

February 25, 2021

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 5:00 p.m. on the above date. The following were present: Commissioner Jacob C. Shade; Commissioner Creade V. Brodie, Jr.; Commissioner David J. Caporale; County Administrator Jason M. Bennett; and County Attorney T. Lee Beeman, Jr. The following business was transacted:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

MOTION

There were no additions or deletions to the Agenda.

MOTION

Upon Motion by Commissioner Brodie, seconded by Commissioner Caporale, and Motion carried, the Commissioners approved the Minutes of the February 11, 2021 public business meeting.

PRESENTATION

Item 1 – Allegany College of Maryland Allegany County Opportunity Scholarship Update – Dr. Cynthia S. Bambara, President, Allegany College of Maryland, David R. Jones, Vice President of Advancement and Community Relations & Executive Director of the ACM Foundation, Kim Leonard, Chair, Board of Trustees of Allegany College of Maryland, and Dr. Audie G. Klingler, President, Allegany College of Maryland Foundation.

Dr. Cynthia Bambara, President of Allegany College of Maryland (ACM), spoke first, and, on behalf of the ACM Board of Trustees, the ACM Foundation Board of Directors, the ACM faculty and staff, and, most importantly, the students at ACM, thanked the County Commissioners for their support of the Opportunity Scholarship Program. Dr. Bambara talked about the impact and importance of this Program, especially during the pandemic.

After the Commissioners thanked Dr. Bambara for her comments, Mr. David Jones, Vice President of Advancement and Community Relations at ACM, and Executive Director of the ACM Foundation, came forward to offer his remarks. Mr. Jones presented an annual update report on the Opportunity Scholarship Program at ACM, including a short video presentation.

Mr. Jones thanked the County Commissioners for their support and for the impact the Opportunity Scholarship Program makes on the community, then called forward the President of the ACM Foundation, Dr. Audie Klingler.

Dr. Klingler also offered his thanks to the County Commissioners for their support, and talked about ACM's importance and impact on Allegany County. He remarked that ACM's students are very appreciative of the Commissioners' support.

Dr. Klingler introduced Mr. Kim Leonard, Chair of the Board of Directors of ACM. Mr. Leonard also thanked the Commissioners and spoke of the importance of education in the community.

Commissioner Shade thanked the speakers from Allegany College of Maryland and said that the County Commissioners would continue to be supportive of the Opportunity Scholarship Program. He mentioned the impact of Covid on the local impact grants from Rocky Gap revenue, as the Rocky Gap Casino was closed for three months and had no revenue during that time. Commissioner Shade asked Jason Bennett, as Chairman of the Local Development Council which recommends allocations of the local impact grants, to make sure that the Opportunity Scholarship Programs remains a priority with the Council.

Item 2 – Frostburg State University Allegany County Opportunity Scholarship Update – Dr. Ronald H. Nowaczyk, President, Frostburg State University, and John T. Short, Jr., Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director, FSU Foundation.

Dr. Ronald Nowaczyk talked about the good working relationship and support that exists between ACM and Frostburg State University (FSU) and also about the great importance and impact of the Opportunity Scholarship Program. He pointed out that over the past year, students from thirteen different municipalities in the County benefited from the Program. Dr. Nowaczyk pointed out that the Opportunity Scholarship money helps keep students here in Allegany County, instead of attending college somewhere else in the State. He also gave the Commissioners some printed information and presented a short video.

Dr. Nowaczyk concluded his presentation by thanking the Commissioners for their support. The Commissioners in turn thanked Dr. Nowaczyk for his comments this evening.

PUBLIC HEARING

Item 3 – Code Home Rule Bill 2-21 – Public Hearing – “Compensation for Public Officials” – T. Lee Beeman, Jr., County Attorney, explained that this evening was the public hearing on Code Home Rule Bill 2-21 – “Compensation for Public Officials”. He recalled that the Bill was introduced at the Commissioners’ previous public business meeting held on February 11, 2021. Attorney Beeman pointed out that, because this was a Legislative Day, the Commissioners, following public hearing and any comment, could take action to adopt Code Home Rule Bill 2-21 at this meeting.

Commissioner Shade opened the public hearing and asked for any public comment, either in person or written and submitted to the Board. County Administrator Bennett told the Commissioners that no comments had been submitted to the Board in writing. No one came forward to offer any public comment on Code Home Rule Bill 2-21.

Commissioner Shade asked Attorney Beeman for confirmation that the Board of County Commissioners could take action on Code Home Rule Bill 2-21 at this meeting. Attorney Beeman confirmed that they could do so.

Upon Motion made by Commissioner Caporale, and seconded by Commissioner Brodie, the Board of County Commissioners adopted Code Home Rule Bill 2-21 - “Compensation for Public Officials”.

Commissioner Shade thanked the Salary Study Commissioner for putting in their work and time to make salary recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

CONSENT AGENDA

As recommended by the County Administrator

Upon Motion by Commissioner Brodie, seconded by Commissioner Caporale, and Motion carried, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Consent Agenda as recommended by the County Administrator.

Item 4 – Resolution 21-2 – Authorizing Resolution for Filing Fiscal Year 2022 Transit Grant Applications – Board of County Commissioners approved and passed Resolution 21-2 authorizing the County Administrator or the President of the County Commissioners to file grant applications for public transportation for Fiscal Year 2022.

Item 5 – Resolution 21-3 – Rules & Regulations Governing Employees of Allegany County, Maryland Amendments – Board of County Commissioners approved and passed Resolution 21-3 to make amendments to the Rules & Regulations Governing Employees of Allegany County, Maryland.

Item 6 – Declaration of Surplus Property – Board of County Commissioners authorized the Allegany County Sheriff’s Office to declare several guns/weapons as surplus and to be disposed of in accordance with County policy.

County Administrator Jason Bennett read three letters into the record. Copies of these letters are attached to and made a part of these Minutes. He asked the Commissioners to sign the letters if they chose to do so.

After the letters were read, the Commissioners signed them.

Administrator Bennett announced that the Fiscal Year 2022 budget process launched today, and he offered some brief remarks concerning that.

County Attorney Lee Beeman had no further comments to make at this evening’s meeting.

Commissioners’ statements, comments, recognition –

Commissioner David Caporale had no further comments to make at this evening’s meeting.

Commissioner Creade Brodie had no further comments to make at this evening’s meeting.

Commissioner Jacob Shade announced that the County Office Building at 701 Kelly Road will be reopening to the public on Monday, March 8, 2021, and that the next Commissioners meeting, scheduled for Thursday, March 11, 2021, will be open to the public. He added that the Board of Education will begin reopening to students on Monday, March 1, 2021. Commissioner Shade commented that the County Commissioners have offered to assist the Board of Education in any way they can to get the students safely back into school.

Commissioner Shade also reported that to date, 9,800 Covid-19 vaccines have been administered in Allegany County, and that Allegany County is the third-highest tested County in the State of Maryland.

Constituents – In order of sign-up sheet –

Mr. Ryan Brenneman, of 555 Greene Street, Cumberland, spoke about the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad. He commented on the “huge miscarriage of funds” spent on the WMSRR and said that he could no longer support his tax dollars being used to support an organization that isn’t using the funds in a wise manner. Mr. Brenneman explained that his company was involved with the WMSRR regarding marketing efforts and has seen nothing change over five years. He spoke of his grave concern regarding an additional multi-million dollar bailout being given to the WMSRR when it has not been proven that it can even be fully operational and self-solvent. Mr. Brenneman said there needs to be real answers, as well as an explanation of how the money is being spent. He talked about equipment and property not being taken care of properly.

Mr. Brenneman spoke against having a WMSRR Board made up of only elected officials and talked about the reasons that is not a good idea. He also pointed out that track maintenance personnel were the first to be laid off, which he also considered a bad move.

Commissioner Shade acknowledged Commissioner Caporale as a member of WMSRR Board and asked him for his thoughts. Commissioner Caporale confirmed that he and the other Commissioners shared Mr. Brenneman’s concerns. He told Mr. Brenneman that presently the Commissioners are reviewing the Railroad’s inspection reports and that they will make their own assessment going forward.

Reminders/Upcoming Meetings –

Next Public Business Meeting – Thursday, March 11, 2021, 5:00 p.m. This meeting will be open to the public, with social distancing and attendees wearing masks.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Jacob C. Shade, President

True Copy
Attest:

Cynthia A. Young
Recording Secretary



ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

The Board of County Commissioners

701 Kelly Road
Cumberland, MD 21502
T 301 777-5911 F 301 724-6970
www.alleganygov.org

Jacob C. Shade, *President*
Creade V. Brodie, Jr.
David J. Caporale

Jason M. Bennett, CPA, *County Administrator*
T. Lee Beeman, Jr., *County Attorney*

February 25, 2021

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr
Chairman of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
East Wing Miller Senate Office Building, Room 2
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Smith:

We, the Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County, Maryland, are writing today to state our opposition to **Senate Bill 627 Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights – Repeal and Procedures for Discipline**. Due to this Bill's emergency status and the fact that the Law Enforcement Bill of Rights has been in place since 1974, our local law enforcement agencies would not have enough time to properly prepare and staff for this Bill's requirements. This Bill would significantly change the function of Law Enforcement agencies and could potentially put our officers at risk.

We respectfully ask that you take more time and research before implementing such substantive changes on an emergency basis, and not pass SB 627.

Sincerely,

The Board of County Commissioners

Jacob C. Shade, President

Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner

David J. Caporale, Commissioner

cc: Western Maryland Delegation
Allegany County Sheriff Craig A. Robertson



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Senator Delores G. Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Kelley:

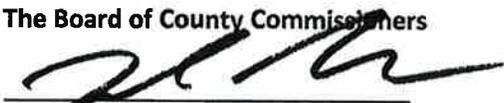
We, the undersigned members of the Allegany County Board of County Commissioners, would like to express our support for **Senate Bill 869: Transportation – Western Maryland MARC Rail Extension Study**.

This bill will require the Maryland Department of Transportation to study extending Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) commuter rail service to western Maryland. As you know, Allegany and Washington Counties are currently not serviced by MARC commuter service. MARC commuter rail service to Western Maryland would, in short, open a world of possibilities to our citizens who otherwise commute to the Baltimore / Washington DC metro areas. This potentially worthwhile endeavor would have lasting benefit for our region.

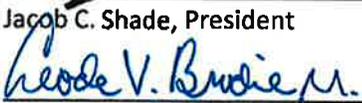
In short, we appreciate Delegate Corderman and the many co-sponsors of this legislation and respectfully request your committee's **FAVORABLE** consideration of this matter. Should you have any questions or comments regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

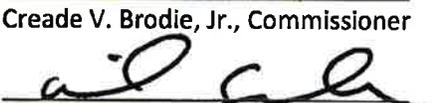
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Jacob C. Shade, President



Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner



David J. Caporale, Commissioner



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Ms. Tiffany P. Robinson
Secretary, Maryland Department of Labor
500 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Madam Secretary:

We are writing today to request your assistance to rectify an ongoing issue with State of Maryland's Department of Labor's Division of Unemployment Insurance. As of this writing, we have had 27 current Allegany County Government employees representing 5% of our workforce have fraudulent unemployment claims filed in their name against Allegany County Government.

Both employees and our staff have encountered difficulties in getting assistance from the Division of Unemployment as they tried to inquire about this fraudulent activity. As you might imagine, the thought of identity theft and fraudulent claims are enough to concern anyone affected, but to not be able to receive a timely response from the Division of Unemployment only adds to the concern.

Through our inquiries, we have learned that multiple agencies throughout the State of Maryland and many others in Allegany County are experiencing the same fraudulent claims and slow response times. While we understand that the global pandemic has added great stress to your office, we respectfully ask that you double down on your efforts to mitigate this fraudulent activity to provide some relief to our employees and residents.

Sincerely,

The Board of County Commissioners

Jacob C. Shade, President

Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner

David J. Caporale, Commissioner

cc: Maryland Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Mark L. Widmyer, Western Maryland Outreach Coordinator