

**Public Business Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday, May 29, 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 5/29/2025. Present: County Commissioner Creade V. Brodie, Jr., County Commissioner William R. Atkinson, County Commission President David J. Caporale, County Administrator Jason Bennett, County Attorney Lee Beeman.

3. Approval of Agenda

Attorney Beeman asked if the Commissioners would add Item D - Lease Agreement with Betizel Resources, LLC for the Use of a Building to Store Flood Relief Donations to the Consent Agenda.

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. Statement of Closed Meeting

There was no closed meeting to report on.

5. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes

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

6. Presentations

7. Public Hearing

8. Action Agenda & Public Comment

A. FY26 Budget Message - **David Caporale, Commission President**

Commissioner Caporale read a prepared statement which is attached to the agenda packet.

B. Resolution 25-05, FY26 Operating and Capital Budget - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

The budget is presented as a grand total of \$147,717,558. Included in that is:

- 2% COLA for all employees.
- Our general fund is increasing by 9%.
- Commissioners will maintain the same property tax for FY26, but the income tax will increase from 3.03 to 3.2 beginning January 1, 2026.
- This budget reflects an increase of \$3,649,000 in property tax revenue, and will utilize \$3.1 million of fund balance, and as a result of our capital, which was discussed later in the meeting, the County will be using \$2.6 million of reserved lottery proceeds to fund three separate capital projects, which have been previously discussed.
- The State of Maryland mandate of cost sharing for Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, which rose to 90% and a total cost of \$728,000.
- The disparity grant calculated at \$7.2 million, along with a supplemental disparity grant for teachers' pensions in the amount of \$815,000.
- Provides Maintenance of Effort for the Board of Education.
- Partially and flat funds Allegany College of Maryland; Allegany County Health Department; the Library system; and all other outside agencies.
- Paying \$754,000 for the County's share of the teacher pension shift.
- This budget stays within the County's debt service goal.

No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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 for FY26 Budget - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

The Commissioners are required to take action to adopt the property tax rate and include the tax differentials. The proposed property tax rate is .9750, which is unchanged from prior years, and the proposed personal property tax rate is \$2.4375 on each \$100 of assessment property, and the same for public utilities. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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 for FY26 Budget - **Jason Bennett, County Administrator**

The Commissioners are also required to adopt all other tax rates, including ad valorem tax rates for all of the sanitary districts, which has no increases. This also includes rates for all of the special taxing areas, including some of the fire companies. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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. Approval of FY26 Water & Sewer Rates - **Adam Patterson, P.E., Director of Public Works**

The proposed rates were presented publicly at the previous two Commissioners' meetings. Now, asking for those rates to be approved as presented. After a question from Commissioner Brodie, Mr. Patterson confirmed the presented rates were all recommended by the Sanitary Commission. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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 FY26-30 Allegany County Capital Improvement Program - **Adam Patterson, P.E., Director of Public Works**

This was presented at the last Commissioners' meeting and was also posted on the website, and there have been no comments received. Most of the projects, with the exception of one, were already funded, and the only new request mentioned was the design funding for the Continuing Ed building at Allegany College of Maryland. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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.

G. CareFirst Administrative Renewal Contract for FY26 - **Kristi Liller, Director of Human Resources**

The proposal includes a 4% reduction in administrative fees, which is an approximate \$15,778 in savings. The prior year cost for administrative fees was \$394,459, and will decrease to approximately \$378,681. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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.

H. CareFirst Stop Loss Proposal for FY26 - **Kristi Liller, Director of Human Resources**

The proposal includes an increase in fixed premiums in the amount of \$360,622 for the upcoming year, due to an increase in high-cost claims. The total cost will increase from \$715,252 to \$1,075,864. The most recent CBIZ projection indicated an illustrative increase of 5.4%. However, due to the increase in high-cost claims, the fixed costs for Stop Loss Coverage will increase by 50.4%. The increase in costs to Stop Loss premiums was baked into the 15.99% increase in employee premiums for the upcoming year. CBIZ did obtain quotes from five other vendors, but continuing with CareFirst would be the lowest cost option. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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.

I. Award of Public Bid for the Village Crossing at Campobello Project to First Fruits Excavating Inc. in the amount of \$4,029,329.75, Base Bid - **Adam Strott, Economic and Community Development**

Allegany County Economic and Community Development (ACECD) has been managing the public bid for the site work associated with the new housing project, in partnership with D.R. Horton. As such, a low-bidder has been identified and a contract can be awarded. First Fruits Excavating, Inc from Ridgeley, WV was the low bidder with a base bid of \$4,023,329.75, which is approximately what the County estimated this project to cost. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

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.

9. Consent Agenda & Public Comment

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. FY26 Senior Care System Annual Plan - Naming the Allegany County Health Department as Lead Agency

The Health Department will be responsible for coordination of the Senior Care Program in the County with the Maryland Department of Aging, and is something that has been done for many years. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

B. Allegany County Transit - Changing the Purple Line Fixed Route to a Demand Response Service

This has been discussed for several months, and there was a hearing held on April 17, 2025 and was previously advertised on March 12, 2025. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

C. Request for Authorization of Sale and to Execute Deed for Surplus Property on Shortest Day Rd.

This is in the amount of \$4,540 to Tim and Tracey Wharton as it adjoins their property, and this will return the property to the tax rolls. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

- D. Lease Agreement with Beitzel Resources, LLC for the Use of a Building to Store Flood Relief Donations (Item added at the start of the BOCC public business meeting)

Beitzel Resources, LLC is graciously donating use of this site for a short term, and it just needs to be approved by the Commissioners. No one signed up to speak on this agenda item.

10. General Public Comment

Constituents – In order of sign-up sheet:

- Judy Hamilton, Mayor of Westernport - Thanked the Commissioners and County staff for everything they have been doing to help Westernport and the neighboring areas.

11. Reports

A. County Administrator

Gave an update for the those citizens who are customers of Maryland Water Service. The water service has been sold to American Water Service, and is now going through the regulatory process, which means back through the PSC and federal agencies as well for approval. Just learned of this sale so doesn't have much in the way of details, including rate information. There will be updated information available on the County's website once the County receives it.

B. County Attorney

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

12. Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Atkinson - Reminded everyone that Flood Recovery information and updates can be found on the County's website, www.alleganygov.org. Also announced the dumpsters will be removed within the upcoming days and weeks. The Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Assistance is on site, and more information about this can also be found on the County's website. The disaster resource center is still open, and thanked the Department of Social Services for all their work on this. He also mentioned and thanked all the federal support the County is receiving. Thanked all the agencies, staff, and citizens who have been working around the clock to provide services for flood recovery.
- Commissioner Brodie - Thanked everyone involved with the recent devastation of the flood in Allegany County. Personally thanked Adam Patterson, Director of Public Works, and Dan DeWitt, County Engineer, along with all their staff of the Roads and Utilities Departments. Also, the four mayors of the Georges Creek area towns, and spoke directly to Mayor Judy Hamilton, who was in the audience, and thanked her and her husband for all their hard work and dedication. He also spoke of the citizens and how amazing it was to see all the help they were all willing to give.
- Commissioner Caporale - Personally thanked Mayor Hamilton for the great leadership she showed. Mentioned FEMA being in the area to assess the situation. Reminded everyone that funds, supplies, and time are still needed if anyone is able to give.

13. Reminders/Upcoming Meetings

- A. NEXT MEETING - Thursday, June 12, 2025, 5:00 PM

14. Adjournment

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 PM.