

October 1, 2019

The County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County met this date pursuant to its last adjournment and there were present:

James J. Moran
Jack N. Wilson, Jr.
Stephen Wilson
Philip L. Dumenil
Christopher M. Corchiarino

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 2:20 p.m.

FY2020 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES:

The Board met with Senator Hershey, Delegates Arentz, Jacobs and Ghrist to review their legislative request for the 2020 session. The following was highlighted:

1. Residential Sprinklers - Waiver of requirements in single new family residences (Worcester County).
2. Local Liquor laws:
 - i. Remove stipulation that you can only have one financial interest in a license
 - ii. Review residency/ownership provisions to hold a liquor license
 - iii. Remove provision that you must be 500-feet from a "place of worship"
 - iv. Provide County Commissioners authority to employ staff
 - v. Adjust Food vs. Beverage sales provision (similar to Kent County)
3. Adjust Hotel Tax — Limited by State Law, currently it is 5-percent
4. Consider adoption of Airbnb tax.
5. TIE - The TIE (Tax Increment Financing) is predicated on having a backup special tax, levied only as necessary on the property owners (with their permission/agreement). The State authorizing legislation for this backup tax lists various Counties but Queen Anne's is not on the list. It would be in our interest to change the State law so we are included, per QAC bond counsel.
6. Broadband
 - i. Support Choptank initiatives to provide broadband services
 - ii. Levy of special benefit assessment for fiber (Broadband expansion) similar to sewer extensions and private to public road upgrades

- iii. Establish process to access government fiber lines for citizen/business use
- 7. Restrict sewer tank pump outs from boats in open water.
- 8. Establish quicker process to remove derelict boats from waterways.
- 9. Establish local authority to close SHA ramps from 50 onto MD 18 and/or work with SHA District office to expand off ramp restrictions like what is being done now at US 50 & Md 18 at the Queenstown Outlets.
- 10. BBRAG - Not happy with proposed process to enlist new members, meeting frequency isn't sufficient, can this process be addressed with new legislation.
- 11. CTE Bill (HB 513 from last year) - To enable two (2) or more Counties to enter into a Memorandum of understanding to establish a regional Tech Center at Chesapeake College.
- 12. Define state "preemption". I.e. don't want to risk losing personal property tax on solar, small cell/5G.
- 13. Prior year requests:

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS FOR 2018 SESSION:

- 1. Use of state-owned broadband fiber for commercial use
- 2. Observation beds for Queenstown Emergency Center
- 3. Insurance coverage for the cost of drug rehab
- 4. Legislation that will restrict new landfills being built before existing ones are full
- 5. Fishing restrictions/fines on State owned bridges

FY2019 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES:

- 1. Highway User Revenue restoration
 - a. Request to restore to historic levels.
- 2. Observation beds at Queenstown Emergency Center.
- 3. CORS (Correctional Officers Retirement) legislation State Retirement Agency is supposedly introducing but not sure.
- 4. Insurance to cover long-term rehab for drug addiction.
- 5. Mobile Integrated Health billing part of Rural Health Initiative
- 6. Small Cell/5G cell towers Michael Sanderson mentioned during his MACo update at last meeting.
- 7. Kent Island Traffic? Not sure if there is anything that can be done legislatively or not, but their support would be helpful.
- 8. Continued support from Governor on LMB funding.

CTP ANNUAL TOUR:

Senator Hershey; Delegates Arentz, Jacobs and Ghrist; Deputy Secretary Earl Lewis and MDOT staff met with the Board for the Maryland Department of Transportation annual CTP Tour and highlighted the various project throughout Maryland.

MDTA - Executive Director Jim Ports highlighted the following:

- The Maryland Transportation Authority has begun the \$27 million deck rehabilitation on the westbound Bay Bridge.
- This project involves replacing the deck surface overlay of the westbound span right lane, which is closed 24/7 from October to April, with additional continuous closures Monday through Friday in May, when traffic volumes are at their lowest.
- Work also includes making deck repairs, sealing the bridge deck and replacing existing lane signal gantries and steel rail posts.
- The project is necessary to preserve this critical connection between Maryland's shores.
- We understand the concerns about the impact of this project on mobility for your citizens - and the need to provide emergency service access.
- With that in mind, the work schedule was established to reduce the impact on the surrounding counties as much as possible.
- Let's talk a bit about this past weekend, and how we are moving forward.
- We expected delays Friday similar to summer weekend travel, but particularly good weather and several incidents contributed to the large eastbound backup at the Bay Bridge.
- With two eastbound lanes available, it was more challenging than usual to recover from the incidents and backups.
- After Friday, MDTA said that moving forward during the Bay Bridge construction, we would consider holding traffic westbound for short periods to allow three lanes of eastbound travel when backups extend to I-97.
- We understand, though, that also holding westbound traffic would be a further disruption to Kent Island residents, so we continued to explore options.
- Our first solution to help keep traffic flowing will be to implement cashless tolling at the Bay Bridge from noon to 10 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays until further notice. All tolls will be collected electronically, with no cash accepted.
- Drivers who usually pay with cash will move through the plaza without stopping. They will be mailed a statement and will only be charged the cash rate. This will help us with traffic flow.
- We will constantly monitor backups. On Thursdays and Fridays, under severe backups and weather permitting, MDTA will implement two-way operations on the westbound span so that traffic can move in both directions at reduced speeds, providing three lanes eastbound and one westbound.
- During two-way operations, speed will be restricted to 25 to 35 mph. MDTA Police will travel the westbound span for enforcement and to help slow vehicles down.
- The public can help by staying alert, keeping speeds down and maintaining a safe distance.
- Even under normal operations, commercial trucks are not permitted to travel eastbound on the westbound span during two-way operations. During THIS two-way operation, due to narrow lanes, commercial trucks will not be allowed to cross westbound either.

- As we do with wind restrictions, we will reach out to truck and commercial vehicle operators with our normal notification system.
- MDTA Police will enforce these restrictions.
- The MDTA is continuing to work with both Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties on emergency management plans for each side of the bridge.
- MDOT SHA will dispatch CHART vehicles to address incidents on route 50 and parallel routes, and will work with Maryland State Police and local law enforcement to help keep traffic moving.
- Just to be clear, as we've been communicating throughout the summer, major delays are unavoidable as we complete this critical safety project.

Discussion of new proposal

- Understanding the impact this project has on our communities, we are working with the contractor to explore options that could reduce the time the overall project will take - but it comes with a price. Options that could help us cut the re-decking to one season include
- Working through Thanksgiving, which we know will result in traffic congestion that will impact holiday travel and Black Friday shopping.
- We would expect delays could extend back to the Queenstown outlets for westbound traffic and to the Annapolis mall for eastbound traffic.
- And extending work through the end of April 2020, which is two weeks later than we have originally planned ... and would impact Spring Break travel.
- We'll continue to look into this option, but it will be critical to have your input and your support for this approach.
- It could help us cut this project from two years to one, but does involve some hardships.
- As you also know, the Bay Crossing Study Team has identified the Preliminary Corridor Alternatives Retained for Analysis as part of the Tier I NEPA Study, and has launched a series of public meetings.
- Three corridors - as well as a "no-build" alternative - will face additional study as part of the Tier I NEPA process.
- We appreciate Queen Anne's County hosting one of the public meetings for the study last week. (Sept. 26).
- We have more scheduled, and of course more information is available at baycrossingstudy.com.
- In other areas, MDTA is excited to begin delivering our third generation tolling system - we call it 3G - which will revolutionize the way we serve our customers.
- The new system will upgrade toll-collection hardware and software with the latest technology and completely modernize how the MDTA does customer-service.
- As you heard, the MDTA Board voted to seek public comment and hold hearings on a toll modernization proposal that puts this new system to work for Marylanders and saves our customers more than \$28 million over five years.
- The proposal includes lower toll rates, a new payment option and a new discount for our customers starting in 2020:

- First, toll rates would be reduced 50 percent for motorcycles, and would be cut 25 and 17 percent, respectively, for “light” vehicles towing one- and two-axle trailers, such as those used for watercraft or landscaping equipment
- Second, a new way to pay, called pay by plate, will benefit infrequent toll customers as well as those who don’t have a prepaid E-Z Pass balance;
- And third, a new, 15 percent discount for Video Tolling customers who pay the toll before their invoices are mailed.
- A final report will be submitted October 31 for review by the MDTA Board and will be posted online for additional public comment. The Board is scheduled to vote on a final recommendation at its November 21 meeting.
- Maryland currently has two all-electronic toll facilities: the I-95 Express Toll Lanes in Baltimore and the Intercounty Connector in the DC. region.
- This month we’re doubling that number.
- On October 16, we’re bringing all electronic tolling to the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge in northeast Maryland, with all tolls collected via E-Z Pass or Video Tolling.
- The Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore will go cashless on October 30.
- Cashless tolling results in rate savings for customers; less congestion, better fuel efficiency and reduced vehicle emissions.
 - It also improves driver safety and results in a safer work environment for our employees.
- It’s also another reason to join E-Z Pass Maryland. With E-Z Pass drivers pay the lowest price for any toll; it saves time; is good for the environment; and signing up is easy.
- From fiscal years 2018 to 2019, the number of E-Z Pass accounts in
- Queen Anne’s County increased by 5 percent.
- In FY19, transactions at the Bay Bridge increased 1.6 percent to more than 13.66 million total transactions.
- We and our partners are always thinking about safety and preparedness, and in August we organized a tabletop preparedness exercise with many local players, including:
- The MDTA Police, Operations, Engineering, Construction and Communications teams;
 - Maryland State Police;
 - MDOT State Highway Administration;
 - MDOT Office of Homeland Security;
 - Queen Anne’s County Sheriff’s Office and the Office of Emergency Services;
 - Queen Anne’s County Schools’ Transportation team;
 - Anne Arundel County Fire and Police departments;
 - Kent Island Volunteer Fire Department;
 - And the County Administrator and elected officials.
- This exercise helped validate plans and procedures, rehearse concepts, and assess the systems and processes needed to guide emergency response and recovery.
- Also, in August, the MDTA met twice with County Administrator Mohn, Commissioner Moran and Public Facilities Planner Cohoon about the project.

The Eastern Shore Delegation and County Commissioners asked various question to the MDOT staff.

The Board noted they were in favor of continuing the working on the Bay Bridge through the Thanksgiving holiday and all of April if this would help to complete the construction sooner.

There being no further business, they adjourned at 5:00 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

PRESIDENT