

**Public Business Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday, January 23, 2025 - 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 05:00 PM on 1/23/2025. 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. Excused: Attorney T. Lee Beeman, Jr.

3. Approval of Agenda

Administrator Bennett presented the addition of Action Item 7B - Appointment of Linda Widmyer to the Allegany County Board of Education to the County Commissioners.

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

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. Code Home Rule Bill 1-25 - Introduction - "Compensation for Public Officials" - **T. Lee Beeman, Jr., County Attorney**

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 28, Section 28-101 et. seq. of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the County Commissioners are authorized to establish the salaries of the Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County, the Board of Education of Allegany County, the Allegany County Board of License Commissioners, the Allegany County Board of Elections, the Judges of the Orphans' Court of Allegany County, and the Sheriff of Allegany County. A Salary Study Commission was appointed to study the salaries of said public officials, and said Salary Study Commission has issued a report, which has been received by the Board of County Commissioners. The County Commissioners are required to set by law the salaries for each of the above offices. These recommendations were presented at a previous meeting, and the Commissioners must enact a Code Home Rule Bill to execute the salary adjustments. Tonight, the Code Home Rule Bill is being introduced, and the Commissioners must vote to hold a public hearing at the next public business meeting in regards to this Code Home Rule Bill.

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.

- B. Appointment of Linda Widmyer to the Allegany County Board of Education (Added at the start of the BOCC public business meeting) - **Jason Bennett, CPA, County Administrator**

This would be to fill the remaining term of the late Bob Farrell, whose term would end in 2026.

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

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. Request for Travel to the 41st International Symposium on Child Abuse for Jane's Place Staff
This will be for two members to travel to Huntsville, AL at a cost of no more than \$5,600, and this will be reimbursed through grant funding.
- B. Western Maryland Economic Futures Investment Fund - Grant Agreement between Tri-County Council For Western Maryland, Inc. and Board of County Commissioners For Allegany County, Maryland
This will be specifically for a \$1 million that was approved by the George Edwards Fund Board for a project being completed by PennTex Ventures on Vocke Rd in Lavale that will include a future property to be named in the near future. The County will hold these funds in escrow until draw requests are made.

9. Public Comment

No one signed up to speak at this evening's meeting.

10. Reports

- A. County Administrator

Updated the Commissioners on some of the highlights of the Governor's projected budget, which was released last week:

- Proposing a reduction in the disparity grant in the amount of \$800,000 - this would reduce the supplemental teachers pension shift grant we got almost 12 years ago. They are removing half now, and are proposing to remove the second half next year.
- Adding a new payment for teacher pension costs that will be given directly to the counties - that is \$754,000
- Proposing a cost shift for SDAT for the local assessment office. Currently, we pay 50% of that cost, which is about \$360,000, and they are proposing to move that to 90% which will be an extra \$368,000 of cost for County Government.
- Proposing a change to income taxes, and how they work in the State of Maryland. It would affect the standard deduction, the Governor essentially doubled it, which is really good news for individuals and families, as it would put more money directly in their pockets. However, this would reduce the income tax the County collects as a result. There isn't an exact number out yet, and the County is working with the State to try and determine what the calculations on this.

As of right now, we are about \$1.9 million in cuts. The Governor's budget will need to go before the General Assembly so things could change.

B. County Attorney

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

11. Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Brodie - Was down at PACE on Thursday for meetings with the Department of Public Works to sit with funding agencies. Said it went really well, and thanked the Director of Public Works and his staff for all their hard work.
- Commissioner Atkinson - Johns Hopkins University visited our Detention Center recently, and created a short video, which is out now on the County website and Facebook page. The video highlighted the Medication-Assisted Treatment administered to inmates addicted to opioids and how to treat them fairly and get them the resources they need. Thanked Captain Dan Lasher, the Re-entry Coordinator Stephanie Brehm, and the MAT coordinator Angel Dalverny for all their outstanding work. Also mentioned the second annual "Positive People" awards will be beginning soon, and the application will be coming out sometime in mid-February.
- Commissioner Caporale - Shared that he had heard of concerns over closing library branches. He reminded the public that this decision rests on the Library, and not the County Commissioners. While the library did receive about a \$120k decrease in their funding last budget year, so did all external agencies and internal departments funded by the general fund budget. He expressed his sympathy, noting that the Commissioners are very familiar with making those tough decisions to operate within their budgets.

12. Reminders/Upcoming Meetings

- A. NEXT MEETING -Thursday, February 6, 2025, 5:00 PM**

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 05:14 PM.

