

January 16, 2020

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 Brandon S. Butler; and Assistant County Attorney T. Lee Beeman, Jr. The following business was transacted:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone 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 December 19, 2019, public business meeting.

Before moving on, Commissioner Shade explained that a number of people were signed up to speak at this evening's meeting. He asked that those coming forward to speak state their names and addresses for the record and that they each try to limit their remarks to about five minutes.

STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS **January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019** **President Jacob C. Shade**

Commissioner Shade presented the annual State of the County Address, for the calendar year 2019. A copy of the State of the County Address as read by Commissioner Shade is attached to and made a part of these Minutes.

PRESENTATION

Item 1 – Lion's Center Board Presentation Regarding Cumberland Chase – John Emerick and Edward Crossland, Lion's Center Board Members. Edward Crossland, Lion's Center Board Member, explained to the Commissioners that he and Mr. John Emerick, also a Lion's Center Board Member, were present this evening on behalf of the Board. He acknowledged another Board member, Al Feldstein, present in the audience.

Mr. Crossland explained that even though the Lion's Center is not a public entity, but rather a private charity, the Board Members felt it appropriate for them to address the County regarding an issue: that for several years, the Board of Directors of the Lion's Center has struggled with a substantial increase in the regulations on nursing homes, decrease in Medicare payments, and a very substantial decrease in private pay clients. He added that costs of operation are always increasing also. Mr. Crossland reported that while the Lion's Center Board of Directors is still currently able to maintain its existing facility, the Board's ability to make long-term plans has become increasingly difficult. He pointed out that other nursing facilities are in the same situation.

Mr. Crossland provided some background information on Lion's Center, including that it was founded in the 1960s, as a 501(c)(3) charity, by a group of Allegany County citizens. He talked about the need for the facility to now be replaced, but said that the Board has reached the conclusion that it is not feasible to build a new facility. Mr. Crossland noted that Lion's Center is a 101-bed facility. Mr. Crossland also pointed out the responsibilities and liabilities facing volunteer board members, such as those for Lion's Center, and remarked that it will become increasingly difficult to find board members willing to serve. He said that the Board will not be able to continue to operate the Lion's Center facility.

Mr. Crossland explained that in December 2019, the Lion's Center Board executed a letter of intent with the principals of the Cumberland Chase Development at the Barton Farm near Rawlings that will, if implemented, provide for the sale of the beds and assets of Lion's Manor to the newly-formed organization that will be constructing a new long-term care and assisted living facility at the Cumberland Chase property. He went on to say that, if implemented, the assets will be utilized in the development of a larger complex that will include very much-needed individual residential housing for retired persons. Mr. Crossland remarked that he could not emphasize enough the importance of this to Allegany County in the future. He added that the operation of Lion's Center would cease with the completion of the new facility.

Mr. Crossland then pointed out that the Lion's Center Board will recognize some revenues from the sale of the assets, and accordingly the Board has recently formed the Lion's Center Foundation, Incorporated to serve as a non-profit corporation, which should qualify as a 501(c)(3) charity, to

allow the Board to continue to use its resources to serve the elderly. He went on to speak about some of things that could be done. Mr. Crossland then acknowledged Mr. Jeff Metz and Mr. Dave Weimer, present at this meeting, for being extremely cooperative with the Lion's Center Board, and also acknowledged the ongoing cooperation of Allegany County Government, in particular Brandon Butler, County Administrator, for being extremely helpful with various issues involving the proposed new type of entity.

Mr. John Emerick then spoke in agreement with Mr. Crossland and offered brief additional remarks.

Item 2 – Proclamation – United States Census 2020 Day and United States Census 2020 Month – Tanya L. Gomer and David K. Nedved, Allegany County Census Complete Count Committee Co-Chairs. Mr. David K. Nedved, Allegany County Census Complete Count Committee Co-Chair, spoke about the background and importance of collecting census data. He pointed out that businesses interested in locating in the County look at that data, and the data is also considered in application for and allocation of grant funds. Mr. Nedved asked that everyone complete the census so the census count in Allegany County can be one hundred percent participation.

Mr. Nedved mentioned that Allegany County's Complete Count Committee will next meet on January 21, 2020, and then on February 18, March 17, April 15, May 19, June 16, and July 21, 2020. He added that anyone is more than welcome to attend these meetings. Mr. Nedved announced that the census mailing will go out on March 12, 2020, and that the official day of the census count is April 1, 2020. He added that the regional census office opened today. A list of important dates regarding Census 2020 is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Tanya L. Gomer, the other Co-Chair of the Complete County Committee, spoke next. She remarked that the Committee is dealing with the census hands-on at the local level. Mrs. Gomer shared some information about how to complete the census, saying that they want everyone to count once, only once, and in the right place. She agreed with something Mr. Nedved had mentioned earlier, that representation in the House of Representatives will be contingent upon how the districts are drawn and the population. Mrs. Gomer also spoke of the effect of census data on redistricting. She reminded everyone that it is a civic duty to complete the census, and she mentioned the many programs, including grants, affected by census data.

Mrs. Gomer pointed out that for the first time, the census can be completed online. Postcards will be mailed out providing a website and a unique identifier code. She explained that if a person can't or would rather not complete the census online, it can be completed by telephone, or mailed in. Mrs. Gomer added that from May through July 2020, census workers will be going door to door to help complete the census with people who have not responded online, by phone, or by mailing. She confirmed that census data collected is kept confidential by law.

She shared some statistics: In 2000, Allegany County had a 77 percent census completion rate, resulting in a loss of funding in the amount of \$11.1 million. In 2010, the completion rate dropped down to 75 percent, for a loss of funding of \$24.3 million. She explained that a similar low completion rate in 2020 could leave over \$32 million in funding on the table.

Mrs. Gomer completed her presentation by announcing that April 1, 2020 is Census Day, and a citizen should complete his census based on where he resides on that date, including college students. She also handed out some flyers and promotional items related to the census, then explained that Mr. Chris Farrell is the Regional Census Liaison.

Commissioner Shade read and presented Mr. Nedved and Mrs. Gomer with an official Proclamation of April 1, 2020 as United States Census Day, and the month of April 2020 as United States Census Month in Allegany County. There was a round of applause.

PUBLIC HEARING

Item 3 – Code Home Rule Bill 3-19 – Public Hearing – “An Act to Repeal and Reenact Chapter 325 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Allegany County, Maryland (2011 Edition, as Amended) Entitled Floodplain Management” – Amy C.M. Stonebreaker, Planner, and Angela R. Patterson, Director of Planning & Growth. Mrs. Amy C. M. Stonebreaker, Planner with the Allegany County Department of Planning & Growth, gave a power point presentation providing details about Code Home Rule Bill 3-19 – Floodplain Management. A copy of this Code Home Rule Bill is available on the County's website and is made a part of these Minutes by reference.

Commissioner Shade then opened the Public Hearing on Code Home Rule Bill 3-19 and asked if anyone would like to comment on the floodplain regulations provided for in the Code Home Rule Bill. No one came forward to offer any comments. Hearing closed.

Commissioner Shade asked Assistant County Attorney Lee Beeman if the Commissioners could take action on Code Home Rule Bill 3-19 at this meeting, and Attorney Beeman confirmed that they could; the Code Home Rule Bill was previously introduced to the Board of County Commissioners, proper notice was given, and this meeting was being held on a Legislative Day.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Caporale, seconded by Commissioner Brodie, and duly carried, the Board of County Commissioners adopted Code Home Rule Bill 3-19 - "An Act to Repeal and Reenact Chapter 325 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Allegany County, Maryland (2011 Edition, as Amended) Entitled Floodplain Management".

ACTION AGENDA

Item 4 – Memorandum of Understanding with Cumberland Economic Development Commission (CEDC), City of Cumberland, and the Board of County Commissioners – Board of County Commissioners to approve and agree to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the CEDC, City of Cumberland, and the Board of County Commissioners to create the Allegany Development Corporation – Jacob C. Shade, President, explained that the Memorandum of Understanding with Cumberland Economic Development Commission (CEDC) would consolidate their economic development efforts and the County's into one entity, to be jointly run between the City of Cumberland and Allegany County Government. He remarked that the key to it is getting everyone on the same page, resulting in more accountability and some savings in taxpayer money. Commissioner Shade acknowledged the presence of Mr. Paul Kelly of the CEDC and Mr. Jonathan Hutcherson, Chairman of the CEDC Board, and invited Mr. Hutcherson to come forward to say a few words.

Mr. Hutcherson offered some brief background and information about the CEDC and its mission. He commented that the Board of Directors of the CEDC is extremely pleased to enter into the MOU. Mr. Hutcherson remarked on the benefits of consolidating the City's and County's economic development efforts into one. He then thanked Commissioners Shade, Brodie, and Caporale for their support and drive in making this a reality, and he referred to it as a "big deal" for all involved.

Commissioners Shade and Caporale also offered brief remarks in favor of the consolidation.

Commissioner Shade moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Cumberland Economic Development Commission (CEDC), City of Cumberland, and the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Caporale seconded the Motion. Motion carried two to one to approve.

VOTE:

Commissioner Shade: Approved
Commissioner Brodie: Opposed
Commissioner Caporale: Approved

Item 5 – Fiscal Year 2020 Rural Legacy Program Agreement – Board of County Commissioners to authorize the President to sign the annual program agreement for the Rural Legacy Program within the Mountain Ridge Rural Legacy area – Siera N. Wigfield, Planner, explained that the Mountain Ridge Rural Legacy Area is an area from Mount Savage through Piney Mountain all the way to Dan's Mountain and is a contiguous area. She further explained that the Rural Legacy Program is for willing landowners to sell their development rights. Mrs. Wigfield reported that the Board of Public Works approved the County's grant this year, and that the grant agreement is before the County Commissioners for their approval. She asked the Commissioners to approve and authorize the President to sign the Rural Legacy Program Agreement.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Caporale, seconded by Commissioner Shade, and duly carried by a vote of two to one, the Board of County Commissioners approved and authorized the President to sign the annual program agreement for the Rural Legacy Program within the Mountain Ridge Rural Legacy area.

VOTE:

Commissioner Shade: Approved
Commissioner Brodie: Opposed
Commissioner Caporale: Approved

Item 6 – Memorandum of Understanding with the Allegany County Task Force on Child Abuse & Neglect, Jane's Place, Inc. and the Board of County Commissioners – Board of County Commissioners to approve and authorize the President of the Board of County Commissioners to execute a tri-party agreement between Allegany County Task Force on Child Abuse & Neglect, Jane's Place, Inc., and the Board of County Commissioners – Brandon S. Butler, County Administrator, Mary Beth Pirolozzi, Task Force Board Member, and Karen Johnson, Jane's Place Board Chair. Brandon S. Butler, County Administrator, spoke first on this Item, and

acknowledged that consolidation appeared to be the theme of this evening. He remarked that this consolidation of the Allegany County Task Force on Child Abuse & Neglect and Jane's Place, Inc., with the Board of County Commissioners, is a consolidation that makes a lot of sense. Mr. Butler informed the Commissioners that this MOU is a zero spend for the County, but it does provide funding that works for the community and allows for grant opportunities to increase because of the partnership. He then turned the microphone over to Ms. Karen Johnson, Jane's Place Board Chair, and Ms. Mary Beth Pirolozzi, Task Force Board Member. He also acknowledged Ms. Chrissy Ujcic of the Task Force on Child Abuse & Neglect, also present at this meeting in representation of the Task Force.

Ms. Mary Beth Pirolozzi commented, on behalf of the Task Force, that this move is very important because it will allow for resources to be leveraged, to be able to do so much more for the protection and safety of the children in Allegany County. She also stated that the mission of the Task Force will absolutely continue as instituted by Carol Sangiovanni at its inception, including raising awareness, providing education, and coordinating community-based programs with available resources for the prevention and intervention of child abuse and neglect. Ms. Pirolozzi also spoke about how the consolidation will work. She then asked Ms. Chrissy Ujcic to stand and be recognized, and pointed out that she is near and dear to the hearts of children in the Allegany County community and will continue to provide educational outreach to the County's schoolchildren and to the community organizations under this merger. Mrs. Pirolozzi thanked the Commissioners for their support and also thanked Jane's Place for working with the Task Force, in particular Karen Johnson for her diligence. She then thanked County Administrator Brandon Butler for working with the Task Force to make the consolidation happen.

Ms. Karen Johnson spoke next, and said simply that she wanted to echo everything that Ms. Pirolozzi said. She pointed out that the Task Force and Jane's Place began talking about consolidation about a year and a half ago, and that it took a while to get it right. She also thanked the Commissioners for their consideration.

The Commissioners also expressed their thanks for the ladies' efforts.

Upon Motion made by Commissioner Brodie, seconded by Commissioner Caporale, and duly carried, the Board of County Commissioners approved and authorized the President of the Board of County Commissioners to execute a tri-party agreement between Allegany County Task Force on Child Abuse & Neglect, Jane's Place, Inc., and the Board of County Commissioners.

CONSENT AGENDA

As recommended by the County Administrator

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

Item 7 – Allegany County On-Call Planning & Engineering Services Contract Award – Board of County Commissioners awarded the On-Call Planning & Engineering Services contract award to RK&K, Keyser, West Virginia, and Bennett Brewer and Associates, LLC., Frostburg, Maryland.

Item 8 – Recovery, Processing, Reporting and Marketing of Recyclable Materials Contract Renewal – Board of County Commissioners authorized the renewal of the Agreement with Penn-Mar Recycling, LLC from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, to provide recovery, processing, reporting, and marketing of recyclable materials.

Item 9 – Consulting Agreement with Atkinson Eco, LLC – Board of County Commissioners authorized the execution of a consulting agreement with Atkinson Eco, LLC for project management services.

Item 10 – Training Site Agreement for Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, and Pediatric Advanced Support Training – Board of County Commissioners approved the agreement between Allegany County Department of Emergency Services and Western Maryland Health System to designate the Department of Emergency Services as a training site.

Item 11 – Local Emergency Planning Committee Officers – Board of County Commissioners approved the following elected officers for the Local Emergency Planning Committee as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Committee: Alex Kelly as Chairman, Vince Pyle as Vice-Chairman, Carrie Hughes as Emergency Planner, and Alison Robinson as Public Information Officer/Secretary.

Item 12 – Emergency Services Board Appointments – Board of County Commissioners approved the following appointments to the Emergency Services Board to serve during the year 2020: Fire Services Committee Chairman, Ronnie Carr, Fire Services Committee Member-at-large, Scott Yates, Emergency Management Services Committee Chairperson, Josh Burkett, Emergency Management Services Committee Member-at-large, Robby May, and Career Representative, Chris Biggs.

Item 13 – Purchase of Computer Aided Dispatch for 911 Joint Communications Center – Board of County Commissioners authorized the purchase of a Motorola Spillman Flex computer aided dispatch system for \$537,620.53 as allocated through the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2020-2024.

Item 14 – Purchase of Emergency Ambulance for Emergency Medical Services Division – Board of County Commissioners authorized the purchase of a 2019 Ford F-550 Life Line Type 1 Ambulance Superliner for \$271,596 as allocated through the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2020-2024.

Item 15 – Allegany County Mental Health Advisory Board Appointments – Board of County Commissioners appointed Teresa Friend and Lynette Wilson as members on the Mental Health Advisory Board. They will be filling two vacant positions due to term expirations. Their terms will expire on June 30, 2022.

Item 16 – Declaration of Surplus Vehicle – Board of County Commissioners authorized the Department of Public Works Roads Division to declare a 1999 International Dump Truck #105, VIN# 1HTGBAAR7XH671269 as surplus and dispose of it according to county policy.

Constituents – In order of sign-up sheet –

Mr. Robby May said that he was present on behalf of the EMS Subcommittee of the Allegany County Emergency Services Board. He explained that he has been a member of the volunteer emergency services in Allegany County for the past fifteen years and is currently a volunteer paramedic with Corriganville Voluntary Fire Company, serving as its EMS captain. Mr. May remarked that he has a long family history of volunteering with emergency services in Allegany County. Mr. May also said that he acknowledged and appreciated the difficult job that the County Commissioners face in making funding decisions in a challenging budget cycle.

Mr. May explained that he was speaking at this meeting because he and his colleagues in the emergency medical services are deeply concerned about the safety of the public and communities when it comes to medical emergencies. He spoke about the nationwide issue of the dramatic drop in volunteerism, and pointed out that there are only fifteen to twenty new EMTs a year in Allegany County, and that, according to statistics, only half of those will still be volunteering within five years of earning their certification. Mr. May acknowledged that because of the ever-increasing number of volunteers, especially on the EMS side, a number of stations have requested the Allegany County Department of Emergency Services (DES) to either fully or partially staff their stations; and that currently, the County is fully staffing (a paramedic and an EMT driver) four stations, and partially staffing (either a paramedic or an EMT driver) five stations.

Mr. May talked about the issues with staffing the stations and the problems of stations having to shut down because DES does not have the staff available for the stations. He added this is due to a number of reasons, including sickness, maternity leave, call-offs, disciplinary actions (suspension of license of a provider), and clinicians leaving DES to work for other agencies for more pay. Mr. May pointed out that staffing is going to stations who historically handle more calls, while citizens served by other stations are facing extended wait times to get assistance because of the ruralness of their region.

Mr. May asked the Commissioners to consider more funding for EMS, and also to consider the possibility of an emergency services tax.

As an individual, Mr. May also asked the Commissioners to consider looking into the staffing and appropriations of volunteer stations as related to staffing by County EMS.

Mr. Randy Appel, of 10807 Cash Valley Road, LaVale, said that he was present to bring an issue to the Commissioners' attention. He told them that at the top of his driveway, on County property, water comes up out of the road, and that he thought Commissioner Brodie knew what he was talking about. Mr. Appel reported that he contacted LaVale Sanitary and was told by them that it was not their problem, that the water was coming from a spring underneath the road. He remarked that the issue is becoming very dangerous, as in the wintertime the water freezes. The water runs down into his driveway. Mr. Appel said that he contacted County Roads, and they did come out to put gravel and salt on the ice, which then created another problem with salt and gravel coming

down into his driveway as cars go by, breaking up the blacktop in the driveway. He also mentioned that his wife fell recently on the gravel.

Mr. Appel told the Commissioners that if they could do anything to help him, he would appreciate it.

Mr. Appel said that he also wanted to commend the Commissioners on the bridge in Little Orleans, saying that they did a fantastic job in getting the money for it. He suggested that, if bridges are dedicated in Allegany County, this bridge be dedicated to the veterans of Little Orleans, in honor of a young man who grew up in the near vicinity of the bridge and was killed in Vietnam. Mr. Appel also told the Commissioners that the Appel Road sign that was formerly on the bridge has not been put back up yet.

Mr. Trevor Laber, accompanied by **Mr. Mike Roche**, of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, spoke about performance and operational issues plaguing the WMSRR, which were discussed back in 2018, and about an audit that was performed at that time. Mr. Laber explained that the audit brought to light a number of issues, some already known and some not.

Mr. Laber told the Commissioners that he and Mr. Roche have now decided to form a not-for-profit organization known as the Allegany Preservation Society, with a mission statement to provide for documentation, preservation, interpretation and display or operation of agricultural, mining, and industrial transportation artifacts within Allegany County and its surrounding areas. He said that they have a bold plan to assist and provide partnerships with other organizations to continue the development and provide for operational and educational assistance, and the enlightenment and enjoyment of future generations; and also, to celebrate the history and preserve the heritage that is the hallmark of Western Maryland. Mr. Laber shared some plans for a museum and cultural center. He also spoke about issues concerning the WMSRR's 734 steam locomotive and having it declared as a national historic landmark.

Mr. Kenneth Wilmont, of 513 Fort Avenue, Cumberland, stated that he is not an advocate of the no-kill policy (at the animal shelter). He also talked about the problem of dog attacks in the State of Maryland, which he read have caused 46 deaths, 65 percent of whom were children under the age of 10. Mr. Wilmont also voiced his concerns about the feral cat situation in Allegany County, and how harmful it is to the County's bird population.

Mr. Edward Guiliano, of 15121 Trailridge Road, Cumberland, in the Bel Air Subdivision, said that he was present this evening to speak against the Dan's Mountain Windforce wind turbines. Mr. Guiliano explained that he is on the executive board of Anchor, the group that is against construction of the wind turbine industrial park at the top of Dan's Mountain, and added that he plans to be a regular attendee at the County Commissioners meetings and occasionally speaking on the topic. He voiced his concerns about the noise aspect of the wind turbines and also the lack of community outreach by Dan's Mountain Windforce, which he considered related. Mr. Guiliano commented that he and his neighbors are very concerned that there has been no attempt at community outreach by Dan's Mountain Windforce regarding construction of the project. He mentioned that some of his neighbors had no idea that a wind turbine industrial park was about to be built at the top of Dan's Mountain, about a mile away from their homes, and that there is no internet site for Dan's Mountain Windforce where additional information about the project could be obtained, just a Facebook page with two postings, one from 2016 and one from October 2019. Mr. Guiliano remarked that people in the area have a lot of questions about the project and its effects on their homes and their lives, including about potential noise pollution caused by wind turbines.

Mr. Guiliano asked the Commissioners to consider rethinking their support of the project and ask a lot of questions. He told them that he looked forward to addressing them again at future meetings.

Commissioner Shade suggested that the Commissioners could possibly arrange a meeting out in Bel Air with Dan's Mountain Wind Force. He asked Mr. Guiliano if he thought that would be helpful in addressing some of the residents' concerns. Mr. Guiliano said that he thought it might be. He thanked the Commissioners.

Assistant County Attorney Lee Beeman remarked on what an asset Jane's Place and the Task Force on Child Abuse & Neglect are to Allegany County, and pointed out that they are a one-of-a-kind resource for the County.

Commissioner Shade thanked Attorney Beeman for filling in for County Attorney William Rudd and said that the Commissioners' thoughts are with Attorney Rudd.

County Administrator Brandon Butler had no further comments to make at this meeting.

Commissioners' statements, comments, recognition -

Commissioner David Caporale had no further comments to offer at this meeting.

Commissioner Creade Brodie talked about the upcoming PACE events and the funding sources that start there for upcoming County projects. He commented that the County team has always been very successful in bringing back large sums of money in funding.

Commissioner Brodie also said that now that the Cumberland Chase project is moving forward, he needs to get some pricing for water and sewer availability to the property. He asked the other Commissioners for their okay to go ahead and look into that. Commissioners Shade and Caporale were in agreement. County Administrator Butler suggested that this be put into a Motion because it will potentially require an appropriation of funds. Commissioner Shade agreed that the Commissioners would make a Motion at this meeting and then vote again when there is an actual number.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Caporale, seconded by Commissioner Brodie, and duly carried, the Board of County Commissioners approved Commissioner Brodie moving ahead to obtain pricing on water and sewer for the Cumberland Chase Project.

Reminders/Upcoming Meetings –

Next Public Work Session – Thursday, January 30, 2020 3:30 p.m.

Next Public Business Meeting – Thursday, January 30, 2020 5:00 p.m.

Announcement – Recycle Christmas Tree & Holiday Greenery

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Jacob C. Shade, President

True Copy
Attest:

Cynthia A. Young
Recording Secretary



**Allegany County Complete Count Committee
Important Dates**

Date	Event	Time	Focus
November 19, 2019	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Education
December 17, 2019	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Education
January 21, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Awareness
February 18, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Awareness
March 12, 2020	1st US Census Cohort Mailing		
March 17, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Motivation
April 1, 2020 - CENSUS DAY			
April 15, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Motivation
May 19, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Reminder
June 16, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Reminder
July 21, 2020	CCC Meeting	3-4 pm	Thank you

Allegany County Contacts:

David Nedved - 301-777-5967 - dnedved@alleganygov.org

Tanya Gomer - 301-876-9594 - tgomer@alleganygov.org

The Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County

State of the County

January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

2019 was a year of transition for Allegany County as the county continued building a foundation for growth and development. Tonight, we reflect on moments from 2019 where the community came together, where we invested in the County's future, and where we continued to plan for tomorrow. Ultimately, the path forward in 2020 will be based on the partnerships we established in 2019. Allegany County government stands ready to work together in this new year, knowing that little can be accomplished by one, but much can be accomplished when we build our community.

Before beginning this State of the County address, we would like to thank some of our elected officials and partners and staff who are critical in advancing the policies of this board and moving our region forward. I believe the elected bodies of Allegany County are more united than ever. Mayor Morriss and the Cumberland city council entered into a memorandum of understanding eleven months ago in February 2019, in this room, to set forth efficiently and effectively addressing the delivery of services between the City of Cumberland and the County.

The era of divisiveness and division between local governments is over.

And, while there is more work to do, tonight's announcement of a merger between economic development efforts between the city and the county is long overdue. In no area is this more important than economic development. There has to be a change to the status quo. Just five years ago, not only did we lack communication between economic development entities, in some instances we were working against each other and withholding information. Now, not only are we prepared to undertake joint projects, but we have consolidated into one economic development entity for all of Allegany County. This will bring cost-savings to all residents, will streamline our structure, and will lead to more accountability to improve our efforts to spur growth and development in our community.

This year, the County completed the Economic Development Strategic Plan with the assistance of Thomas P. Miller and Associates. The plan sets a path forward for economic development for our region. Finally, we have a set of common goals, a plan, and one organization to achieve our desired outcomes. This new entity, the Allegany Development Corporation, will be tasked with carrying out this plan and projects and will be measured against the benchmarks and timelines laid out in the report. We must work together, in unison, if we are to achieve the type of success our area desperately needs.

2019 was a year of coming together across our community. Leaders empowered our youth and invested in our area's entrepreneurs. Local government on all levels continues a commitment to these themes as we move into the new year.

Community coming together

Our community was met both with tragedy and triumph in 2019. We were all devastated by the news of the closure of the Luke Paper Mill. A 130-year institute in our community was a regional creator of a way of life for many of our citizens. County government led the effort to organize a multi-state resource event that included 70 employers who offered employees jobs on the spot. Working with our state and federal partners, we successfully secured job training and benefits for the affected employees of Verso Corporation, who are now undergoing training at the County's facility, Western Maryland Works.

Hunter Douglas celebrated 100 years of innovation this year in Allegany County. Commissioner Caporale was on hand to greet workers and company executives who have invested greatly in our community.

We honored community heroes like Mr. Floyd Wigfield, a World War II veteran on the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

We greatly expanded our O.P. road repair and improvement fund. This year we allocated \$76,000 to assist over 70 residents with the improvements of 8 roads, which while they pay all county taxes they do not receive the benefit of having a county maintained street.

In March, it was recommended that the Board of Education should hire more mental health counselors in middle and high schools to help with the increase in teen suicide and violence. This was offered as a possible use of the \$300,000 increase provided by the County to the Board of Education. In November, I'm proud to report in a compromise and unanimous vote the Board hired four mental health counselors and four additional school resource officers.

In July, we worked with the Health Department to create an online inspections database so the public can view inspection reports and results of all food establishments in the County.

And in September, we banned the use of automated speed cameras in Allegany County. We introduced a code home rule bill that would ban all speed cameras on County-maintained roads. While bans are in place in some states, Allegany County is the first county in Maryland to ban the devices. Unlike other counties, Allegany County isn't going to rely on these cameras to balance our budget. These cameras are about cash, not safety. They do little to improve driving habits and act only as a tax on motorists everywhere. The State collected \$64 million in revenue from the program in 2018 alone.

Investing in the future of Allegany County

This year, a number of businesses opened or expanded operations. We welcomed expansions of the Toasted Goat, now located in the historic Hotel Gunter; J&J Baits in Frostburg started an ax throwing range in its existing shop, which is unique to Western Maryland. We also welcomed Holy Grounds in LaVale, Basecamp Coffee in Cumberland and Dig Deep Brewing Company in the historic Footer Die Works building.

All of these new or expanding businesses support economic growth and promote livability in our communities.

County Government also moved forward on a number of key investments in the future of our community. We announced a partnership for major residential growth at the property formerly known as Cumberland Chase. Tonight, representatives from Lion's Manor are here to provide more good news on that opportunity for the area's seniors.

We established, in concert with the State of Maryland and Allegany County Public Schools, a youth apprenticeship initiative for the area's high school seniors. Allegany County Government and Willet's Tech, among others, were the first to give these students a chance to earn while they learn.

The Board of County Commissioners established a Future Fund to utilize economic development funds to seed business attraction and location into the area. The Board also approved the renovation of a facility in LaVale to create a first-of-its kind workforce development space called Western Maryland Works. This facility, which will officially open March 1 of this year, is a partnership with Allegany College of Maryland. It utilized 100 percent local labor and contractors and is utilizing local vendors for materials. It will also be a training home for the REACT robotics teams.

With each of these investments, we are saying loud and clear that Allegany County is Open for Business. We are not interested in placing undue regulatory barriers in front of people who want to realize their dream to start or expand their own businesses, which may have been done in the past. We promise to work to eliminate as much red tape as possible for residents seeking to build up their home or business in Allegany County.

To that end, the Board of Zoning Appeals, on remand from Maryland Court of Special Appeals, took up an application for wind technology in Allegany County. This why the case was heard again locally.

We decided to stand by the decision of the Board of Zoning Appeals, first when they voted against the windmills and now that they approved them. This project is supported by every landowner and adjoining landowner.

Let's not forget Allegany County is surrounded on three sides by commercial wind farms, with windmills no more than two miles from our borders in three directions, including one 738 feet away in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Somerset County, Mineral County, and Garrett County have a combined 297 wind turbines generating energy, local jobs, and most importantly tax revenues each day.

Garrett County brought in \$3.257 million in tax revenues this fiscal year from their wind projects. The proposed \$110 million project on Dan's Mountain would bring in an average of \$951,556 in tax revenue each of the first ten years, making it instantly the third largest tax assessment in the county.

This project, which is to be sited on Dan's Mountain, provides much needed tax revenue for the County and construction jobs for local companies. The Board of County Commissioners was clear: we will not stand in the way of a company seeking to legally construct a project within our borders due to unsubstantiated claims. Our neighboring

counties are realizing real revenues due to the development of wind energy in their jurisdiction, without any loss of home values. In none of the three neighboring counties has this occurred, why should we expect this to occur in Allegany County?

The debate is not whether windmills are a good form of energy or whether you like them, the question this Board faces is this:

We adjoin three counties with 297 windmills, generating millions of dollars a year in tax revenues which help pay for police, education, infrastructure, and other critical needs – does Allegany County want to miss out on this revenue? Even when every landowner and adjacent landowner approves of this project, should the Board of Commissioners attempt to nullify private property rights and the decision of the Board of Zoning Appeals to fight this project and purposely miss out on over \$9.5 million in revenues over the next ten years?

As a fiduciary of Allegany County Government, I believe that it would be detrimental and a disservice for Allegany County to simply pass on this project and the important revenues associated with it. Securing new businesses and new streams of revenue is how we will build a secure future for our community.

Planning for tomorrow

The County Government has been resolute in planning for tomorrow. We have expanded the State's Enterprise Zone designations for the community to include the Barton Business Park. We established the Get to Work program that meets the needs of our businesses in the North Branch Industrial Park. We commissioned a concept of operations study for an automated vehicle center in partnership with Frostburg State University.

We provided community enhancement funds for both Cumberland and Frostburg to facilitate their blight removal and growth opportunities. We established a three year contract with the Greater Cumberland Raceway. In addition to traditional grants for EMS and Public Works, an \$3.2M in grant funding for various projects across the county was won. This included over \$700K for public safety, law enforcement, and opioid response.

As we look to 2020, there is much more to be done

While we had a glimpse of some light at the end of the tunnel, the effects of the Verso closure are still yet to be seen. With mandates from the State such as minimum wage, which increased on January 1 of this year, and the looming passage of the Kirwan Commission's recommendations, we will move forward conservatively and make the tough decisions required to balance a budget without tax increases. We will make cuts if necessary within government instead of asking taxpayers to pay more in taxes each year.

In closing, I would like to quote "*A History of Allegany County*" page 434. While it was written 44 years ago it remains as accurate today as it was then.

"Another attitude which has retarded development in this area is a mental isolationism. Afraid of change, many people have attempted to preserve Allegany County as it has been in the past rather than allow it to move into the future. These isolationists were

often complacent and proud that this region was spared many of the ailments of modern American society. It was certainly true that Allegany County was a pleasant place to live, free of the rampant crime, pollution, overcrowding, filth, and impersonality of the urban areas. It was also true, however, that some change was unquestionably necessary in order to solve the region's acute economic problems."

The Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County

Jacob C. Shade, President

Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner

David J. Caporale, Commissioner