: Creade V. Brodie, Jr., William R. Atkinson, David J. Caporale. No: None. Abstain: None. Motion: Approve, By: Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Seconded: William R. Atkinson. Yes: Creade V. Brodie, Jr., William R. Atkinson, David J. Caporale. No: None. Abstain: None.

B. FY2025 Second Preliminary Budget Public Hearing - **Jason Bennett, CPA, County Administrator**

Mr. Bennett presented the second preliminary budget to the public and the Commissioners, which was made part of the agenda packet. The final budget will be presented for adoption at the next public meeting.

7. Action Agenda

8. Consent Agenda

Motion: Approve, By: William R. Atkinson, Seconded: Creade V. Brodie, Jr.. Yes: Creade V. Brodie, Jr., William R. Atkinson, David J. Caporale. No: None. Abstain: None.

A. Resolution 24-8 - Cumberland Area FY2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program, Amendment 8 – Administrative Modification

Increases the 5307 operating budget for FY24 by \$525,647 and local matching funds by the same amount to support Allegany County transit service.

B. Approval of Lease of Real Property Located at 851 Kelly Rd, Cumberland, MD to Talkie Communications, Inc

For portions of Building 31 and 31B in the Riverside Industrial Park at a cost of \$126,750 for five years and they will move their operations here from Chestertown, MD.

C. Approval of Request for \$200,000.00 to the City of Cumberland for Acquisition of Homes along Central Ave

The purpose will be for demolition and future site preparations for new housing.

D. CareFirst -Stop Loss Renewal Approval

This is to authorize the President to sign the renewal with Care First for Stop Loss insurance, which is for individual annual claims that exceed \$250,000. The premium for this is just over a million dollars,

which represents a 4.14% cost reduction, and this is covered as part of our annual insurance premiums.

- E. Community Promotions Request for Miss Mountain City in the amount of \$200
For an ad to run in the State program.

9. Public Comment

Constituents – In order of sign-up sheet:

- Brian Kurtz of 16701 Lakeview Rd in Cumberland - Representing Rocky Gap Casino, he came to discuss concerns he has with the closure of the Flintstone Volunteer Fire Department's ambulance service.
- Dr. Cynthia Bambara on behalf of Kim Leonard, Jane Belt, and David Jones all of 12401 Willowbrook Rd, Allegany College of Maryland - Came to discuss concerns they have with the 10% budget cuts for all outside agencies. The amount the College receives from the State of Maryland depends on the amount they get from the County. Allegany College was one of the only ones to get an increase from the State because enrollment rates have increased.
- Steven Corioni of 22607 Gilpin Rd in Flintstone - As President of the Local 1715, came to represent the EMTs and paramedics of the Allegany County EMS division by speaking against a potential \$2 million budget cut of the division's funding.
- Andy Cessna of 759 Pine Ridge Rd in Bedford, PA - Yielded time to Mr. Corioni.
- Joel Rush of 737 George Washington Hwy in Oakland, MD - Yielded time to Mr. Corioni.
- Zachary Barbe of 101 Division St in Westernport, MD - Read a letter from Dr. Rameen Shafiei, who is the director of UPMC Western Maryland Emergency Department, in which he outlines concerns he has with EMS budget cuts.
- Jason Wolf of 1007 Van Buren Ave in Cumberland - Yielded time to Mr. Corioni.
- Steve Moyer of 11807 Murleys Branch Rd in Flintstone - Came to discuss concerns he has with budget cuts and the potential closure of the Flintstone Volunteer Fire Department, and response times that will be made much longer if Flintstone is not in service.
- Allen Ruby of 21708 National Pike in Flintstone - Discussed concerns he has with budget cuts and what would happen if the ambulance service out of Flintstone is closed.
- Lloyd Hardman of 10718 Hinkle Rd in Cumberland - Shared two stories with the Commissioners that helped express the need of having ambulance service in remote areas.
- Ken McKenzie of 19016 McMullen Hwy in Rawlings - President of the Local 203 Cumberland who works alongside the Local 1715, came to discuss concerns with EMS budget cuts.
- Jack Coburn of 60 Main St in Lonaconing - Invited to speak by Commissioner Caporale at the beginning of the meeting, came to discuss concerns with the potential closure or funding of Georges Creek ambulance service.
- Leeann Abernathy of 2888 Limestone Rd in Keyser, WV - Representing Tri Towns EMS, and talked about concerns she has with the management of the County EMS, and the potential closure of Tri Towns.
- April Morgan of 25 E Main St in Lonaconing - Yielded time to Ms. Abernathy.
- Thomas Morgan of 25 E Main St in Lonaconing - Yielded time to Ms. Abernathy.
- Josh Burkett of 123 Greene St in Westernport - Representing Tri Towns EMS, echoed concerns about EMS budget cuts and the closure of Tri Towns.
- John Gray of 430 Wildland Dr in Swanton, MD - Name was crossed off the list.
- Joseph Marshall of 34504 Marshall Hollow Rd in Little Orleans - Representing the Orleans Volunteer Fire Department, expressed concerns with EMS budget cuts.
- Bobby Ritchie of 1A Church St in Lonaconing - Representing the Goodwill Fire Company, expressed concerns with EMS budget cuts.
- Ellen Coffey of 304 Cumberland St in Cumberland - Yielded time to Max Green, who came up to speak at this time.

- Max Green of 505 Patterson Ave in Cumberland - Discussed concerns with the potential closure of the Washington Street Library due to budget cuts of outside agencies funded by the County.
- Tyler Wood of Frostburg - Expressed concerns with EMS budget cuts and station closures.
- Bill Valentine of 13613 Orleans Rd in Little Orleans - As a former Commissioner, came to express concerns he has with the potential budget cuts and asked the Commissioners to consider another option other than public safety.
- Alex Hay of 170 Mt Pleasant St in Frostburg - Yielded time to Max Green.
- Connor Woodring of 170 Mt Pleasant St in Frostburg - Passed.
- James Heward of 11011 Heward Ln in Frostburg - Shared a story of how his life was saved by EMTs and paramedics and praised them, and asked the Commissioners not to cut the EMS budget.
- Kristi Williams of 214 Wood St in Westernport - Discussed and shared stories of why EMS is so important and urged the Commissioners not to close stations.
- Brittany White of 104 Green St in Westernport - Introduced her son and told stories of how EMS personnel helped save his life more than once. She expressed concerns with EMS budget cuts and station closures.
- Judy Hamilton of 211 Kelley Ave in Westernport - Mayor of Westernport, talked about concerns for her citizens and response times by public safety personnel now, and especially if stations are closed and the EMS budget is cut. Urged the Commissioners to look at the Management of the Department of Emergency Services.
- Robert Overstreet of 14926 Lone Oak Dr in Cumberland - Concerned with EMS budget cuts and echoed sentiments of people who talked before him.
- Carey Williams of 214 Wood St in Westernport - 27 year volunteer, expressed concerns with EMS budget cuts and station closures.
- Jenny Lazarus of 500 Magruder St in Cumberland - No longer in attendance.
- Sandi Corsaro of 22708 Horserock Rd in Westernport - Family member of public safety personnel, expressed concerns with EMS budget cuts and station closures.
- Gerald Cook of 12 E Florida Way in Lonaconing - Vice President of Georges Creek Ambulance Service, expressed concerns with budget cuts and station closures.
- Janet Wunderlick of 15 Prospect Sq in Cumberland - No longer in attendance.
- Donna Jean Martin of 12114 Penney Ln in LaVale - EMT from LaVale who started her EMT career 50 years ago, expressed concerns with budget cuts and station closures.
- Rev. John Martin of 12114 Penney Ln in LaVale - Former EMT who relies on others to do the work him and his wife did for years. Echoed the sentiments of people who spoke before him.

10. Reports

A. County Administrator

Had no further comments to add at this evening's meeting.

B. County Attorney

Had no further comments to add at this evening's meeting.

11. Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Atkinson - Had no further comments to add at this evening's meeting.
- Commissioner Brodie - Had no further comments to add at this evening's meeting.
- Commissioner Caporale - Stated that there were recommendations made for station closures, but there has been no determination and discussions are still on-going. The Department of Emergency

Services has grown over 400%, and there is a meeting tomorrow with representatives to discuss potential solutions. He also thanked everyone for coming.

12. Reminders/Upcoming Meetings

A. NEXT MEETING - Thursday, May 30, 2024, 5:00 PM

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 07:30 PM.