

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Wednesday, January 2, 1974

Present: Commissioner J. Wilmer Bowles, President
Commissioner George R. Aud
Commissioner J. S. Guy, Jr.
H. D. McGlade, Comptroller
Edward V. Cox, Chief Clerk
Judith A. Mullins, Recording Secretary

The meeting came to order at 10:00 a.m.

READING OF MINUTES

The minutes of December 28-29, 1973 were read and corrected.

BILLS APPROVED

The following bills were approved by the County Commissioners:

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Estimated amount due State of Maryland for the first half of fiscal year 1974 - \$74,556.00;

Madge Ridgell for reimbursement for 26 pullets and 29 hens killed by dogs - \$163.50;

John W. McConnell for reimbursement for 36 chickens killed by dogs - \$108.00.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioners reviewed the 1974 Legislative Recommendations consisting of 19 items with Mr. McGlade. Commissioner Bowles proposed three additional items to be included in the Legislative Package.

1. That revenues from power plant site development in the tri-county area be on a regional sharing basis.

2. That an environmental protection agency be created for the tri-county area or St. Mary's County. One member for the agency would be selected by the legislators, the County Commissioners and the Economic Development Commission from each County.

3. That St. Mary's County be exempted from the one mile bussing rule for school children.

The Commissioners unanimously agreed that these three items be included in the Legislative Package.

Mr. McGlade is to put the proposed Legislation in final form for presentation at the public hearing, Saturday, January 5 with the local legislators.

PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

Present: Harris Sterling, Finance Director

Mr. Sterling stated he attended a meeting with Lt. Governor Blair Lee, acting for the Governor, Friday, December 28 in Annapolis pertaining to the rearrangement of assessments. This rearrangement was brought about by a number of bills that had been prefiled to change the assessment basis and to help conform with the law of yearly assessments instead of the method now being used by the State on a three-year cycle. The Governor has ordered that the Assessment Department is to reduce their rate of assessment for inflation against cash value of property from 60% to 50%. Under the regulation change, all real property that was assessed in the year 1973 for tax billing year 1974-75 will be reduced by 16 2/3%. This means that all real property will be assessed at 50% cash value (the current market value). Mr. Sterling stated that the Fifth, Seventh and Eighth Election Districts of St. Mary's County will be affected. In the Eighth Election District, this would mean a loss of approximately \$240,000 in revenues.

Commissioner Bowles asked if this assessment decrease would affect the Board of Education budget. Mr. Sterling said that Blair Lee stated that this would not affect the Board of Education budget because of a built-in ratio. However, it will affect the Library Incentive Fund in a small amount - \$2,000 to \$3,000. Social Services will also be affected in about two or three years from now.

Mr. Sterling stated that Blair Lee said based on the three-year cycle, the assessment for levy year 1973-74 will be reduced approximately 9%. This will affect the First and Second Districts. For 1972-73, there will be no effect because the inflation factor did not change the percentage ratio. This concerns the Third, Fourth, Sixth and Ninth Districts.

Mr. Sterling stated that Blair Lee said that the State may have to raise their own property tax rate which is now .21¢ per \$100 of assessable property another .02¢.

Mr. Sterling stated that the assessments and reassessments will have to be reworked and he has talked to the auditors and they are going to try to do this by computer.

Mr. Sterling said Lt. Governor Lee is asking for administrative support for the bill going in this year eliminating all assessments to a maximum annual increase of 10%. Mr.

McGlade asked that if the Governor's proposed legislation, ie, limiting reassessments to a 10% maximum increase each year, as worded, affects a maximum for all reassessments or only a maximum for reassessed property that stays in the same zoning classification, and if a property changes classification, is it still limited to the 10% increase. Mr. Sterling stated it only applies to property that has not changed classification. Mr. McGlade further questioned if there is any savings clause in the Governor's policy that would apply to older people to stabilize their tax base. Mr. Sterling said there is no provision in the Governor's policy; however, the State at this point has a bill providing for residents 65 years and older and based on income.

Mr. Sterling stated that the drawback to this assessment decrease is that the money may have to be made up with County funds which means the Commissioners may have to make a decision on the tax rate.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION - PUBLIC OFFICIAL BOND

Present: John Pleisse, Attorney, Metropolitan Commission

Mr. Pleisse stated that Admiral Thurston Clark resigned from the position of Director and Secretary-Treasurer of the Metropolitan Commission. The Directorship is an employee of the Metropolitan Commission, but the Secretary-Treasurer is an officer of the Commission. Amanda Breig, who has been the bookkeeper for the Metropolitan Commission has been promoted to Secretary-Treasurer and this position requires a bond in the amount of \$25,000 or an amount greater if the County Commissioners so specify. The blanket policy of the County Commissioners (Continental Insurance Company - Frank A. Combs, Agent) covers employees of the Metropolitan Commission, but not officers. Mr. Pleisse said that Mr. Combs said he could prepare this bond this afternoon if the Commissioners would give their approval. Commissioner Aud made a motion to approve a bond in the amount of \$25,000 for the Secretary-Treasurer of the Metropolitan Commission, Amanda Breig, seconded by Commissioner Guy and made unanimous by Commissioner Bowles.

The meeting recessed at 2:00 p.m.

Friday, January 4, 1974

Present: Commissioner J. Wilmer Bowles, President
Commissioner George R. Aud
Commissioner J. S. Guy, Jr.
Judith A. Mullins, Recording Secretary

The meeting reconvened at 12:00 Noon

PRESS CONFERENCE

Present: Jack Kershaw, Enterprise
Patty Muchow, Beacon
Dick Myers, WKIK
Dave Fox, WPTX
Abby Ford, Guardian Review

The regular monthly press conference was held at this time. A tape of the conference is on file in the Commissioners' Office.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

J. Wilmer Bowles 7/2/74
J. Wilmer Bowles
President