

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING: JANUARY 21, 2025

The Howard County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in Hearing Room 338 of the Howard County Administration Center. Those in attendance included Commissioner President Jack Dodd, Commissioner Vice President Brad Bray, Commissioner Member Jeff Lipinski, County Attorney Alan Wilson, and County Auditor Jessica Secrease.

The meeting was called to order by Sheriff Jerry Asher and conducted by President Dodd. Commissioner President Dodd led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Lipinski offered a word of prayer.

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the January 06, 2025, regular meeting, having been previously submitted and reviewed, were approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS & REPORTS:

PLANNING COMMISSION

Unsafe Properties

Planning Commission administrator Greg Sheline requested a hearing for demolition of unsafe property at the address of 4648 W. 250 S. in Russiaville. Mr. Sheline asked county attorney Alan Wilson to prepare a resolution for the demolition of the property to be presented at the hearing that was set for February 17, 2025. Commissioner Lipinski made the motion to set the hearing for the demolition of the unsafe property. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE

NLEC Agreement

Maintenance Supervisor Bill Stonestreet presented the Commissioners with a contract for engineering services that have been discussed in previous meetings to help with the water damage repairs that are needed at the Kinsey Youth Center. Commissioner Bray made the motion to sign the agreement with NLEC for their engineering services. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Kitchen Fire Suppression Alarm

Maintenance Supervisor Bill Stonestreet requested permission to move forward with updating the range hood at Howard Haven to meet the required code by the Fire Marshal. This project will cost roughly \$3,319.38 with an annually maintenance fee of \$445.00. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve this project. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

***The Board of Commissioners' Meeting recessed at 4:14 pm to initiate the Board of Finance Meeting. ***

BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING:

The Election of the Board of Finance Officers

Commissioner Dodd made a motion to elect Commissioner Lipinski as President of the Board of Finance; Commissioner Bray seconded this motion. Commissioner Bray made a motion to elect Commissioner Dodd as Vice President of the Board of Finance; Commissioner Lipinski seconded this motion.

The minutes of the meeting held on January 16, 2024, having been previously submitted and reviewed, were approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Dodd. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

2023 Pay 2024 Figures

Treasurer Christie Branch presented the Board of Finance Report for 2024. The spring installment collection rate was 99% in the sum of \$75,257,617.19. The fall installment collection rate was 96%, collecting \$72,935,797.61 in tax dollars for a combination of \$148,193,414.80 at over 97.5% for the 2023 pay 2024 tax year. The revenue from our annual tax sale for 2024 \$560,105.17 resulting in 127 parcel tax lien certificates sold on October 30, 2024. The county held a certificate sale for the parcels that did not sell in the October 30th sale. Out of 73 parcels, 56 were sold on and the total revenue was \$5,600.00. The inn-keepers tax collections for 2024 were \$1,695,470.90 putting the County up over 24.5% compared to 2023's collections. The total interest earned in 2024 through our local banks, CD's, and federal agency bonds are \$4,592,235.57; this is up 15% from 2023's interest.

Investment Policy Changes

The investment policy and the list of approved depositories has changed as of June 13, 2024. When it comes to the verbiage of the policy, everything remains the same except the updated date of approved depositories. The approved depositories changed with some institutions being added and others being removed from the approved listing. The change does not affect Howard County and the business it does with its already established institutions.

Commissioner Dodd made a motion to close the Board of Finance Meeting and reopen the Commissioners Meeting. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

*****The Board of Finance Meeting was adjourned at 4:21 pm, and the Board of Commissioners' Meeting reconvened. *****

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Update from Nursing

Nurse Jennifer Sexton was asked by Commissioner Dodd to give the county an update on illnesses around the counting. Ms. Sexton stated that we are in the middle of a Quad-demic of COVID, Influenza, RSV, and Nora-Virus. She discussed the importance of vaccinations, handwashing and recommended wearing a mask if out in public, some of these viruses are very contagious.

HOWARD HAVEN

New Admission

Howard Haven Director Jennifer Brower presented a contract for new admission. Commissioner Bray made a motion to approve the new admission. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Truck Purchases 2025

Highway Superintendent Amber Tolle requested permission to purchase 2 new tandem trucks with belly blades and a single axle dump truck. They have some of the money already appropriated to buy these vehicles and they plan on asking for an additional appropriation to cover the rest. Most of the highway fleet is over 20 years old so Ms. Tolle is working on updating the fleet over the next several years. Commissioner Bray made a motion to approve the purchase of the 3 new vehicles. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

GPS Program

Highway Superintendent Amber Tolle just wanted to give an update on a new GPS Program that they are in the process of purchasing. It tracks the vehicles that it is installed on and can help with efficiencies of production and vehicle diagnostics. It has been tested on 5 vehicles so far and has proven to be a very useful tool for the Highway Department.

IN THE MATTER OF CLAIMS AND REPORTS:

Howard County Auditor Jessica Secrease submitted the following claims and reports for the Commissioners' information and approval:

1. **Salary Claims:** The Commissioners' Salary, Hourly, and Overtime Claims for payment on January 10, 2025, in the amounts of \$1,240,838.12 were submitted and approved on a motion made by Commissioner Bray. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
2. **Payroll Expenses:** The Commissioners' Payroll Expenses for payment on January 10, 2025, in the amounts of \$1,240,838.12 were submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Bray. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
3. **Operating Claims:** The Commissioners' Operating Claims to be paid January 21, 2025, in the amount of \$1,844,829.42 was submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Bray. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lipinski, and the motion carried.
4. **Monthly Reports:** Auditor Jessica Secrease presented the following reports to be received into the record:
 - a. Weights & Measures Monthly Report for December 16, 2024 thru January 15, 2025
 - b. Treasurer's Monthly Report for November 2024
5. **Total Compensation:** Auditor Jessica Secrease read into record the Howard County Total Compensation for 2024.

IN THE MATTER OF COUNTY ATTORNEY ISSUES:

Kokomo Humane Society Contract

County Attorney Alan Wilson presented the Kokomo Humane Society Contract for 2025. There have been no changes from the 2024 contract. Commissioner Bray made a motion to approve and sign the contract. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Contract Services for Gabrielle Dupuy

County Attorney Alan Wilson presented the contract for Gabrielle Dupuy to help with ARP tracking for at most ten hours a week at \$60.00 per hour. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve the contract. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Lead Lawsuit

County Attorney Alan Wilson requested approval to file a lead-based lawsuit against Brittany Smith, Kolton Rickard, and James Lawrence. Commissioner Bray made the motion to approve filing the lawsuit. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, the motion carried.

RFP Approval

County Attorney Alan Wilson presented a request for proposal of creating a board for the construction of the new jail. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve the RFP. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Dodd made the comment that it is very cold outside and he wanted everyone to be aware and be careful.

*There being no further business to come before the Board of Commissioners at this time
the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Bray.
The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lipinski, and the motion carried.*

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

JACK W. DODD, PRESIDENT

R. BRAD BRAY, VICE PRESIDENT

JEFF S. LIPINSKI, MEMBER

ATTEST:

JESSICA SECREASE, AUDITOR

Howard County Commissioners' Meeting: February 03, 2025