

**Public Business Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday, May 30, 2024 - 5:00 PM

*Allegany County Office Building, 701 Kelly Road, Allegany Room 100
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 in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, Allegany Room 100, 701 Kelly Road, Cumberland, at 05:02 PM on 5/30/2024. 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

6. Public Hearing

7. Action Agenda

A. FY25 Budget Message - **David Caporale, Commission President**

Commissioner Caporale read the budget message for the upcoming fiscal year, which has been made part of the agenda packet.

B. Resolution 24-11, FY25 Operating and Capital Budget - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

Mr. Bennett explained this is the first of several steps the Commissioners will take tonight to adopt the budget. He then noted that there is still work to do with EMS to work on the 2 million dollar cut that is incorporated into the budget. Noted that the total budget is \$138,562,000, which is down from \$152,000,000 last year. The general fund is at \$106,821,000, which is down 5.6% from last year, or 6.3 million. There is a gain of \$2,100,000 in real estate tax and a loss of 3,000,000 in income tax. This budget holds the Board of Education at maintenance of effort level, which is \$33,800,000. Allegany College, the Health Department, the Library System, and all other outside agencies received a 10% deduction. There are no property tax rate changes within this budget. Went back to all the County's operating departments and asked for 10% cuts, and the departments came up with more than that, and are now down to \$238,000 worth of fund balance. Mr. Bennett then thanked all the departments for their hard work on this. The budget does include a 2% COLA for County employees. Water and sewer rates are included in the budget, which were presented over the past few weeks. Public budget hearings were held on March 21st, April 4th, a constant yield hearing on March 21st, budget workshop April 18th, preliminary budget hearing May 2nd, and the CIP May 16th. All of these, and more, are part of Resolution 24-11 which Mr. Bennett asked the Commissioners to approve and adopt this evening.

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.

C. Adopt the Tax Levy & Differential - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

Mr. Bennett explained this is setting the property tax levy and differentials as previously discussed. This includes no property tax increase, a slight increase to the tax differentials due to how the formulas work, and this was all presented in March. The next step would be for the Commissioners to take action on to adopt.

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.

D. Adopt the Supplemental Levy for Special Taxing Areas - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

Mr. Bennett explained the supplemental levy includes the ad valorem we have for the sanitary districts, and also includes the special taxing districts we have throughout the County. Those rates are set by many other organizations and are sent to the Commissioners to incorporate. There is just one increase for Bedford Road Volunteer Fire Company, all other rates were held the same. Action needs to be taken to adopt the supplemental levy.

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.

E. Authorize the Director of Finance to Publish - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

Mr. Bennett asked the Commissioners to take action to authorize the posting of the FY25 budget on the County's website and in the newspaper.

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.

F. Approval of CareFirst Renewal Document for Medical & Prescription Plans for County Employees for FY25 - **Kristi Liller, Director of Human Resources**

Mrs. Liller stated that due to the rising cost of healthcare and increased costs specific to the County's self-insured plan, the County was looking at an increase of 28% or \$2.5 million for the upcoming fiscal

year. Upon a thorough review of different options given by CBIZ, several plan design changes with no increased employee payroll deductions were decided upon. The plan design changes include, but are not limited to, increases to co-pays for doctor's visits, urgent care, ER visits, and prescription medications, as well as an addition of a copay for hospitalization. This would also include an addition of a deductible of \$250 for individual and \$500 for family and a 10% coinsurance for labs and radiology. CBIZ has indicated that this is still a very rich benefit plan for employees and their families. Mrs. Liller then asked the Commissioners to approve the CareFirst Renewal Document, including the plan design changes, for the County's employee's Medical and Prescription Plan for FY25.

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.

G. Resolution 24-10, Approval of Allegany County's FY24 Housing Bond Allocation for Maryland Mortgage Program - **David Nedved, Community Development Representative**

Mr. Nedved explained that the Maryland Mortgage Program provides below-rate mortgages for home-ownership to the residents of Allegany County. One does not have to be a first-time home-buyer to participate in this program. Current income limits are very generous with \$149,400 being the upper limit for one or two person households and \$174,300 being the upper limit for a household of three or more. The maximum acquisition cost is \$624,481 for Existing or Newly Constructed Homes. The Federal Housing Administration maximum mortgage limit is \$498,257 for a one family house. For more information, one can visit the website at <http://mmp.maryland.gov>. The participating lender in Allegany County is Truist Financial Corporation, and the contact is Toni Davis-Spivey, tdavis-spivey@Truist.com or 410-265-3699. Mr. Nedved then asked the Commissioners to approve and authorize the transfer of \$2,942,931 to the Community Development Administration's Maryland Mortgage Program for issuance of tax-exempt housing bonds on behalf of the County, and authorize the President to sign the Letter of Transfer.

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.

8. Consent Agenda

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.

A. Approval of FY25 Water & Sewer Rates

Presented by Adam Patterson at the BOCC public business meetings held on May 2nd and May 16th. These rates represent an average of a 7.4% increase.

B. Approval of FY25-29 Allegany County Capital Improvement Program

Presented by Dan DeWitt at the BOCC public business meeting held on May 16th. There are no newly funded projects in the request for FY25.

C. Approval of an Upgrade to the Allegany County Courthouse Security System with New Cameras and Door Locks

This would be by Securitas using grant funding in the amount of \$108,809, and authorize the President to sign any and all grant contract agreements and documents.

D. Frostburg State University 2024-25 Shuttle Contract

For Transit to provide bus service from August 26, 2024 to the last day of exams in May 2025. The proposed revenue from this contract will be \$148,844.

E. Trash Sticker Increase

From \$1.00 to \$2.00, which will potentially cause a \$250,000 increase in revenue. The price increase will be effective July 1, 2024.

- F. Accept the Office of Statewide Broadband - Difficult to Serve Properties Program Grant - \$1,656,000
This would be to help provide broadband services to households who lack affordable high speed internet connectivity.
- G. Community Event Promotion Request for the UPMC Western Maryland Dialysis Center
In the total amount of \$500. This is for two separate events, which will each get \$250.

9. Public Comment

Constituents – In order of sign-up sheet:

- Steven Corioni of 22607 Gilpin Rd in Flintstone - Representing the Local 1715, came to discuss the concerns with shortages of ambulance services the County's current system has and what cutting those services would do. Asked again for the Commissioners to reconsider the budget cuts.
- Leeann Abernathy of 59 Main St in Westernport - Concerned with the County's budget cuts, considering the revenue generated by EMS. She also discussed the issue with Tri Towns billing, and asked for Tri Town's revenue from the past 11 months, and explained that they have reached out to Director Pyles several times regarding this issue, and have received no response. Mr. Bennett told the Commissioners that their attorney reached out, and our attorney would reach out tomorrow to discuss.

Four others signed up to speak, but when called upon, passed: Joe Bittinger, Dan Carl, Steve Moyer, Allen Ruby, Sr.

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 - Thanked everyone for being in attendance this evening, and said they would continue to work toward a solution for the EMS budget cuts.

12. Reminders/Upcoming Meetings

- A. NEXT MEETING - Thursday, June 13, 2024, 5:00 PM

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 05:27 PM.