

March 26, 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 County Attorney T. Lee Beeman, Jr. The following business was transacted:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present at this meeting.

Before proceeding, Commission President Jacob Shade announced that this meeting was being livestreamed and that there were less than ten people present in the meeting room, with all of those people maintaining proper social distancing.

MOTION

Commissioner Shade presented an item to be added to this meeting's Action Agenda: Item 2A – COVID-19 Business Assistance Fund.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Brodie, seconded by Commissioner Caporale, and duly carried, the Board of County Commissioners added Item 2A – COVID-19 Business Assistance Fund to the Action Agenda.

There were no further additions or deletions to the Agenda.

MOTION

Upon Motion by Commissioner Caporale, seconded by Commissioner Brodie, and Motion carried, the Commissioners approved the Minutes of the March 12, 2020, public business meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

Item 1 – Constant Yield Hearing – Jason M. Bennett, CPA, Director of Finance, confirmed that the Constant Yield Public Hearing was being held this evening, as advertised back on March 16, 2020. Mr. Bennett reminded the Commissioners that this Hearing is one of the “pieces of the puzzle” during the annual budget process. He explained that the State calculates the tax rate the County would need to adopt to bring in the same amount of tax dollars as the previous year. Mr. Bennett reported that this year the County has a .6 percent increase in its assessments, which he remarked is very small. He pointed out that the County, as required by State law, had to publish a Notice of a Proposed Real Property Tax Increase, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of these Minutes. Mr. Bennett discussed the information contained in the Notice.

Mr. Bennett announced that this evening was the required Public Hearing on the Notice, and that the proposed tax rate was previously put out for public comment. He confirmed with the Commissioners' Executive Assistant Linda Simpson, present at this meeting, that no public comment was received. Mr. Bennett told the Commissioners that they were entitled to comment on the Notice, and he added that he would also accept public comment following this evening's meeting, at his email address of jbennett@alleganygov.org or at his direct telephone line of 301-876-9526. Mr. Bennett commented that he would be happy to answer any questions from either the Commissioners or the public.

Mr. Bennett said that, barring any further comments, the public hearing could be closed. He explained that the County would move forward with the published rate for the time being, subject to change. Mr. Bennett confirmed that preliminary budget is scheduled for April 30, 2020, and budget adoption for May 28, 2020, with several budget workshops to be held prior to the end of April.

ACTION AGENDA

Item 2 – Agreement with Aeon Technologies – Board of County Commissioners to authorize and approve an agreement with Aeon Technologies to establish a laboratory testing location in Frostburg, Maryland, and to authorize the President of the County Commissioners to sign all necessary agreements – Jacob C. Shade, President, presented some information regarding Aeon Technologies and its plans to establish a location in Allegany County, as set forth in the news release attached to and made a part of these Minutes. Commissioner Shade also read this news release into the record.

Upon Motion made by Commissioner Shade, seconded by Commissioner Brodie, and duly carried, the Board of County Commissioners authorized and approved an agreement with Aeon Technologies to establish a laboratory testing location in Frostburg, Maryland, and authorized the President of the Board of County Commissioners to sign all necessary agreements.

Commissioner Brodie expressed his great thanks to Commissioner Shade for taking the lead regarding Aeon Technologies and acknowledged all of the time and effort that Commissioner Shade put into this project on behalf of the County. Commissioner Shade remarked that this project has been in the works for about three years, and that everything is now lining up at the right time.

Before proceeding to Item 2A, Commissioner Shade, at the previous request of Public Works Director Paul Kahl, read a news release concerning Allegany County Transit. A copy of the announcement as read by Commissioner Shade is attached to and made a part of these Minutes.

Item 2A - COVID-19 Business Assistance Fund – Commissioner Shade discussed the impact the COVID-19 Virus situation has had on many local small businesses, and announced that the Board of County Commissioners is establishing the COVID-19 Business Assistance Fund. He presented information about the Fund by reading from a news release on the subject. A copy of this news release is attached to and made a part of these Minutes.

Commissioner Brodie asked Commissioner Shade how soon assistance could be provided to businesses under this funding program. Commissioner Shade replied that ideally, the Commissioners would like the funds to be available next week or the following week, and that they will work to make this happen as soon as possible. Commissioner Brodie asked if the Fund could be accessed on the County's website, and Commissioner confirmed that it should currently be available there.

Upon Motion made by Commissioner Caporale, and seconded by Commissioner Brodie, the Board of County Commissioners approved and agreed to establish the Allegany County COVID-19 Business Assistance Fund.

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 3 – Berkeley Springs Instruments, LLC – Board of County Commissioners authorized the Department of Public Works to begin work on a new building for Berkeley Springs Instruments, LLC, including award for design and construction assistance to EAD'S Architects for \$95,500, East Hills Engineering for \$35,400 and Hillis Carnes Engineering Associates for \$9,300.

Item 4 – New Boom Mower for Public Works Roads Division – Board of County Commissioners awarded the contract for the purchase of one new boom mower to Gladhill Tractor, Frederick, Maryland, in the amount of \$134,526.52.

Item 5 – Personnel Matters – Board of County Commissioners authorized the President of the County Commissioners to sign any and all necessary contract agreements or documents regarding personnel matters within their purview.

Item 6 – Borden Tunnel Lighting Project – Board of County Commissioners awarded the Borden Tunnel Lighting Project to American Energy Services in the amount of \$183,000, and authorized the President of the County Commissioners to sign any and all necessary contract agreements or documents.

Item 7 – Moss Cottage Ballfield Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Mount Savage Athletic Association – Board of County Commissioners approved a Moss Cottage Ballfield Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Mount Savage Athletic Association.

County Administrator Brandon S. Butler had no further comments to make at this evening's meeting.

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

Commissioners' statements, comments, recognition –

Commissioner David J. Caporale remarked on the strange meeting (with no public present) and current strange times, and pointed out that this evening was to have been the celebration of Aaron Laffey Night as part of the County's annual baseball recognition series. He said that he hoped a lot of people could resume playing baseball in a lot of places in the very near future.

Commissioner Caporale then asked Commissioner Shade if he had any announcements he

needed to make before the end of the meeting, regarding the County's new website.

Commissioner Jacob Shade announced the new County website devoted to coronavirus-related issues, and explained that it can be accessed at the web address of resources.inallegany.org. At Commissioner Caporale's request, County Administrator Butler provided a brief overview of what can be found on this website. He also talked about donations of food made by Rocky Gap to the Foodbank, and a pay as you can program offered by Fat Boys Pizza Shack in Frostburg. Mr. Butler pointed out a few of the resources that can be accessed through resources.inallegany.org. The website is attached to and made a part of these Minutes by reference.

Commissioner Creade Brodie, Jr. expressed his pride at how the Allegany County community has come out to support its local businesses. Commissioner Shade agreed and encouraged patronage of the County's local businesses.

Reminders/Upcoming Meetings –

Next Public Work Session – TBD

Next Public Business Meeting – TBD

Before the meeting was adjourned, Commissioner Shade cautioned the public to use care when relying on information available online and on social media. He encouraged obtaining information from reliable sources, including the local Health Department, State of Maryland Government, and Allegany County Government.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Jacob C. Shade, President

True Copy
Attest:

Cynthia A. Young
Recording Secretary

ALLEGANY COUNTY NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The County Commissioners of Allegany County propose to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2020, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by .6% from \$2,214,224,392 to \$2,228,262,010.
2. If Allegany County maintains the current tax rate of \$.9750 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by .6% resulting in \$136,867 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.9689, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The County is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The County proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$.9750 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is .6% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$135,924 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 5:00 pm on March 26, 2020 in the County Commissioners' Meeting Room, County Office Complex, 701 Kelly Road, Cumberland, Maryland.

The hearing is open to the public and public testimony is encouraged. Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call (301) 777-5911 for further information.

There are certain municipalities within the County which have different tax rates. The above revenues and tax rates are county wide, excluding municipalities with different tax rates. The following chart provides the corresponding information and tax rates for those municipalities.

**ALLEGANY COUNTY NOTICE
OF A PROPOSED
PROPERTY TAX INCREASE**

JURISDICTION	a PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN BASE	b PREVIOUS ASSESSABLE BASE	c NEW ASSESSABLE BASE	d CURRENT TAX RATE	e PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN REVENUES	f INCREASE IN REVENUES
EXCLUDING TOWNS	0.6%	\$2,214,224,392	\$2,228,262,010	\$0.9750	0.6%	\$136,867
BARTON	-3.1%	12,044,078	11,671,670	0.8864	-3.1%	(3,301)
CUMBERLAND	1.2%	891,547,651	902,322,015	0.8223	1.2%	88,598
FROSTBURG	0.8%	338,350,943	341,167,989	0.8355	0.8%	23,536
LONACONING	-2.2%	26,772,485	26,180,192	0.8526	-2.2%	(5,050)
LUKE	-9.9%	32,301,100	29,100,195	0.8511	-9.9%	(27,243)
MIDLAND	0.3%	11,571,552	11,600,671	0.8864	0.3%	258
WESTERNPORT	0.8%	52,440,438	52,856,398	0.8864	0.8%	3,687
		<u>\$3,579,252,639</u>	<u>\$3,603,161,138</u>			<u>\$217,352</u>

JURISDICTION	g CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE	h PROPOSED TAX RATE	i PERCENTAGE HIGHER THAN CONSTANT YIELD	j ADDITIONAL PROPERTY TAX REVENUES
EXCLUDING TOWNS	\$0.9689	\$0.9750	0.6%	\$135,924
BARTON	0.9147	0.8740	-4.4%	(4,750)
CUMBERLAND	0.8125	0.8166	0.5%	36,995
FROSTBURG	0.8286	0.8273	-0.2%	(4,435)
LONACONING	0.8719	0.8422	-3.4%	(7,776)
LUKE	0.9447	0.8408	-11.0%	(30,235)
MIDLAND	0.8842	0.8740	-1.2%	(1,183)
WESTERNPORT	0.8794	0.8740	-0.6%	(2,854)
				<u>\$121,686</u>

**ALLEGANY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
NEWS RELEASE
March 26, 2020**

**ALLEGANY COUNTY and FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY LAUNCH
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP WITH AEON TECHNOLOGIES**

*“GROWING TECHNOLOGY COMPANY ANNOUNCES EXPANSION WITHIN MARYLAND TO
CREATE AN ISO 17025 ACCREDITED LABORATORY ON THE FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
CAMPUS AND BECOME PART OF THE UNIVERSITY’S ACADEMIC RESEARCH OFFERINGS.”*

FROSTBURG MD - Amethyst Technologies, LLC is forming Aeon Technologies and entering into a partnership with Frostburg State University and Allegany County Government after 13 years of successfully developing laboratories to international standards for the US government in the United States, Africa, and Asia.

The affiliation will capitalize on expanding opportunities for laboratory testing, quality assurance services, and global health initiatives from a new facility being developed in the Allegany Business Center adjacent to the FSU campus. The parent company is headquartered in the bwtech@UMBC tech center located in Baltimore County and occupies 5,000 square feet of office and laboratory space there.

“Although this partnership has been in negotiation and development for many months, the parties involved are very aware that recent needs for testing and research brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic may be an immediate opportunity for our community,” commented Commission President Jake Shade.

Aeon Technologies will provide technical assistance and innovative solutions to improve global health, and also will seek manufacturing, testing and research contracts in partnership with Frostburg State University. The new laboratory will support commercial research, global health, pharmaceutical testing, agriculture industry, food and beverage industry, and water/sanitation sectors.

Dr. Kimberly Brown PhD, founder of Amethyst and president of Aeon, completed her graduate studies at the University of Maryland College Park and is internationally recognized in field of global health. She has served as an advisor for the White House Council on Doing Business in Africa and has supported World Health Organization initiatives. Dr. Brown will join the teaching and research faculty of Frostburg State University under terms of the Aeon Technologies’ local partnership agreement.

Prior to making the commitment to locate in Allegany County, Aeon identified significant revenue over the next ten years in providing comprehensive testing services to the private sector; technical services to the myriad of government agencies and private companies - as well as research collaborations for development of intellectual property. This new area of research and technology development will enhance the national and international reputation of the University,

Allegany County and the State of Maryland as centers of technology, testing and health science innovation.

Aeon's business plan is based on funding expansions through the Allegany County Futures Fund, an effort spearheaded by Commission President Jake Shade and by various federal designations, including HUBZones and recently enacted Opportunity Zones. The investment in Frostburg will be used for office and laboratory setup, business development, salaries, expenses, and equipment. Additionally, the company will be applying for workforce development funding to support staff training in corporate policies, ISO compliance, and FDA compliance.

Aeon will expand into Allegany County and projects the creation of 10 technical positions within the next two years in underutilized business zones. Expansion in Allegany County will bring the company an advantage in market share for testing contracts in the region and allow the testing laboratory to become a HUBZone company eligible for federal funding and set-aside contracts.

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Small business help now

Need help paying rent, mortgage payments, or utilities?

Accessing emergency funds, the Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County established the **COVID-19 Small Business Assistance Fund**. The fund establishes a one-time grant award of \$2,500. There is no repayment required.

To be eligible, the business must:

- Have a physical address in Allegany County, Maryland
- Must be in good standing with the State of Maryland
- Have no more than 15 full-time employees (as of March 1, 2020)
- Demonstrate a loss of business revenue of 50% or more related to COVID-19
- Have no pre-existing tax liens or legal judgments
- Cannot be any of the following entities: home-based businesses, churches or religious institutions, banks & financial institutions, investment/real-estate entities, government agencies



To apply, or for additional resources, visit:

<https://resources.inallegany.org/emergency-resources-for-businesses/>



**ALLEGANY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
MEDIA RELEASE
MARCH 26, 2020**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

**COMMISSIONERS ESTABLISH ‘COVID-19 SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE FUND’
FOR ALLEGANY’S SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY PANDEMIC**

(March 26, 2020 – Cumberland, MD) – The Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County, recognizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community’s small businesses, announced a new fund to provide the very best, rapid service to the businesses affected most. These micro-grants can be used by businesses to pay rent, mortgages, or utility costs for businesses. The fund will be launched on March 27, 2020. The micro-grant can be combined with other funding opportunities provided by the State and federal government.

“Our businesses are hurting and need help now. As the State and federal government are also providing funding, this money is available now for those who need it most,” commented Commission President Jake Shade.

To be eligible, the business must:

- Have a physical address in Allegany County, Maryland
- Must be in good standing with the State of Maryland
- Have no more than 15 full-time employees (as of March 1, 2020)
- Demonstrate a loss of business revenue of 50% or more related to COVID-19
- Have no pre-existing tax liens or legal judgments
- Cannot be any of the following entities: home-based businesses, churches or religious institutions, banks & financial institutions, investment/real-estate entities, government agencies

Limited grant funds are available, so businesses are encouraged as soon as possible. To apply for the grant, or for additional resources for businesses and for the community at-large, please visit: <http://resources.inallegany.org>.

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Jacob C. Shade, *President*

Creade V. Brodie, Jr.

David J. Caporale

ALLEGANY COUNTY TRANSIT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1000 Lafayette Avenue

Cumberland, MD 21502

301-722-6360 FAX 301-722-0326

www.alleganygov.org

Brandon S. Butler, County Administrator

Paul F. Kahl, P.E., Director of Public Works

Elizabeth Robison-Harper, Transit Chief

ALLEGANY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

NEWS RELEASE

March 26, 2020

Allegany County Transit Announcement – March 26, 2020

In an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, our transit service will transition from a fixed route service to a demand response service on **Monday, March 30, 2020**, for essential transportation only.

Essential travel means; trips to Medical appointments, pharmacies, grocery, and employment (if you currently use the bus to get to your place of work.) This service will operate from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm—Monday through Friday.

Passengers should call to request a trip the day before the need for travel. Same-day requests cannot be guaranteed. Please call in advance.

To make an appointment. Call our Alltrans line at (301) 724-1255

Allegany County Transit will do our best to accommodate the essential travel needs of our community.

PLEASE USE THIS TRANSPORTATION FOR ESSENTIAL TRAVEL ONLY.

PLEASE DO NOT USE OUR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IF:

- YOU HAVE A FEVER,
- FEEL SICK, OR
- HAVE A COUGH.