

**Public Business Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday, February 6, 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 2/6/2025. Present: County Commissioner William R. Atkinson, County Commission President David J. Caporale, County Administrator Jason Bennett, County Attorney Lee Beeman. Excused: County Commissioner Creade V. Brodie, Jr.

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 William R. Atkinson, seconded by County Commission President David J. Caporale, and duly carried, the Minutes from the previous public business meeting were approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

5. Presentations

- A. **Allegany County Participation at the Presidential Inauguration - Sheriff Craig Robertson and Deputies**
The Sheriff's Department sent nine deputies to Washington DC for the Inauguration of President Donald J. Trump. They were assigned to certain locations, and all the cost associated with this is taken care of by the Department of Homeland Security. The Sheriff then invited Major Morgan to approach the podium.

Major Morgan thanked the Commissioners, Administrator Bennett and Sheriff Robertson for committing the resources so the deputies could have the opportunity to serve at the inauguration. They were sworn in under the authority of the U.S. Marshals, and there were 3,800

allied agencies from all over the country. The nine deputies felt honored and privileged to serve and represent the Sheriff's Department.

6. Public Hearing

- A. Code Home Rule Bill 1-25 - "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.

The public hearing was open for public comment. At this time, three members of the public spoke in opposition of the salary increases for all entities included:

- Max Green
- Deb Frank
- Ellen Coffey

After the closing of the public hearing, the Commissioners could then take action on enacting the bill. Commissioner Caporale asked for a motion to enact CHRB 1-25, but no motion was received. Per Attorney Beeman, without a motion to approve, CHRB 1-25 does not pass. The salaries that are currently set in law under, Chapter 52 - 1-6, will remain in effect until the Board of County Commissioners takes further action.

7. Action Agenda

- A. Approval of \$28,000 in Business Expansion Deferred Loan Funds to Tunnel Hotel & Trail Inn Cafe - **Nathan Price, Economic Development Representative**
Director of Economic and Community Development, Jeff Barclay, presented this item. Mr. Adam Forshee, owner of Tracks and Yaks, joined Mr. Barclay at the podium to present this item. Mr. Forshee has recently purchased the old Trail Inn across from the Depot, and is asking for funds to help improve this property.
Motion: Approve, By: William R. Atkinson, Seconded: David J. Caporale. Yes: William R. Atkinson, David J. Caporale. No: None. Abstain: None.

Mr. Barclay did mention the \$28,000 will cap off the Business Expansion Deferred Loan Funds, which was \$100,000, for this fiscal year.

8. Consent Agenda

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

- A. Approve the Board of Education's FY26 CIP Request of \$913,000 for Early Childhood Education Center at Washington Middle School

This was already approved in the FY25 CIP, and there will be a total County commitment of this project for \$1.5 million. Tonight, the Commissioners will be approving the release of \$913,000 and an MOU with the Built to Learn funding we will get through the Maryland Stadium Authority, and that will be for \$6.9 million.

- B. Old Willowbrook Road Sewer Project Award to Mountain Top Excavation in the amount of \$68,436
This project is through the Health Department, and will be using Bay Restoration Funding to replace some failing septic tanks and connect them to our system.
- C. Re-Appointment of Jason A. Pannone to the Allegany County Building Code Appeals Board
This will be a five year term and will expire January 22, 2030.
- D. RFP for Updating Allegany County's State-Required Comprehensive Plan
This needs done every ten years so this will start the process. The advertisement will be released for bid, and this will be paid for with operating funds.

9. Public Comment

Constituents – In order of sign-up sheet:

- Vicky Brenneman of 210 Walnut St in Westernport - Expressed her concerns with potential closures of libraries, and asked the Commissioners for their help.
- Deb Frank of 17 Forest Dr in LaVale - Expressed her concerns with the appointment process of the recent vacancy on the Board of Education.
- Alan Septoff of 301 Mt View Dr in Cumberland - Expressed his concerns with the appointment process of the recent vacancy on the Board of Education.
- Trish Morgan of 306 Baughman St in Westernport - Spoke on behalf of the Friends of the Westernport Library group. Concerned with library leadership, and potential closures of libraries.
- Sandra Roeder of Cumberland - Expressed her concerns with the appointment process of the recent vacancy on the Board of Education.
- Alan Whitworth of 10710 Kreigbaum Rd in Corriganville - Discussed issues he has been having with the Permit Department. Also advocated for the library.
- Ellen Coffey of 304 Cumberland St in Cumberland - Spoke during the Public Hearing for CHRB 1-25, during which she expressed concerns with the library budget and closures.
- Max Green of 505 Patterson Ave in Cumberland - Spoke during the Public Hearing for CHRB 1-25

10. Reports

- A. County Administrator
Addressed Mr. Withworth and his issues. Mr. Bennett said he will be in contact with him, and this will hopefully get worked out.
- B. County Attorney
Read a statement regarding the closed session held on Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 4:00PM. A copy of this statement is attached to the agenda packet.

11. Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Atkinson - Announced the opening of our Second Annual Positive People Award Nomination period will go live tomorrow. The deadline will be February 28th. Mr. Atkinson encouraged everyone to look around for people who go above and beyond for the benefit of our community, outside of what they do for work.

- Commissioner Caporale - Thanked everyone for being here, and talked about the different agencies who have worked alongside the Commissioners during the budget process. Said representatives from the Commissioners' office would be in attendance at the next Library Board of Trustees meeting.

12. Reminders/Upcoming Meetings

A. NEXT MEETING - Thursday, February 20, 2025, 5:00 PM

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 06:01 PM.