

ST. MARY'S COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
GOVERNMENTAL CENTER

Tuesday, April 25, 2006

Present: Commissioner President Thomas F. McKay

Commissioner Kenneth R. Dement

Commissioner Lawrence D. Jarboe

Commissioner Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr.

Commissioner Daniel H. Raley

George G. Forrest, County Administrator

Donna Gebicke, Administrative Assistant (Recorder)

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m.

APPROVAL OF CHECK REGISTER

Commissioner Raley moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Check Register as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to approve the minutes of the Commissioners' meeting of April 11, 2006, as amended. Motion carried 5-0.

PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

The Commissioners presented a plaque and check to Catherine Bowles, who was voted Employee of the Year for 2006.

THE COMMISSIONERS PRESENTED THE FOLLOWING PROCLAMATIONS

Christmas in April

St. Mary's Nursing Center: Housekeeping and Laundry Week and National Volunteer Week

Fair Housing Month

National Library & Friends of the Library Week

INVITATION TO THE MARCEY HOUSE BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Commissioners received an invitation from Marcey House Director Larry Harvey to the Thirteenth Annual Marcey House Benefit Golf Tournament on Friday, May 26, at Wicomico Shores Municipal Golf Course. The tournament's title sponsor is Eagan, McAllister Associates, Inc., in association with Verizon, Constellation Energy Group, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, and Washington Gas. All proceeds benefit The Marcey House, a residential, rehabilitative treatment facility for those recovering from substance abuse.

DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

College of Southern Maryland students Terrel Nowlin and Thomas Smith (not present) were recognized for their participation in the School to Work Transition program, along with their employer's McDonalds and Wyle Laboratories.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

1. Draft Agendas for May 2 and May 9, 2006, were presented.
2. **Department of Public Works & Transportation** (*George Erichsen, Director, DPW&T*)
 - a. **Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Raley, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Public Works Agreement for Forrest Farm Subdivision, Section 3, Phase 8, located in the 3rd Election District, with an expiration date of February 1, 2007. Motion carried 5-0.**

(Elaine Kramer, CFO)

- b. **Commissioner Dement moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment increasing the FIN 06 Capital Reserve Account by \$10,741 and decreasing the Ridge Transfer Station Land Acquisition Project by \$10,741 to close out the project. Motion carried 5-0.**
 - c. **Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment increasing the FIN 06 Capital Reserve Account in the amount of \$110,451 and decreasing the Landfill Closure Cap Project Account by \$110,451. Motion carried 5-0.**
 - d. **Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to approve the "Ride-All-Day-For-A-Dollar" event during National Transportation Week, May 14-20, in appreciation of the STS customers for the success of the STS system, to raise awareness of the system and to encourage increased ridership. Motion carried 5-0.**
3. **Department of Land Use and Growth Management** (*Denis Canavan, Director*)

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Raley, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment increasing the Over Lot Grading Revenue Account and Other Contract Services Expense Account by \$35,600 and decreasing the Supplemental Reserve Revenue

Account and Supplemental Reserve Expense Account by \$35,600. Motion carried 5-0.

4. State's Attorney's Office (*Lyle Long, Investigator; Pam Soffos, Legal Assistant*)

Commissioner Dement moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to accept the Cooperative Reimbursement Incentive Funds and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment decreasing the Child Support Enforcement Incentive Project FY06 Budget Revenues and Expenses by \$3,327, in accordance with the actual grant award. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Circuit Court (*Teresa Weeks, Senior Legal Assistant*)

Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to accept the Child Enforcement Incentive Funds from DHR's Child Support Enforcement Division and to authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$1,317 to set up the budget in accordance with this award. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Department of Public Safety (*Tim Cameron, Director; Stanley Williams, Emergency Services Coordinator*)

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Bio-Terrorism Pre-Hospital Providers Grant for the purchase of a Mass Casualty Incident Trailer and the related Budget Amendment decreasing the FY06 Budget amount by \$8,894 to reflect the actual award amount. Motion carried 5-0.

COMMISSIONER'S TIME

Commissioner Mattingly

Pleased to participate in: Town Creek Elementary School addition/renovation dedication ceremony and groundbreaking for new Cedar Point Credit Union.

Commissioner Jarboe and I attended the *Last Chance Scenic Places* press event at Deep Falls in Clements. Compliments to Teresa Wilson for her good work.

Attended Earth Day Celebration sponsored by the Leonardtown Business Association and the Commissioners of Leonardtown.

Congratulations to Linda on the opening of the new Linda's Café in Leonardtown.

Encourage folks in the community to get out and fish – contact a charter boat captain – this fish are out there – get out and enjoy a day on the Bay or River.

Commissioner Dement

Attended the 2nd Business Roundtable put on by the Dept. of Economic and Community Development; groundbreaking ceremony for the new Cedar Point Credit Union; Knights of Columbus Immaculate Heart of Mary Council 9968 Pancake Breakfast; Earth Day celebration in Leonardtown; Blessing of the Bikes; and groundbreaking ceremony for new kindergarten addition/renovation at Piney Point Elementary.

Commissioner Jarboe

At a public forum a few months back, Rocky Rowland requested our assistance in obtaining his farm tax credits. Apparently, there is a conflict between our tax credit law and the zoning regulations in the Code. I am asking that the County Attorney provide a solution to this problem before tax time.

Commissioner Raley

Attended many of the same functions that have already been mentioned, including the groundbreaking for new Cedar Point Credit Union. This is a local, home-grown business that always gives back to the community. Best wishes in their new location.

Presented a proclamation on behalf of the Commissioners to Althea Loudon on her 90th birthday.

Attended Historic St. Mary's Foundation Wine Tasting and Auction at St. Mary's City to benefit the reconstruction of the brick chapel and the concert at St. Mary's Ryken sponsored by St. Mary's in Ridge to raise funds to help rebuild and refurbish St. Mary's in Biloxi.

Visited Mr. Hall's home in Essex and observed the drainage problem he brought to our attention at the last public forum. I have seen the correspondence from DPW&T indicating that they will address this problem and will do design in-house and complete construction sometime in FY07. Due to the seriousness of this problem, I request that DPW&T try to push this project up sooner.

Commissioner McKay

Attended a ceremony on Monday in Bowie where the Governor announced the 2006 Community Legacy Awards. The Community Legacy Awards are designed to help communities rebuild existing areas. St. Mary's County received two Community Legacy Awards. St. Mary's County Housing Authority received \$125,000 to assist in revitalization projects in Lexington Park. The Town of Leonardtown received \$100,000 for the Leonardtown Wharf project.

Attended the wine tasting in St. Mary's City and want to thank Commissioner Raley for the time he puts into doing an extraordinary job as auctioneer for several fundraising events throughout the year.

EVENTS

The meeting recessed and reconvened at the following events: National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Luncheon at the Dr. James A. Forrest Center and Technology Center, Leonardtown; and the groundbreaking ceremony for the kindergarten addition at Piney Point Elementary School in Tall Timbers.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE AND RECOMMENDED FY 2007 BUDGET FOR ST. MARY'S COUNTY HELD AT Great Mills High School.

Present: George G. Forrest, County Administrator

Elaine Kramer, Chief Financial Officer

L. Jeannett Cudmore, Deputy Finance Director

Elaine Kramer provided an overview of the Constant Yield Tax Rate and FY 2007 Recommended Budget and noted that final adoption of the FY 2007 Budget by the Board of County Commissioners is currently scheduled for May 30th. Additional written comments relative to the FY07 Budget must be submitted by May 11, 2006. The evenings' public hearings were moderated by George Forrest, County Administrator.

Constant Yield Tax Rate

Commissioner President McKay opened the public hearing on the Constant Yield Tax Rate for public comment. As no one was present to speak regarding this item, he then closed the public hearing. The record will remain open for a period of ten days for the submission of written public comment, and will then be placed on an agenda for final discussion/decision.

FY 2006 Recommended Budget

The Commissioner President opened the public hearing on the FY 2007 Recommended Budget, with the following individuals speaking:

Dr. Martirano, Superintendent of Schools (accompanied by Board Chair Dr. Sal Raspa and Board members Cathy Allen, Gary Kessler and Mary Washington) 23160 Moakley St., Leonardtown

On behalf of the Board of Education (BOE) of St. Mary's County, the students, parents, staff, and community, I want to thank you for your support of public education. Several issues beyond our control have created a "Perfect Storm" with regard to the funding necessary for FY-2007. As we execute the FY-2006 budget, we have seen our heating fuel oil contractor default, the power company increase rates by 30%, medical health insurance costs rise at a double-digit rate, and negotiations with our labor unions. All these events will have a significant impact on FY-2007. We cannot meet the mandates of No Child Left Behind, the Maryland Bridge to Excellence, attempt to eliminate the achievement gap, and address all these unforeseen requirements changes without your support and full funding as shown in your proposed budget for FY-2007.

In our request to the County, the Board of Education cited two separate figures. The first figure was based on the per pupil funding for FY-2007 found in the St. Mary's County Bridge to Excellence Resolution. The second line was the additional funding we requested to cover those items not within our control and rising at a rate far greater than inflation as a whole. The Board of County commissioners generously approved both figures. What will this level of funding do for the Board of Education? It will:

- Make our salaries more competitive with surrounding counties;

Starting teachers will earn \$40,055

This achieves the goal of the Maryland State Teachers' Association's goal of "40K Right Away"

Our teachers will be 5th in the state for average salary by the end of this fiscal year and we want to maintain that competitive edge.

- Address salary issues related to our Educational Support Professionals and bus drivers;
- Increase the Board's contribution to retiree health insurance coverage;
- Maintain Board of Education class size goals;
- Address rising fuel, energy, and health care costs;

Although, if prices continue to rise, we may have to reassess the expenditures in this budget associated with energy.

- Continue our textbook initiative;
- Enhance our technology life-cycle replacement initiative;
- Increase the number of students participating in Advanced Placement courses;
 - Start an initiative to assist students who will have to pass the Maryland High School Assessment tests to graduate (current freshman);
- Add two new programs at the James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center;
- Continue to refine our programmatic efforts to eliminate the achievement gap;
- Continue planning to expand after-school programs;
- Place more emphasis on Professional Development;
- Complete our full-day kindergarten initiative; and
- Convert two more Health Department nurses to Board employees.

The BOE is presently in negotiations with both labor groups, the Education Association of St' Mary's County (EASMC) and the Classified Employees' Association of St. Mary's County (CEASMC). This funding level enables the Board of Education to propose a respectable contract offer for both associations.

The FY-2007 proposed budget represents the priorities established during extensive meetings with site-based personnel and parents, public hearings, and considerable hours of executive staff time. The end product is an austere budget that requests only those additional resources, both dollars and personnel, that impact student learning and achievement, while addressing basic requirements changes outside our control. Thank you for your continued funding support of public education, and we look forward to working with you to "*Chart a Course to Excellence.*"

Dan Slade, on behalf of Teen Court

I am asking for your commitment to fund the Teen Court Coordinator position. Without this position Teen Court won't exist. VISTA funding of this position will not be renewed. Sheriff's Office and Rec and Parks Dept. currently house the program. Due to confidentiality and other issues, best Department to run the program is Sheriff's Office. Don't let the program die, it is too important.

Others speaking in support of Teen Court:

Elsie Summers, Lexington Park; Catherine Orr, 45805 Filmore Dr., Great Mills; Morgan Miller, 23450 River Hill Ct., Lexington Park; Kristen Bowes, 41960 Swans Ct., Leonardtown; Victoria Curtis, Mechanicsville, Senior at Chopticon; Joshua Orr – 45805 Filmore Dr., Great Mills Senior; Dan Wiers, Leonardtown; Deborah Curtis, Mechanicsville; Brittany Russell, P.O. Box 476, Great Mills (comments read by Deborah Curtis); Meaghan Orr, University of Maryland and Great Mills

Jamie Raley, Avenue, on behalf of Board of Trustees for College of Southern Maryland

Thanks for fully funding the operating budget for CSM, Leonardtown Campus. This will bring engineering program from La Plata to Leonardtown to make it more available for St. Mary's residents. I would like to request further that you reconsider the request made in late March by Dr. Ryan for a non-recurring technical grant to accelerate the engineering program at Leonardtown. This would provide for an upgrade of current infrastructure,

refurbishing the engineering lab and the distance learning room and essential simulation technology for the nursing and healthcare program. It will also allow the Leonardtown Campus to achieve a standard level of instructional technology in all classrooms and labs for all students and faculty and will help the college accelerate cost efficient projects such as the personal computer refresh and document imaging. This request is important to the work force in the community.

Todd Morgan, VP Eagan & McAllister, former CSM instructor

Want to echo Mr. Raley's comments. Thank you for supporting the curriculum at CSM. There is a need to expand the engineering curriculum and information technology programs at CSM. The demand for these professionals continues to exceed supply. The community will be enhanced by the ability to have home-grown students who return to work in the engineering and IT fields in the County. Request that you consider Dr. Ryan's request for a one-time grant.

Mike Besche, Waldorf, on behalf of CSM Foundation

Thank you for funding the annual CSM scholarships for St. Mary's citizens. There are always a large number of deserving students. We are asking for an additional \$25,000 to help us build an endowment for scholarship funds to help meet the demands in leaner years.

F.J. Talley, Dean, CSM, Leonardtown Campus

Thank you for fully-funding CSM and request you reconsider Dr. Ryan's request for one-time grant.

Todd Morgan, Pres. So. Md. Navy Alliance

Successfully defended BRAC. Faced with new difficulties from Capitol Hill and pressures inside the base, such as war on terrorism, causing us to move away from the diversification strategy. Request that you re-look at our budget request and add an additional \$30,000 (for a total of \$50,000) ability to expand and diversify

Kerry Klear, 40492 Port Place, Leonardtown, on behalf of the Advanced Life Support Unit

I have been a paramedic with the SMC ALS unit since 1983. I have held the offices of Chief at Leonardtown VRS for six years and of the ALS unit for one year. I have seen our County grow by leaps and bounds over the past 20+ years. What hasn't happened is the growth of the ALS unit to match it.

When the ALS Unit first started, it was done with 10 members that were actually members of County rescue squads with an interest of bringing advance pre-hospital emergency medical care to the citizens of SMC. The plan was, over a period of ten years, to get enough ALS trained members in each County rescue squad so that ALS would be provided by each squad and the ALS unit chase car system as we have today would have disbanded. This never occurred due to the increased requirements for ALS training, skyrocketing numbers of calls and increased career and personal demands on the members.

We are currently operating with primarily the same core group of paramedics we did 10-15 years ago. We have seen many come and go, but few have stayed. Most honor their requirements here, then move on to a career somewhere else in the state and lose interest in our system because they are already doing it 40+ hours a week. I don't fault them for this. How many of you out there put in a 40-50 hour work week and then volunteer and additional 20+ hours a week doing the same thing. There are those that are not in the EMS career field, but have their own career and family obligations to attend to. The time for the type of volunteer commitment that it takes to get trained, maintain that training and serve has become impossible for most. We have only seen a select few be able to do it over the past several years. The other thing that comes into play is that it takes a good five years to take someone off the street and train them to the level of an independent practicing paramedic in the volunteer system.

The current paramedics are tired and can no longer keep up with the demand County growth has caused. They have been taxed to the limits and just cannot be required to do more. It has gotten incredibly difficult to continue serving. To run a shift and then be expected to perform at work the next day or evening is nearly impossible. In the past, some private companies permitted employees to respond during work hours and they had individual agreements with their employers for the time

they spent on calls. This has also become a practice of the past due to the increased number of calls. County government was approached several years ago, more than once, to allow County employees to respond to calls while at work, and it was out of the question.

The ALS unit has done numerous studies; they have compiled the numbers and can show the increases across the board, with the exception of the number of providers. The same studies have been done throughout the state and all have come up with the same statistics as ours. All have resulted in instituting a career system to assure their citizens get the required level of pre-hospital care in their time of need.

Elizabeth Carroll, 35869 Army-Navy Drive, Mechanicsville

I am a paramedic and President of the all-volunteer St. Mary's County Advanced Life Support Unit, the only organization providing advanced prehospital care in the County. Over the last twelve years that I have served with the Unit, I have seen the population of this County grow exponentially, and the call volume increase accordingly.

It has never been easy to cover all the calls requiring advanced life support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with only volunteers. We optimize our resources by using a chase car system, in which a paramedic responds with ALS equipment in a car and meets the ambulance. However, in the last few years, it has become impossible to cover all the calls.

In order to try to meet the increasing demand, we instituted some innovative programs, and introduced new requirements for our members. First, we place the equipment and medications needed to treat cardiac arrest on all basic life support ambulances, which could be used by any available paramedic. We then expanded the program by placing a full set of advanced life support equipment and medications at each rescue squad, so that a paramedic responding with the squad could provide advanced care as part of the ambulance crew.

These programs helped us meet the growth in call volume, but we were still missing calls, and also having trouble covering shifts due to fatigue issues with overloaded paramedics. Please keep in mind that many of our paramedics also run several shifts per month with their basic life support rescue squads, besides working full-time jobs and caring for their families. When a paramedic runs 8 to 12 calls in a 12-hour shift, and then must spend additional hours completing paperwork for those calls, burnout happens very quickly. Those medics that run all night long with little or no sleep and then have to go to work the next day run the very real risk of harming themselves, or the very people they are trying to help.

We must implement solutions now, or we will find ourselves sorely lacking in meeting the needs of the citizens of this County. We are teetering on the brink of that situation right now. During this last month, there were two shifts in which no medic unit was on duty and several advanced life support calls went without a paramedic, including a cardiac arrest.

This year, for the first time, we requested funds for one paid paramedic crew to help reduce the call per medic ratio and enable us to meet the call demand. This was an extremely difficult decision, because we have always been proud of our ability to provide state of the art care just with volunteers. We would not have asked for it if we didn't think it was needed. However, you apparently thought otherwise, and cut those funds from the preliminary budget. If you do not want us to hire a paid crew, then you will need to fund measures to attract more paramedics to this County and provide incentives to stay for those who are here now. In the past we have never asked for anything more than what was absolutely necessary to provide the standard of care to our patients. Now we need more than that to attract more paramedics and keep what we have. Here are some proposals:

- Offer the County health and life insurance plans to volunteer paramedics

- Transfer up to 10 years of service from neighboring Maryland counties toward eligibility for the Length of Service Awards Program for experienced paramedics wishing to serve with St. Mary's ALS.

- Provide funding for uniform items, such as shirts, jackets and boots.

- Provide funding for decent furniture in the Unit's living and sleeping quarters.

- Provide for an allowance for meals while on duty.

- Fund aggressive advertising for paramedics, such as through local cable television, radio announcements, newspapers, movie theater advertisements and signs.

These are only a few of the things that be done to increase our staffing. They may help for the short term. In any case, we can't go on with the resources we now have. We do not do what we do for ourselves. We do it to serve you – all the people in this room, and everyone else in this County. But, unless we get the support we need, we will not be able to continue. When someone needs advanced care, we want to be there to provide it. Right now, we cannot always do that. What if it was your husband or your wife, mother or father, or your child, who needed help, but we were not available to give it? Please give our funding request serious consideration and let us provide the care the people of this County need and deserve.

Michael Barnett, 27205 Widow Lane, Mechanicsville

I have been an EMT since 1989 and a Paramedic with the SMC ALS unit since 1997. I have held offices of President or Chief of the ALS unit for the last six years. I would like to give further information with regard to the status of the ALS unit. Our goal is to man a unit 24/7, 365 days per year with "No Medic Available" less than 5% of the time. As you can see by the chart before you, we have not been able to reach this goal in the last eight months. In 2003, the number of calls increased 12.5% from approximately 3500 calls to approximately 4,000 calls. This number has increased to 4,200 calls this past year. This, along with the average number of ALS providers available to run calls being reduced from 47 in 2003 to 37 at this time, has caused the inability of the ALS Unit to meet its goals.

The ALS Unit can do very little to reduce the call volume, but along with the Medical Director, we have recently reviewed the types of calls the ALS Unit is responding to. With implementation of the Medical Director's suggested changes, we expect a minor, though probably insignificant, reduction in call volume.

As Mr. Klear mentioned, it takes a long time to grow a new ALS provider, and those that we do grow do not remain members after they have met their minimum requirement. Our County LOSAP program is one of the poorest in the state and has not done what it potentially could to help with retention, nor does it provide much incentive to attract current ALS providers from throughout the region. For the ALS unit to attain its goal of "No Medic Available" less than 5% of the time, we need, immediately, a minimum of 15 new volunteer ALS providers. We expect to turn over 2 ALS providers in the near future, but that is far from the number required to meet minimum manning.

The ALS unit has been studying the problem of providing adequate service for many years. We have frequently been on the forefront of implementing the many programs mentioned by Ms. Carroll. We have been studying the current situation for at least eight months and this includes the review of other County studies conducted with the state Medical Director as the facilitator.

It is and remains our contention that hiring a paid crew to augment our volunteer staffing is the more logical long term alternative though we are willing to explore significant increases in retention incentives that may help attract ALS providers from other jurisdictions and retain our current ALS providers. Minor increases in retention incentives would be meaningless and a waste of time and funding.

The major problem is that these incentives are not going to solve the ALS provider burnout problem we face. The number of ALS calls is now of such magnitude that we need a minimum of two medic units on the road every night shift to allow our volunteers enough sleep to be able to go to work and be productive the next day.

While reviewing the latest EMS study completed in Kent County, Maryland, we found many recommendations that this County has had in place for a long time, but the main recommendation to fix their problem was implementation of one paid ALS chase car 24/7 and two day-time paid ALS chase cars. The night coverage would be performed by volunteers.

When comparing St. Mary's County with Kent, you find a significant size difference in all respects:

St. Mary's Kent

Population 96,000 19,000

ALS Calls 4,200 1,700

Square Miles 367 170

If anything, this leads one to believe that St. Mary's County should have four or five full time units using a mix of paid and volunteer.

Joe Held for Dennis Gordge, a 22-year member of the SMC ALS Unit

First, let me express my apologies for not being able to speak in person tonight. I would like to address a growing concern in our County's Emergency Medical Service. The proposed budget includes an increase in ALS funding to allow us to augment our dedicated volunteer staff. The explosive growth in SMC has exceeded our organization's volunteer capacity to answer emergency calls for help. Our emergency call volume has sharply increased, while our staff numbers have only grown modestly. Our typical duty shift is 12 hours long. While a busy shift once was three or four calls during the shift, we now frequently run 8-12. This high call volume has resulted in three very disturbing circumstances:

First, the on-duty medic unit is often not available for dispatch on a 9-1-1 call because it is already committed elsewhere; thus a patient needing ALS may not receive this critical service or it may be delayed until the duty unit can clear from its previous responsibility.

Second, the heavy call volume almost guarantees that a volunteer will be running calls all night long. The frequency of sleepless nights has forced many of our members back off running because of the negative impact on their work responsibilities the next day.

Finally, the heavy call volume is causing volunteer paramedic burnout and is reducing their desire to run duty. Incident reporting and paperwork account for a significant portion of the paramedic's time. It is not uncommon for our members to spend one to three hours of additional time AFTER their shift is over just to get caught up and complete the required paperwork. Ideally, these reports should be completed after each call, but the heavy call volume results in the duty Medic Unit being dispatched on the next emergency before the reporting responsibilities can be completed.

Prior to joining the SMC Medic Unit, I volunteered with a similar organization in Virginia. Thus, I have spent the better part of 31 years committed to an all volunteer EMS service. I thought it would be painful for me to argue for paid personnel to augment the volunteer staff, but my commitment for excellence in EMS far outweighs my pride to maintain status quo.

We are proud of the fact that our organization has been a leader in the state of Maryland for ALS service. We have initiated new and novel techniques for maintaining our coverage in the face of rising call volume. Our organization was the first in the state to implement programs such as the IV Technician Program, the Initial Cardiac Arrest Medication Program, and finally, the Paramedic Early Intervention Program. These efforts have been hugely successful and have been modeled by other counties. Unfortunately, the time has come that we must face the reality that we can't keep up with the growing demand with our system. I'm asking for your support in providing funds that will give the ALS Unit options for solving this current shortage in manpower. Failure to do so will result in a growing number of uncovered duty shifts and sporadic loss of this critical life saving service.

This County needs Advanced Life Support. The citizens deserve continuation of the high level of service and skill they have come to rely on with the SMC ALS Unit. Our members are experts in EMS and we know what works in the life saving business. We are asking for help because we see a serious shortfall in our ability to provide this critical service. We fully intend to keep the volunteer system and have no intention of scraping it in favor of paid staff. We are only looking for help to fill a void that we cannot fill ourselves.

L.F. "Gus" Eggert, 45250 Cove Manor Rd., California; representing Patuxent Naval Air Museum

We are anticipating the new building construction to start next year. The building will rise from the ground, but the inside is something else. Will need to build in educational programs, interactive exhibits, look ahead to interior designs, we will need help for a part-time designer for new museum interior.

Mary Novotny, 22905 Maple Road, Lexington Park; on behalf of Board of Directors, Child Care Resource Center

We are here tonight to ask you to consider fully funding the Resource Center. For the past six years we have requested \$19,000 from the St. Mary's Board of County Commissioners and received only \$7,400 last year. If we were to receive the full amount, this would go far in assisting us with our building expenses for our Center in Charlotte Hall. The Southern Maryland Child Care Resource Center is one of 12 in the state of Maryland. We receive some funding from the state, but are not fully funded. Because we serve St. Mary's, Charles and Calvert Counties, we request \$19,000 from each County for our building expenses. None of the counties has honored our request for the full amount.

We have financial grants, but these are for programs and do not cover maintaining the facility. If we were to close our doors, and this is a possibility, the entire community would suffer. Our children, the parents, and the employers would be the big losers. Studies have shown that early programs for children better prepare them to enter school, and those children in child care facilities are ready to learn when they reach school age.

I have spoken with the Southern Maryland Delegation in Annapolis about the inadequate funding at the state level, and now I am urging you to take a look at what you can do for the Center. The Board of Directors has also begun fundraising and will hold their second annual "Play in May" on May 19th, which will help meet some of our needs.

We are at a critical period in time and unless you step up and provide additional funds, we will have to cut staff, which has already happened. We are contemplating the idea that we may have to sub-let a portion of our building to meet our expenses. We don't want to do that. Child care is important to parents and employers as well as the children who enjoy a well-rounded child care facility.

Bridgette Lawrence, 23185 Oak Drive, California

(licensed day care provider and former school teacher, speaking on behalf of Southern Maryland Child Care Resource Center)

With "no child left behind" mandate, it is essential that children enter school as prepared as possible. It is vital that providers have resources and tools access to all information we need and opportunities to network so that we can prepare our children for life's challenges. The school system provides their teachers with access to all of these resources - - we should have the same opportunity. Please fully fund our lifeline for these basic funds as requested.

Dan Capper, P.O. Box 270, Dameron, Three Oaks Community Liaison

As with most organizations, we, too, are experiencing an increase in operating expenses, the workload is getting heavier, and there is never enough money. Funds are mostly needed for transition programs. We currently have 32 women and 75 children in our live-in program and 40 or 50 on a waiting list. Funding has been flat for the last six years. We have become child advocates

out of necessity. No one else is filling the need. All of us recognize the need for a women's shelter, but this is another problem for another day. Thank you for your level of support; it also enhances our ability to raise funds from other sources.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien, 26845 Point Lookout Road, Leonardtown; Executive Director, Walden Sierra

Thank you for all you have accomplished with this budget - - with one exception, the under-funding of the softer side of government. The creation of Walden/Sierra in 1973 took courage. From humble beginnings . . . our needs for services have only grown. The 24-hour hot line was not funded by the county. This hot line allows us to have the slogan: *help for today, hope for tomorrow*. The hot line is the heart of our organization. It helps us identify problems and then create programs and seek funding to help resolve them. 6,000 calls over the last year. Sexual Assault has increased 50%, Domestic Violence, 20%, and there is a 40% increase in demand for substance abuse services. Challenges remain daunting. Please fund Hot line at the level to be fully funded so that we can continue this crisis intervention service that is model for state. Demonstrate same courage that was needed in 1973 -- fund crisis services.

Jane Sypher, 45211 Cover Manor Road, California

President of the Board of Directors, Walden/Sierra

Thanks to Dan Raley for bi-partisan agreement on budget. Our budget request for \$207,812 budget was reduced to \$195,038. We are a model program in the state of Maryland. The hot line deals with runaways and rape, sex assault, and child abuse victims. Walden was there at the murder of Ms. Taylor to provide support to all involved. From 2001 to now, liability insurance has increase 83%, utilities increased by 129%. All agencies were cut in 2001, we received the same amount in 2003, 4, 5 and 6. In 2007, we are asking for \$229,632 – an increase of \$22,000 over budget we received in FY2000. I think the \$35,000 is there to fully fund Walden in order to continue to provide services.

Julie Randall, 26845 Point Lookout Road, Leonardtown

Board member Walden/Sierra.

Thanks to Commissioner Raley. Thank all of you for your previous support of Walden/Sierra. All of us know someone who knows someone who has had need of Walden's services. If these services had to be provided by County government, it would require a lot more funding than Walden has requested. Anchor is an inpatient facility that served over 200 St. Mary's County residents this year. There is a waiting list of 3 weeks to one month and the numbers of citizens needing services continue to grow. We are prosperous in this County, but the divide between the haves and have-nots in this County is growing larger. We anticipate a 35% increase in the needs of our county citizens for these services. Help keep the facility open and viable. There has been no increase in funding for quite some years. Please look at this, continue your support and fully fund.

Phil Tschirhart, 41665 Fenwick St., #6, Leonardtown

Please fully fund the Anchor ICF program in Charlotte Hall. If a cross benefit analysis was prepared comparing the cost of treatment of alcoholism and addictions problems vs. non-treatment and the resulting costs of increased hospitalization due to chronic disease; fire, police and EMS calls; accidents; domestic violence, etc., the treatment option must be cheaper. It is also the moral thing to do. 200 people were returned to meaningful, purposeful and happy lives last year. I count myself as one of those people. I was there 14 months ago and have been returned to a meaningful, purposeful, and happy life. Before that I only knew alcohol. Without Anchor, I would be a dead man. Thank you for your support and I hope it continues.

Mort Bowling

(on behalf of Walden/Sierra)

I have experienced the negative affects of alcohol, but have also seen the brighter side. Walden empowers the addicted to overcome the addictions with compassion. Without this service in the community, there would be a huge void. Please fully fund.

Barbara Zeigler, 26845 Point Lookout Road, Leonardtown

Lead Addictions Counselor, Walden Sierra

As counselors, we are college graduates with at least one degree, but are historically underpaid. We do it because we love it. We all know someone who has suffered from an addiction -- people who are physically and emotionally sick and have lost their spirit. I am 20 years in recovery. Consider this -- knowing the costs of courts, jails, highway accidents, and health issues -- treatment does work.

Liz Purcell Leskinen, 21800 N. Shangri-La Drive, Lexington Park

MD State Teachers Association, representing the Education Association and Collective Employees Association

Thank you for your commitment to a superior public school system. As you well know, St. Mary's County employees are leading the advocacy for high standards and strong accountability and are fully committed to fulfilling the promise in every child. We need your unwavering support in order to achieve these goals. We must continue to work as a team for the single unified objective of a successful public school system. We are particularly appreciative of your willingness to fund the budget as submitted by the Superintendent. Adequate funding of public education is imperative to ensure our educators have the means to produce real results to meet the needs of the future. Our teachers need resources to guarantee a highly skilled workforce, solid entry level standards, successful mentoring, and effective peer systems, so that we can then assure our parents and community members that SMC employees continue to excel in their knowledge and skills. A collaborative partnership beyond our school system is essential to meet our objectives. Thanks to the Commissioners as well as the citizens for your pledge to renew and nurture our partnership in public education. We can assure you that the dedicated and talented professionals in the SMC school system will continue to do what they do best, and that is to ensure each and every student

shines in his or her own unique and powerful way. We have the same unified objectives -- the success of our students. We appreciate your willingness to fund the budget requested by Dr. Martirano. Thank you for your pledge to renew our partnership in public education.

Jan Emerson, 45504 Poplar Land, Lexington Park, President, Education Association of St. Mary's County

I am representing 916 members and 1208 certificated employees. Thank you for fully funding the Superintendents budget request. We are still not closing the gap in per pupil spending. In local funding we are 21st out of 24 in the state of Maryland, but in state funding, we are 11th out of 24. So, the state is actually doing a better job of funding our children than we are. The general fund balance and rainy day fund are more than double what they were in 2003. So, we are a wealthy county with a lot of money put away for a rainy day. I ask that you continue to revisit and revise the Bridge to Excellence, and please increase your support for the children of SMC. Since 1994, the funding has declined by 9.8% of the total budget. It seems like we might be able to reverse that trend now.

Lever Queen, 36794 Owens Dr., Chaptico

Are you keeping Oakley Senior Center open? We have done what you asked to try to meet the quota, but we are losing people. 7:15 am is too early to ask seniors to catch the bus. Please let us keep our bus and give the Northern Senior Center a bus. We enjoy the Center. We are willing to work with them, but 7:15 am is just too difficult for seniors. Thank you for all your help over the years.

Mary Ruth Horton, 44173 St. Andrews Lane, California

(on behalf of the Commission on Aging members)

Thanks for your wonderful support you have given to the needs of seniors. We truly do appreciate it. At our meeting yesterday, we voted to request your support for the positions Acting Director Jennie Page requested in her budget. The senior population is ever increasing. The baby boomers are here and the demand for services continues to increase. We have lots of volunteers for which we are thankful. But we can't run the centers with volunteers only. Staff is still needed. We ask that you reconsider the request for positions. We asked Ms. Page to prioritize those positions for us as she feels they are needed and in order to adequately deliver much needed services, and these are the priorities: (1) Transfer one full-time Manager position, Home Care Services, from a grant-funded to a County-funded position. (2) Fund a new part-time senior office specialist for the Northern Senior Center. This request was postponed when the Center opened and we were asked to wait and fill with volunteers. We did this -- we started with 40 volunteers and are now down to 20. (3) Part-time senior program specialist for Oakley Nutrition outreach and programming. We respectfully request that you include these positions in the budget.

Kathleen Reif, Library Director

Reviewed last year and plans for coming year. Thanks for full funding of request. Technology initiative will provide for self-checkout equipment, color printers and presentation equipment.

Linda Vallandingham, 21705 Indian Bridge Road, California

(and also on behalf of Robert Jarboe)

Thanks to Commissioner Raley for his foresight. With all the capital projects that are projected for the County, we support first paying down the debt. Then, if the County can afford to give tax relief to the citizens, the County energy tax reduction proposal would benefit more people -- whether you rent or own, you would benefit. Basically, anyone who pays a utility bill that has the County energy tax applied to it would benefit from the energy tax reduction whether you rent or own, and it would also run for a longer period of time. The property tax reduction proposal would only be for one year and would only benefit homeowners.

Capt. Ken Cusic, Office of the Sheriff

Thanks for fully funding the Board of Education. We urge you to do the same thing for something that is equally important, Law Enforcement. If you truly support law enforcement, fully support our budget request. Through our strategic planning process we identified our critical needs and included those in the request. Now, your suggested funding only addresses a portion of those needs. Manpower remains one of our most critical needs, but just as important is the retention of our trained personnel. That's why the corporal, senior deputy first class and senior correctional officer first class

ranks are so important. With the limited growth in sworn officers we have had to reassign six deputies from the operations division to patrol and also had to reassign three narcotics officers to the patrol division. We are asking for 12 deputies which may sound like a lot. Remember, this is a 24 hours a day, seven days a week activity. Five new deputies still means only one officer on the street per day (due to shifts) and doesn't include training, court time or leave. We are falling farther and farther behind, particularly since we were not fully funded last year either. If not fully funded once again, we will continue to lose deputies, correctional officers and civilian staff. We are asking that you fully support law enforcement by fully supporting our budget request.

Catherine Elder, Executive Director, Sotterley Foundation, P.O. Box 67, Hollywood

For the past five years we have doubled our students. Last year alone we served 10,750 students. Like any other business or non-profit, we are experiencing increased operating expenses. We need not only the recommended amount, but the requested amount which is actually the same funding received in 2001. We request that you fully fund us this year and thank you for your support over the past years.

Monique Willett, 20620 Colton's Point Road, Colton's Point

President of Classified Employees' Association of St. Mary's County (CEASMC).

I represent support professionals in the St. Mary's County School System. Thanks for fully funding Dr. Martirano's requested amount. I am pleading for the working class. Teachers have gained by having good starting salaries. We need mercy to maintain a decent quality of life. **We are falling below poverty level and can't find affordable housing in St. Mary's County. Please increase funding to the school system.**

Clare Whitbeck, 40502 Port Place, Leonardtown

I have three Senior issues. **1. Meals on Wheels. Fund everyone who needs this service. There should be no one on the waiting list. 2. Reasonable transportation for Oakley and Northern Senior Centers.** A 7:15 am bus pick up time is unreasonable for a senior who would need to start getting ready at 5:15 a.m. This is not a funding issue. **3. Have no senior care waiting list.** Dr. Icenhower reported to us that he was upset that there are seniors on waiting list for services – one was 106 years old. You could save the state funding by making sure that case management services can be provided in the home instead of forcing people to go into nursing homes. **We have asked that a figure be provided to you as to what it would take to remove all seniors from the waiting list.** If there is a list, it should be for those waiting for approval, not for 35-40 people waiting for services.

Barbara Thompson, 24744 Sotterley Road, Hollywood; Chair, St. Mary's County Justice and Advocacy Council

In early March we came before you and requested that you develop an Affordable Housing Strategic Plan and that a County staff position be put in place to make the plan a reality. Our request was based on the Danter Study of Housing Needs (03) and the report on Housing Livability and Affordability Issues in St. Mary's County (02) which were paid for with \$85,000 in County funds, but not followed through on. We are convinced that without a plan the affordable housing issue will not be addressed adequately. In our letter of 4/18/06, you will notice that we have been joined in our request by eight pastors from other denominations. We are aware of the Chamber's Task Force on Affordable Housing and understand that recommendations will be made very soon. I believe they will include the same recommendation. We request that you include in next year's budget the funding for the plan and the position. Now is the time to show the community that you recognize the challenges and are willing to commit the resources needed to address them to achieve the goal of providing safe and affordable housing for all citizens.

Shirley Leyland, Box 96, Tall Timbers (joined by Lewie Aldridge, Steve Dunlap, and Tom T

We are requesting that a site supervisor be funded for the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum. Thanks for your support in securing funds for property and site improvements at Piney Point. We appreciate your help in enabling us to begin recouping some of the losses from Hurricane Isabel. Since 1995, we have operated with part-time, seasonal staff and volunteers. This only allows for basic access to the site for tours without the development of specific educational programs and diverse events. Additional funding is being sought to implement bay related critical areas policy. The museum and park needs a full time site supervisor in place to oversee the development of these endeavors and to maintain and expand programs, improve visitor services and public service offerings, develop educational programs, oversee the physical plant, recruit, train and support part-time staff. Please reconsider your decision to eliminate hiring the full time site supervisor in January 07.

Lewie Aldridge, Jr., P.O. Box 310, Lexington Park, Museum Board members and Friends of St. Clemen

Reiterate Ms. Leyland's comments. Please fund a full-time employee for Piney Point Lighthouse Museum.

Donald P. McErlean, 20829 Chestnut Ridge Dr., Leonardtown; Executive Director, Patuxent Partnership, on behalf of CSM

Want to compliment the Board on your excellent decision to fully fund and even increase funding for the Board of Ed and CSM. America is facing a problem in the science and engineering workforce. Reports indicate that we risk losing our competitive edge primarily due to the lack of participation in and lack of availability of proper education in the science and engineering areas. The CSM is a vital link in the transition from high school to university for students in science and engineering which allows them to return to St. Mary's County and continue to serve in the S&E technical workforce. Please reconsider Dr. Ryan's request for a one-time grant for technology upgrades and high tech equipment to allow for expansion of tech and engineering program. CSM could eventually fund, but your support will allow CSM to leapfrog the program ahead by three years.

James Manning McKay, P.O. Box 98, Hollywood

You have a fine staff and they have done a fine job for you. I really have a lot of respect for the hard work you have put into preparing this budget. I don't come to ask for additional funds and I'm not representing any organization, except for the fact that I am a small businessman and life-long resident of St. Mary's County. I think that I fully understand the situation of many of our residents. I know there have been proposals to reduce for one year certain taxes; however, that would not meet the needs of all the citizens -- those who do not own property. But, I am sure that you can find a way to help those who do not own property, such as through the establishment of an organization whereby you could commit some of the surplus funds to help some of the people who are at or below the poverty line.

I would venture to doubt that your prediction of lower budget deficit and debts four to six years down the road will be less than today. I doubt that this will happen. You are putting forth a capital budget that will increase your operating budget considerably over the next four years. Two County Executives up north of us are recommending tax cuts. I would venture to say that you would applaud that. I appreciate the hard work that you do and believe you do an outstanding job. I have heard the praise of other Commissioners tonight, but I know one Commissioner who is the hardest working I've ever seen in my life.

Dr. Caroline Dale Rothfield, 23214 Galloway Place, Hollywood

I have lived here for eight years and have three small children. I am concerned about the state of education in St. Mary's County. While I applaud you for funding the Board of Ed's request, it only goes to the minimum needs. St. Mary's County ranks 21st in funding. This is very discouraging. There has been a continuing diminishment of funds. One underlying thread of all comments tonight has been education. Look back in history to see what happens to communities who don't support education. There are no enrichment programs (only some pilots) in the elementary schools. That is appalling. There are no textbooks in my child's school. Teachers leave because of inadequate salaries. Without proper education, our children will end up in juvenile court and be less productive citizens. Use the surplus to go beyond the current level of funding.

Noel "Tim" Wood, 44478 White Stone Place, Tall Timbers; Member of the Southern Maryland Association of Realtors Board of Directors

Looking at recent capital budget and plan for next 8-12 years (on page 34), I see that the principal source of funds is coming from transfer and impact fees. Looking at increase in impact fees for 2007 and growth projected for 08 and 09, leads me to question, is this due to increase in collective opportunities (more new homes) or to an increase in impact fees and fewer houses? (*Response was given: "No increase in impact fees is planned."*)

Keith Fairfax, 46516 Walnut Court, Lexington Park; Chair of the Emergency Services Committee.

The Committee has been **working with the Human Resources Director on proposed changes to the LOSAP program. She has been provided with a signed copy of our request this evening.** Want to thank you for your continued support. Last year we were before you for the 8th District Fire Tax increase. Come visit our new station. It's rocking.

Pam Wilkerson, Director, Boys and Girls Club

Thanks to Commissioner McKay for his continued commitment to the youth of St. Mary's County and for including us in his proposed budget. We received zero dollars in the Recommended Budget. Keep in mind the critical work we do to inspire and enable all youth to realize their full potential

and to become responsible and caring citizens. State grants were cut by 50%. We appealed to the Commissioners for a one-time funding request to keep us from having to shut down the after school programs. The lights are out at Park Hall and Green Holly Elementary schools. We realize this situation is not all your fault, but are appealing to you to reconsider -- if not to fully funding our request, to at least provide partial funding. This program is especially important to disadvantage kids. We provide programs at no or low cost. Disadvantaged youth need the same opportunity to become productive caring and responsible citizens as other children.

John Tucker, Director of Operations, Boys and Girls Club

We touch so many lives each day. We serve all children, but we target those in disadvantaged circumstances. \$900 year to provide services -- compare to the cost of things we prevent. Want to grow and be most effective Boys and Girls Club possible. Only way we can succeed is with the help of the county and state. Allow us to continue programs while we work to build alternative funding.

Julie Randall, on behalf of Center for Life Enrichment and citizens with disabilities

In FY 05, there were only three parks that were not in compliance with ADA requirements (7th District, Cecil, Elms Beach). It looks like all will be brought into compliance by FY07. This took 17 years, however, the end is in sight and we thank you and the Rec and Parks staff. Unfortunately, the rate of progress in public schools is not as good. The school's Capital Plan shows that all schools will be in compliance by 2014. We can do better. Continued pushing to the right is not acceptable. Please work with the Board of Ed to make this a priority and to revise their capital plan to reflect that priority. Evidently you received a waiver for an elevator in the old Sheriff's building where the Housing Office is now occupying the second floor. Disabled and senior citizens need the services of the Housing Office. Put an elevator in the capital plan for this building. As the Chair for the Center for Living Independently, I ask that you reconsider their request for an increase this year. They provide important services and are experiencing increases in energy costs and other areas. Funding level has not changed since FY02, resulting in a reduced ability to serve. They would like to upgrade their small computer lab used for workforce training. Thank to all of you for your support of our citizens with disabilities.

Sheriff David Zylak, Mattingly Street, Leonardtown

Over the past four years, the Sheriff's Office has experienced an increase of 11 sworn deputies and one new correctional officer. However, prior to that, the authorized strength of the sworn personnel was stagnant for four or five fiscal years at 106 sworn deputies and 67 correctional officers. We are in a catch-up period now. We have added special deputies for the courthouse and several new civilian positions. I compliment this Board for your support.

Two years ago we developed a Strategic Management Plan for the Sheriff's Office and an update was done in 2005. That Plan calls for a ratio of 2.0 sworn officers per 100 inhabitants. Keep in mind that the national average for "non metropolitan" counties is 2.8 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. I would urge you to 2.0 per 1,000 your goal and to work hard to accomplish that goal. St. Mary's County is a great place to live and raise a family. Not far to the north, crime is more prevalent, and we are seeing that criminal element coming to our County and committing more and more crimes.

I have an obligation to the citizens of this County to provide the best possible protection against crime, but I can't do it without the fiscal support of the County Commissioners. We need to stay well ahead of the curve when it comes to crime, because playing catch-up is tough and more expensive in the long run.

I know you all have reviewed our Strategic Management Plan and have seen the need for more than just sworn deputies and correctional officers. As we add deputies and correctional officers, the need for supervision and support becomes increasingly important. More personnel on the street produces more paperwork, inmates at the Detention Center, cases to prosecute, equipment, training, supervision, etc.

I'm asking that you not get tunnel vision and miss the bigger picture. I do need more deputies and correctional officers, but we can't forget everything that goes along with it. The Sheriff, the Captain, and the five Division Commanders bring over 100 years of experience in law enforcement to the table. I'm asking that you trust us when we tell you how we believe the increase to our budget would be best utilized. We are your law enforcement professionals and we want to work with you, not against you.

As the elected Sheriff, I am accountable to the citizens, just like each of you. Let me and my command staff do our jobs and communicate with us if you have any questions or concerns. Law enforcement, like education, is expensive, but the investment is a good investment for the future.

Mike McCauley

I urge your continued support of Three Oaks. I have seen Three Oaks transform peoples' lives. Also, you have made important steps in addressing affordable housing needs. You have two pieces in place and now need a strategic plan and how to implement the plan. I understand that the staff position not fully described, but the definition could be put together very quickly. Please commit to funding the affordable housing staff position.

Marcel Brooks, Minority Business Alliance

In an effort to meet the needs of minority-owned businesses, we decided it would be beneficial to form a partnership between the MBA and the County. It is the intent of this partnership to provide support and resources to strengthen the economic position of minority-owned businesses in St. Mary's County. The MBA and the County have agreed to: (1) work together to increase the establishment, development and growth of small and minority-owned businesses headquartered in St. Mary's County; collaborate on strategies to ensure that small and minority-owned businesses are able to fully participate in the local economy; and (3) collaborate to secure funding for the execution of mutually-developed strategies and initiatives for the purpose of ensuring that small and minority-owned businesses are able to fully participate in the economic development of the County. One approach might be to state the problem for small business. That is: in order for local, small business to grow, it must have the support of local government. As you know, successful small business adds to the tax base and adds local jobs. The work of the MBA is focused on supporting small business. The MBA Business Support Network will be supported by three initiatives for 2006: Small and Minority Business Survey; Web Portal, and Local Business Mentor Program.

You agreed to work with the MBA Board on our MOA. I am very appreciative and thankful for that. We have identified our needs and submitted them in accordance with the budget. Our justification fully explains how we are going to work together to accomplish our goals. We are budgeted for only 30% of what we asked for. I know you gentlemen are really serious about our MOA, therefore, I ask that you fully fund our budget request.

Cheryl Blazer

Commend four Commissioners on the recommended budget. My concerns are for seniors and disabled citizens. Great strides were made in getting County-owned buildings into ADA compliance 4-5 years ago. I recently took my mother in-law to the Housing Office and she suffered great pain going up the stairs in the old Sheriff's Building. This is a disgrace to seniors and citizens with disabilities. Funding levels for Center for Life Enrichment and ARC are still at 02 amounts; request that you fund additional amounts. Hospice is also in need of additional funds. I am not on

any of these boards, but have seen first hand how they help. These organizations are all worthwhile to fund, especially Hospice as they begin constructing new building. As for Walden/Sierra - we all have friends or family that has been touched by the programs at Walden. It is important to have the opportunity to be removed from the situation and to work on your self first when dealing with addictions. We all know there is a crack epidemic crisis. Walden/Sierra approaches these problems in a wonderful team manner. If you don't increase funding for Walden, you will have to increase funding for Sheriff Zylak to add more deputies.

Pastor Marguerite Morris New Beginnings Christian Worship Center and Leah's House

Listened to Three Oaks - - they paved the way for the need for a women's shelter. We have shelter for all three counties in Hughesville, one in Calvert, and Angels Watch is relocating. I encourage you to recognize the need in the budget for an emergency shelter. I am not part of a large organization, but I personally commit 50-60 hours today to bring forth the effort to establish a women's emergency shelter in St. Mary's County. My phone rings all the time and I am turning down women who need shelter. Seriously consider that one organization can't meet all of the needs. We need the multiple organizations to get together and share funding. We have a \$50,000 matching grant from a believer in Leah's House. This is your opportunity to make a commitment. Consider all organizations who want to meet this need.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Board of County Commissioners on _____

Donna Gebicke, Administrative Assistant