

**MINUTES OF THE KENT COUNTY LEVY COURT
COMBINED BUSINESS MEETING
KENT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX
555 BAY ROAD, DOVER, DE
LEVY COURT CHAMBER, ROOM 203
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025**

Call to Order

The Business meeting of the Kent County Levy Court was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President Masten.

Invocation

The Invocation was led by Commissioner Angel.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Hall.

Moment of Silence for our Troops

A moment of silence was observed for our Troops and led by Commissioner Sweeney.

Roll Call

Allan F. Angel	Commissioner
Jeffrey W. Hall	Commissioner
Paul Hertz	Commissioner
Terry L. Pepper	Commissioner - Absent
Robert Scott	Vice President
George W. Sweeney, Sr.	Commissioner
Joanne Masten	President

There are six (6) Commissioners present; one (1) absent at Roll Call.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

M-25-168 **Motion** to adopt agenda as presented made by Mr. Angel; seconded by Mr. Hertz; carried by Roll Call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

Public Comments on Agenda Items other than Public Hearing Items

Note: Public Comments for Public Hearing Item(s) will be during their public hearings. – None

PRESENTATIONS

SB237, Comprehensive Plan Climate Change Requirements

Philip Barnes, Institute of Public Administration: Thank you. Hello, good evening commissioners. My name is **Philip Barnes**. I'm from the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware. I am here today to talk to you, it's a dialogue actually for a moment to talk to you about SB237, which is a bill that passed the General Assembly last year. It was signed by Governor Carney and essentially what it does is it adds new requirements to the comprehensive plan, a set of set of chapters or set of set of issues that a comprehensive plan must address, and it adds climate change and resiliency to that, to that list. So, I am here on behalf of the Institute for Public Administration because I'm going on a bit of a tour around the state, and I have been for the last couple of months visiting planning commissioners, planning commit...planning and zoning commissions. Also, I wanted to, to speak to the counties, particularly Kent and Sussex County because I know your comp plan is going to be due, I think in 20...28...2028 or early 2029, and so, the county will be subjected to the requirements of SB237. So, I'm here for primarily two reasons, one is to communicate the existence of the bill and the addition of climate change and resiliency into comprehensive plan requirements and then two is to listen to you and to try and get your feedback because the Office of State Planning Coordination has not yet established sort of the guidelines on what adding climate change and resiliency to a comp plan actually entails. And so, what I'm doing is in each of these planning commissions that I visit, and Kent County council and Sussex County council is to try and record your feedback, and I'm going to compile all of this feedback and present it to Office of State Planning Coordination before they go off to develop the guidelines for complying or for satisfying the requirements of SB237. So, I actually have copies of the...printed copies of the bill. I don't know, can I share those with you now? So, I've already visited this chamber and presented to the county planning and zoning, and I've received some feedback from them. So, I highlighted the changes, so, the bill SB237 which you have here or a portion of it, which applies to Kent County, the underlying text that I've highlighted are the new changes to the county code. This is in the zoning portion of the State Code, and it essentially amends what is required, as I said, amends what is required in

the comprehensive development plan. So, I'm not here on behalf of Office of State Planning Coordination or DNREC or anybody like that. What I'm really trying to do is trying to gather have some feedback from commissioners, planning commissioners who are going to be responsible for developing the comprehensive plans and also the councils such as yourselves that are going to be responsible for adopting those plans. And as I said, I'm going to try to assemble this feedback in a way and get it to State Planning so that they've got some feedback before they go off and they actually define what this looks like. So, that's my role.

Mr. Sweeney: So, Mr. Barnes, we have an extensive section in our comprehensive plan that covers climate change. Is that something that...have you looked it over and seen that it doesn't meet SB237?

Mr. Barnes: That's not for me to say whether or not it meets SB237 or not. Yeah. I have not investigated your comp plan, your 2020 or 2018 or 2019 comp plan.

Mr. Sweeney: I think it's pretty extensive that, you know, it addresses average temperature increase, seawater or yeah, sea level increases, extreme temperatures, rainfall, and brings into account agricultural preservation and has policy emphasis. I think it's pretty extensive, so I'm just not sure other than you giving us the information that SB0237 has that we haven't already addressed it, and I would have to refer to our Director of Planning, Sarah Keifer, to make sure that we're covering what's in SB237.

Mrs. Masten: From my perspective, sir, I don't have enough information to know whether or not I'm in compliance specifically with SB237 since this is the first time I've seen it. So, as Mr. Sweeney said, I'd be deferring a lot of this to Ms. Keifer who's our Planning Director because I can't intelligently comment on this.

Mr. Barnes: Right, so just to be clear, this isn't retroactive, so it doesn't mean that you're suddenly, your previous comp plan is out of compliance, right? So, this will be...this would be expected of the update that will come in the next couple of years. So, let me maybe phrase it this way. In the bill text, it asks counties to essentially create a future land use map that includes things like flooding and sea level rise. And then if you look on page six, the section I highlighted at the, near the top of page six, that those growth areas for housing, for example should be away from the areas that are vulnerable to flooding and sea level rise. So, I think that's probably the most impactful new language in the code, in the state code that pertains to comprehensive planning. So, as I said, the state hasn't established the compliance standards yet, so I understand that I'm asking you to sort of comment on something that doesn't exist, but for the sake

here, imagine that I work at Office of State Planning Coordination and I'm going to go off and I'm going to develop those guidelines, right? What would you want to say to me?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Barnes, please forgive me, but I'm a little confused. What is it you're trying to...what information are you trying to get from us? I think commissioner Sweeney hit it right on the head, generally with all due respect, anything that pertains to planning comprehensive planning et cetera, we're going to definitely defer to our Planning Director or Planning Department. They're the ones that they live and eat this, sleep it day in and day out. So, they are well in advanced on this. And then I guess my next concern is you had said that, you know, it's not exactly approved yet. And even if it is approved next year this whole thing could change. It could change, it could go away, it could be tweaked, all depends on what legislators want to do during session next year. So, I think it would be somewhat unfair and impossible for us really to, for any of us to really comment on this particular bill at this time. That would be my personal take on it.

Mr. Angel: Mr. Barnes also, I always like getting all the documents. We got pages four through six, missing one through three and seven through ten. I would like to see what the before and after preamble and ending is. And on top of it, have you read the sea level rise, 600 and some odd pages?

Mr. Barnes: So, to address your first point for the bill, the...what I printed is what amends Kent County's code. There are other texts in the bill does the same for New Castle and Sussex. So, it's not relevant.

Mr. Angel: I understand. But have you read the sea level rise documents, 600 and some odd pages.

Mr. Barnes: So, I don't know which one you're referring to specifically...

Mr. Angel: Well, I have, that's why I'm bringing it up and it's very comprehensive and the amount of information... And when I was in Los Angeles and gosh, 15-20 years ago or 15-18 years ago, I was at the, I forget the name of the place where you saw they have the ice caps across the whole TVs that showed each year the demise and how much you know, the ocean's rising at about an inch a year. So, the only reason I'm bringing that up is I think there's some parts missing to this also that needs to be discussed because we have no control over that. It has nothing to do with warming of the climate, by the way. But I'd just like to know I have the whole document. I appreciate this but, pages four through six doesn't count it for me. So, thank you.

Mrs. Masten: Mr. Barnes I I'm just not sure what we could add or what we could even provide to you at this point, having seen this for the very first time and not having any comments coming from our Planning Department, which obviously is where we get our information, our guidance from. So, I mean, I appreciate you coming before us with it, I'm just not sure...I don't think anyone here is in a position to comment. Am I correct? I wish I could be more help, but right now I can't.

Mr. Barnes: Yep, that's ok. I do have, as I said, I spoke to your Planning Commission, I did get some feedback from Planning Commissioners, so Kent County will be represented in the report that that I'll produce for this, so if you trust them, then they've already given me the...

Mrs. Masten: Absolutely we trust our Planning Department.

Mr. Barnes: There you go. All right. Thank you.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – None

Mr. Angel:
Attorney Appointments

M-25-169 Mr. Angel: I **Move** to approve: Levy Court - Connolly Gallagher; Regional Planning Commissioner - Connolly Gallagher; Row Office - Connolly Gallagher; Board of Assessment Appeals - Giordana & Gagne, and Edward. Barrett Edwards will remain the attorney for Monitions and Fred Townsend will remain the attorney for the Board of Adjustments. That's my motion; seconded by Mr. Scott; carried by roll call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

Unidentified Speaker: I'd just like to say thank you members of Levy Court and we look forward to serving you and my entire team looks forward to serving the county. We've actually been here a long time as outside counsel and litigation counsel and are very excited to take on this opportunity. So, thank you for your faith in us. Appreciate it.

Mrs. Masten: We're very happy that you accepted the challenge.

Mr. Scott:
1. EMS Station Contractor/Owner Contingency Fund

Mr. Scott: Chief Tinger?

Chief John A. Tinger, Director of Public Safety: Thank you Mister Vice President. Good evening commissioners. For item number one, there's actually two separate items that we're going to take motions on, and we'll discuss. So, the first half of the number one EMS station contract owner contingency fund. As you are aware, for each project, the Frederica project and the Harrington project, we had built into the contract of \$100,000 contingency. Looking at the current expenditures and the proposed expenditures to the completion of the contract, our Harrington contingency of \$100,000 is fine and there will probably be excess money in there. The \$100,000 for the Frederica will probably come up short if the anticipated change orders come to fruition. So, at this point we're asking Levy Court the authority to transfer the money between the Harrington to make up for the shortfalls in the Frederica contingency. Additionally, to that, all further change orders that come in that fall within that \$200,000 cap contingency, we're asking Levy Court to authorize the county administrator to authorize those change orders to help keep the progress moving forward as smoothly as possible. Happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Hertz: So, we had a \$100,000 at each place, you've used...you're going to use 86 at Harrington?

Chief Tinger: No, so looking at that second page of the memo on the right-hand side for the Harrington buildings first, \$100,000 with actual and anticipated change orders we should have a balance of \$86,000 in the Harrington project at the conclusion. The second chart is the Frederica building, again, starting with \$100,000 with actual and anticipated change orders we're going to be short of about \$36,000. So, if we can transfer that 36 from the existing \$86,000 in the Harrington to make the Frederica even, there'll be no change of money, no increase or additional requests for money. We're just looking to transfer the contingencies that we have for individual projects to put it into one project to cover both.

Mr. Hertz: No, I read it wrong, I see now it says balance is 86. I read it wrong.

Chief Tinger: Okay.

Mr. Sweeney: Hi, Chief. So, the question of the day is which one's ahead?

Chief Tinger: As of right now, the Frederica station is a little bit ahead.

Mr. Sweeney: Is it really?

Chief Tinger: Yes.

Mr. Sweeney: It started later, it was a couple hours later, but it started later and now is ahead. Good job.

Chief Tinger: And just to acknowledge Mr. Mike Freda is our project manager for both of these, so that's why you see him here tonight, because if there's technical questions, that's outside my wheelhouse.

Mr. Hertz: I want to ask him about the stone under the foundation, the GTA for \$88,000.

Michael Freda, 1310 North Bancroft Parkway, Wilmington, DE: What the commissioner's referring to is we had recycled concrete. Our geotechnical request.

Mr. Sweeney: He needs to be sworn in.

Mr. Freida: Can you guys hear me, okay?

Max Walton, County Attorney: Hold on please Mr. Freda, apparently, we have to swear you in.

Mr. Freda: So, there was a change order for the use of recycled concrete to create a stabilized base on which this PMS station is being constructed and the parking and driving areas as well. When the initial Geotech report was completed, which was about a year ago now, everything was dry, and the results were very good. We figured there was going to be some sort of undercutting of poor soils here and there, but once we started working in March and it rained and then it rained again and then it rained, we had just a sloppy mess. We tried different things with our site work contractor, bring in some dry soil to mitigate, and it just kept getting wetter and wetter. So, our geotechnical consultants suggested that we add lifts of recycled concrete to create that stabilized base, as opposed to just common structural fill. The good news is it worked. So, we delivered a very good product that that EMS station is sitting on. But it did cost a surprising amount of money. It was...it was a lot. But it's...we couldn't...there was no other way to do it. We had to listen to our consultants and what they were recommending we do. In fact, as we were bringing the soil up, they were taking compaction tests, as we were bringing the recycled concrete up in lifts, they were taking compaction tests. They got to about second lift or so, they said this is really in pretty good shape. So, I said, well, why do we need to keep going with recycled concrete, why don't we just switch back to the common fill, common borrow fill? So, they discussed it, and we agreed that that would be acceptable. So, we probably saved another \$50,000 that might have been spent to continue with recycled concrete. The subbase that they dug down to wasn't great either. If you saw the photographs of what this place looked like before, we were just stuck, we

couldn't move, it was just slop. So, there's photographs that show how bad it really was. And then after the recycled concrete was installed, how much better it got.

Mr. Hertz: Did you have to use a fabric or geotextile?

Mr. Freda: Didn't have to use geotex fabric, no. They recommended just coming up with 8" lifts of concrete and then they were taking compaction tests, and it did work out.

Mr. Hertz: So, you just undercut to a certain point and then just started filling crusher run, didn't put no fabric, no nothing.

Mr. Freda: Pretty much yes.

Mr. Hertz: And it's holding.

Mr. Freda: When they got to the subbase, he even said, you know, we...I said, well can we use common fill from here? Did you reach a stabilized point where we can just build on top of that? He says I'm not confident that we can do that, I would feel better with the structure, with the recycling concrete.

Mr. Hertz: What was your subbase? Was it clay?

Mr. Freda: It was Clay. It was just sort of a silty clay material, so.

Mr. Hertz: But no barrier.

Mr. Freda: Didn't put a geotex barrier.

Mr. Sweeney: So, Mike I to look for anomalies. Just out of curiosity, we know both buildings are exactly the same. One of them you had to change roof panel change, the other one you didn't. But the generator cost for one only went up \$1,482. The generator cost for the Harrington building went up \$600. Why would there be a difference if they're both the exact same?

Mr. Freda: Great question. The Frederica site has the command...command...we call it the warehouse, has an extra building. So, that required a larger...

Mr. Sweeney: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Scott. The only other question that I had Mike...Mike if you're still here, did ask Administrator Sipple this question earlier, why the extra

expense is coming in on the last page if we kind of knew that these things were going to be needed?

Chief Tinger: We'll address that with the next one.

Mr. Scott: Thank you, sir. Disregard Mr. Freda.

Mr. Freda: Sure thing. Thank you all. Thanks for your time.

Mr. Scott: Chief Tinger.

Chief Tinger: Did you want to take a motion on that or continue on with the other ones?

M-25-170

Mr. Scott: I make a **Motion** at this time for the reallocation of Capital Project Contingency funds for the Herrington EMS station project to the Frederica EMS station project and authorize the County Administrator to approve and sign future change orders related to both projects within the approved contingency limits; seconded by Mr. Angel; carried by roll call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

Mr. Scott: Chief Tinger.

Chief Tinger: Thank you Mister Vice President. Commissioners, the second part of the number one that we were discussing is the owner responsible expenditures outside the construction contract. So, we're at the point of this project where there are going to be expenditures that the owner is responsible for that we were unable to include in the construction contract. One of the things was the limitations on the ARPA funding usage for the building construction. So, some of the things outlined in our memo are high-level categories that we have obtained preliminary quotations and summaries for so that these are really good, estimated costs that we're going to move forward with over the next couple of months at the completion of the project. So, those are the six items that we have listed there with again, estimated numbers for that. What we're asking for is authorization from you, Levy Court to be able to use capital, I'm sorry, realty transfer tax contingency, the realty transfer tax contingency funds to fund the owner responsible expenditures that we've outlined in here that were not covered under the construction contract initially.

Mr. Hertz: These expenditures ARPA wouldn't cover?

Chief Tinger: Now I'm not, I can't say for all of them, but these are also items that we weren't able to purchase in the beginning. This is the time now to purchase the networking cables, now that construction is done. And I see the savior walking down the aisle now.

Susan Durham, Director of Finance: First and foremost, we're out of ARPA funds, so we don't have any ARPA funds to spend on that, so we chose the owner items to come out of our funds.

Mr. Hertz: Well, it just, it just boggles my mind a little bit that we didn't know ahead of time about exterior signage or wayfinding or interior signage.

Ms. Durham: Well, we knew about those items, but why would you want to pay your contractor to those in and pay a commission on that when you can do it yourself and save money.

Mr. Hertz: Oh, we're going to do them ourselves?

Ms. Durham: Well, we're going to hire somebody, we're not going to pay somebody else a commission to do it.

Mr. Hertz: But you're saving us money.

Ms. Durham: Oh yeah, man.

M-25-172

Mr. Scott: Ms. Durham, Chief Tinger, I thank both of you for the explanation on that. At this time, I'll make a **Motion** to authorize the expenditure of Realty Transfer Tax (RTT) contingency funds for owner-side project costs associated with the Frederica and Harrington EMS Stations, not to exceed \$310,000, as outlined in the August 1, 2025, memorandum from the Director of Public Safety; seconded by Mr. Hertz; carried by Roll Call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

2. Creation of a 40-hour Paramedic Trainee Position

Chief Tinger: Commissioners, the next items we would like to talk about is switching gears from the EMS stations to more of a retention or recruitment or retention. Currently, we have twelve vacancies, so our full complement of staffing is 60 paramedics, so we're actually at 20% vacancy right now. Good news is we've just interviewed and offered employment to a ready medic, so now we're down to eleven. When she, I think August the 11th is her first day, so just under 20% now. But because of our severe staffing crisis that I will call it this time, we're looking to, the staff has discussed this at length with both administration and personnel and also finance and we're looking to implement some strategies to mitigate some of our recruitment issues that we're having right now. The first one before you is about the paramedic training positions. We started this program back in 2021. We were using Good Fellowship Church... Good Fellowship up in Chester PA. That program was a

Tuesday, Thursday night, and every other weekend. So, the hours in class were minimal. We allowed for the flexibility of travel time, etc. When we hired the students back then in '21, it was a 35 hour a week. Since then, Del Tech has finally answered the calls for all the ALS agencies and put up a one-year program, so we've been using them. This is going to be the 3rd year that we're looking to use Del Tech's program, I'm sorry, 2nd looking to use Del Tech's program. They are a Monday through Friday program, so as such, the students are really going to class more than 40 hours with the Del Tech program compared to the Good Fellowship program. So, we're looking to bring up the paramedic trainee salaries from a 35-hour week to a 40-hour week to better align with the school that we've chosen and also to pay them, because once they come out to the field, they're actually working the same hours as a medic, which is like an average of 42 hours a week. We'll work with their schedules to make sure they maintain 40 but they are going to be out on the truck days and nights and it's only right to pay them what we're asking them to work. Happy to answer any questions.

M-25-173

Mr. Scott: Chief Tinger, thank you for addressing this issue as well. It's kind of been somewhat long overdue since we started back with Delaware Technical. So, appreciate that. At this time, I'll make a **Motion** to approve the updated job description for the paramedic training position increasing the standard work week from 35 hours to 40 hours to align with the current paramedic training program schedule; seconded by Mr. Angel; carried by roll call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

3. Sign-On Bonus due to staffing crisis

Chief Tinger: Commissioners, the last item before you is our last current initiative to try to address our recruitment issues. Again, we're twelve open...eleven open vacancies right now where the most attractive employee candidate would be a certified paramedic coming from out of state. Those are the ones that we could probably get out to the field within about a three-month period. The student program that we just addressed is great, but it's going to take about a year, a year and a half before we see those students actually functioning as full-time paramedics. So, one of the things that we have not been able to do over the years is attract certified paramedics. New Castle County has just implemented something to the north of us and as a result in trying to stay competitive with our neighboring counties, we are respectfully requesting that the commissioners consider doubling our sign on bonuses for the paramedics. And before you is the current chart up on top, and our sign on bonus is based upon your levels of experience and there's five different categories, with the highest category being a fully certified paramedic with three to five years of experience coming to us. Currently right now we would offer them \$5,000 bonus pay it out over three years. What we're requesting is

that that number and all the subsequent numbers above it for the less experienced candidates all double in price. We're asking this to be a short term until our staffing levels get up, but hopefully we may be able to get one or two good, certified medics from increasing this on a short-term basis. Happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Angel: Yes, Chief Tinger. I've heard this ever since I've been a commissioner. So, and we're still getting behind the scenes, we still can't get enough paramedics. I know we're getting aged out. How, I just need to know how...where are we at on the aging out? How many are going to be retired in the next three to five years.

Chief Tinger: We actually only have four that are eligible to retire in the next few years. We kind of lost all of those that needed to retire at our 30-year mark. So, we're, our attrition rate's not going to be high due to retirement.

Mr. Angel: Is our training program working well?

Chief Tinger: Del Tech right now is working very well for us. The first class has been extremely well. They're very, very successful. The current class, in right now, they're all doing very well.

Mr. Angel: And how many trainees do we have in the program?

Chief Tinger: Five currently in the Del Tech program. We're looking and you guys have approved the budget for the current year, we're going to look to put six in January.

Mr. Angel: Thank you, that was my next question. Thank you.

Mr. Sipple: John, can you clarify that those five are not part of the...to replace the eleven that are that you're missing now? Those are...

Chief Tinger: The current would not affect these eleven vacancies. They're actually filling where we're paying their salaries from the FTEs that we have for the Paramedic I's now.

Mr. Hertz: Yeah, you say new Castle County gives a lump sum of \$10,000 and any experience from zero to whatever experience or?

Chief Tinger: Yeah, it's not their academy students, but if you come in as a certified paramedic, at the end of your probationary period, they'll do the one lump sum. We're not the only ones. I mean this is unfortunately a national trend for emergency services having such staffing crisis. We're all trying to do different things and we're competing with each other

unfortunately. And we do assure you that we are trying to look at different ways and innovative ways and we're not just looking at money. We're looking at other options too that we can implement to try to help our retention and recruitment.

Mr. Scott: I just have basically a statement just so that the commissioners are aware that this isn't something that necessarily just stops here with the recruitment end of things. I know Chief Tinger and his staff are working very diligently on some retainment concerns as well how to continue to retain our existing paramedics, so I don't want the commissioners to be *Inaudible that, you know, this is not necessarily going to fix all of it, but it's, I think it's a big step towards fixing it and then the adjustments that may come down the road that may be presented I think would tie in the recruitment and retention and hopefully get us to a position of being whole and solid again.

Mr. Sweeney: So chief, you mentioned the New Castle County lump sum bonus. Their FTO program, how long does it take for them to complete that?

Chief Tinger: On the average they're about nine months to a year.

Mr. Sweeney: So, after nine months to a year, they get the \$10,000 bonus. You're recognizing that that \$10,000 bonus for someone who comes in with three to five years of experience will get that \$10,000 bonus but it's spread out over five years.

Chief Tinger: Three years, sir.

Mr. Sweeney: Okay.

Chief Tinger: So, for three years. So, if they want to stay, at least we get them for three years and if they want to stay and get their entire bonus, that's how we're looking.

Mr. Sweeney: Gotcha. All right, thanks.

Mr. Angel: Chief Tinger, once they graduate, do they receive like time in grade for as a student for retirement purposes for being a paramedic?

Chief Tinger: My understanding is yes; they are a county employee full time.

Mr. Angel: Okay, so that helps...also helps pay grade IIs to help them get to the next level quicker.

Chief Tinger: Well yes, so they were a pay grade 2111 as a student. Once they get their certifications, they'll get promoted to a 2118, which is a Paramedic I.

Mr. Angel: Just looking...just as I said, it's been a while, so I just want to see if we're doing everything we can to help.

Chief Tinger: Yes, they're accruing time and everything while they are a student, not using much of it, thankfully, but they're accruing it, so yes, it's beneficial to them.

Mr. Hertz: So, if I'm reading this correctly, a three-to-five-year person comes in and after year one, they've already collected \$5,000.

Chief Tinger: No sir. So, using the top chart as the current thing upon hire, they would get a \$500 bonus. At the end of their six-month probation, they would get another \$1,000 bonus and then at the end of their first year, they would get a \$1,000. So, at the end of their first year, they technically would get \$2,500 or half of the \$5,000.

Mr. Hertz: I'm looking at what you got proposed.

Chief Tinger: Proposed would be the same thing, yeah, so it would be \$5,000 of the \$10,000 just like they get now \$2,500 of the \$5,000 in the first year.

Mr. Hertz: Okay, so I could come here with three to five years' experience and after the first year walk away with \$5,000, quick, go to New Castle County and get \$10,000 upon hire and walk away from the final \$5,000 that would take me another two years to get.

Chief Tinger: But that \$5,000 is well worth it for that year of service you gave to Kent County.

Mr. Hertz: But my point is, are we locking them in for the full three years? Or are we just...or once they as they hit those benchmarks, they get the money, but they can walk away at any time.

Chief Tinger: Correct. And this has been in place since 2021. If we'd like to change it, we could definitely bring it to workshop and relook at the format that we're using. We're open to that. This is just, we weren't looking to change what we've been doing. We were just asking to increase the dollar signs, but if there's a better way to do it that's more incentivizing then we could definitely look at that.

Mr. Scott: Chief Tinger, Administrator Sipple, you both were over there during this period, if I remember it correctly. We used to have the program where we tied them in for so long and I think it became more of a nightmare than it was worth with the attempt of tying them in because if they'd left virtually the only thing you were doing was going after them in court for the funding of the schooling and stuff. Am I correct by saying that?

Chief Tinger: That's been the new trend unfortunately, with the newer hires. Yes, they're not staying the full three years. They're willing to give up the remainder of their bonus and actually are willing to pay back the county for expenditures for educational services to move on to different jobs. That's why I said if we can get a year out of someone, I'll take that year.

Mr. Hertz: Yeah, my point is you do whatever, whatever you come in as in the first year you've taken half the money that you're entitled to and then you can walk away because...

Mr. Scott: Valid point Commissioner Hertz and I think that's where we need to work on the retainment. We have a good strong retainment program in place. I think that'll alleviate some of that walking away possibility after a year or two.

M-25-174

Mr. Scott: I **Move** to approve the revised Paramedic sign on bonus program as presented by the Department of Public Safety with the funding to be provided from the existing FY2026 operating budget. This updated incentive structure is intended as a short-term recruitment and retention strategy to address the current staffing shortage within the Division of EMS and will be subject to future review and adjustment based on vacancy levels; seconded by Mr. Angel; carried by roll call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

Mr. Hall:

1. Introduction of **Ordinance LC25-15**, An Ordinance to amend the Comprehensive Plan Map Designation and the Official Zoning Map of Kent County, Delaware pursuant to the provisions of Kent County Code, Vol. II, Chapter 205 Zoning, Article III, Section 205-8 and Section 205-9, and Article XXVIII (changes and amendments) effective December 01, 2000, as amended. (Ref: CZ-25-03 Susan D. & Jon C. Nichols Jr.) for Public Hearing, on Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.
2. Introduction of **Ordinance LC25-19**, An Ordinance to amend the Comprehensive Plan Map Designation and the Official Zoning Map of Kent County, Delaware pursuant to the provisions of Kent County

Code, Vol. II, Chapter 205 Zoning, Article III, Section 205-8 and Section 205-9, and Article XXVIII (changes and amendments) effective December 01, 2000, as amended (Ref: CZ-25-04: George A. & Amy S. Lewis) for Public Hearing, on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

- M-25-175** Mr. Scott: **Move** to go into Executive Session immediately following the Business Meeting of August 12, 2025, for preliminary discussion on site acquisition for a publicly funded capital improvement; legal strategy session regarding collective bargaining or pending or potential litigation; and personnel matters pursuant to 29 Del. C. 10004(b)(2), (4), and (9); seconded by Mr. Angel; carried by Roll Call vote six (6) yeas; one (1) absent.

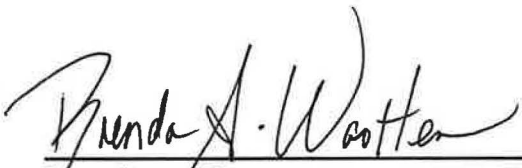
*Please note the next meeting August 12th is a Combined Business Meeting so there will be an opportunity to vote to go into Executive Session that night if needed.

INFORMATION ITEMS - None

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS - None

- M-25-176** **Motion** to Adjourn made by Mr. Pepper; seconded by Mr. Scott; carried by seven (7) ayes. **7:57 p.m.**


Brenda A. Wootten
Clerk of the Peace
Kent County