
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

*GOVERNOR'S RECEPTION ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, STATE HOUSE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND*

September 10, 2025
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PRESENT

HONORABLE WES MOORE

Governor

HONORABLE BROOKE E. LIERMAN

Comptroller

JOHN GONTRUM

Secretary, Board of Public Works

ATIF CHAUDHRY

Secretary, Department of General Services

HELENE GRADY

Secretary, Department of Budget and Management

RAFAEL J. LÓPEZ

Secretary, Department of Human Services

THOMAS HICKEY

Director of Procurement and Real Property Initiatives,
University System of Maryland

VALERIE RADOMSKY

Chief Procurement Officer, Department of Transportation

EMILY WILSON

Director of Legislative and Constituent Services,
Department of Natural Resources

LISA GRIGSBY

Recording Secretary, Board of Public Works

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PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNOR MOORE: Good morning.

(Chorus of Good Morning.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: And welcome to today's meeting of the Board of Public Works. Our friend, the Treasurer, is still recovering and not quite ready to join us this morning. So it'll just be the Comptroller and myself today. So for all who came to see the Treasurer, we apologize. But we continue to wish him a speedy recovery. And again Mr. Treasurer, if you're listening, just know that we're looking forward to having you back soon as possible. And with that, we will begin the business of the day.

Secretary Gontrum, good morning.

MR. GONTRUM: Good morning, Governor and Madam Comptroller. There are 15 items on the Secretary's Agenda this morning. I'm happy to assist with answering any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much. I would actually like to start by highlighting Item 9, which is a request from the Department of Housing and Community Development to award a \$5 million loan. And that's through the Neighborhood BusinessWorks Program to redevelop a property in Baltimore's historically beautiful Remington neighborhood into a high impact mixed-use development. I see (indiscernible), our leaders from City Hall. Great to see you, brother. Great to see you.

And this is a -- the Neighborhood BusinessWorks Program is a State initiative that provides flexible financing options to our Maryland businesses and to really be able to allow them to have targeted impact in targeted areas where we believe that there's going to be maximum impact inside the community. And

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it's the kind of work, frankly, that that you all have been doing for a very, very long time. This item that we're including here, it just continues a decades-long investment strategy in Remington.

And it's going to do it by introducing 60 new apartment units, retail space, and also a vibrant community park. So it's really going to be a place where you have a live, and a work, and a play environment all throughout a singular area. And it really does just exemplify the larger goals that we have about how can we create livable communities and communities that everyone can be seen and benefit from. And it really also helps to address the issue that I know folks, you know, hear about constantly is we have got to address the Maryland housing shortage. And this fundamentally helps to do that.

And so right now -- and the reason that we are so obsessive about it is because we're just seeing housing options just become increasingly unaffordable. We are seeing housing options become increasingly unavailable. We are seeing a historic shortage of housing and we are seeing it across all income levels. And it's driven largely by the insufficient housing construction that is taking place in our state over the past 15 years. We've got to be able to go faster. And our Administration is committed to making Maryland a more affordable place to live and a more affordable place for people to stay.

And that's why during the 2024 Legislative Session, we introduced one of the most comprehensive housing packages of any Maryland governor in recent history. We focused on cutting red tape. We focused on directly lowering costs for renters. We focused on incentivizing the type of investments that Marylanders want and that Marylanders need to help Marylanders be able to live and stay here.

And that is also why, just this past week, I signed an executive order directing State agencies to invest in strategies that increase housing

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production all across the State. And that's focusing on how are we cutting red tape, how are we thinking about state-owned property differently to be able to create housing options? How are we thinking differently about incentivizing local jurisdictions to be good partners inside the work? And it all, essentially, can be summed up in one word -- speed. Go faster, build faster, and make sure making it easier to do so.

And by being able to do things like leveraging state-owned properties, by being able to do things like incentivizing transit-oriented development, by being able to do things like making sure we're focusing on density bonuses, we're making sure that we can build faster. And so we're just incredibly grateful for this work. We're incredibly grateful to the people of the State who will continue to see that speed does produce a measure of urgency, and urgency will produce the kind of results.

So with that, Mr. Secretary, I want to say thank you. And is there any further discussion on the Secretary's Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Nope, I'll just echo your remarks.

I'm excited about this project, but not as excited as my multimedia manager is. Tebow (ph.), you might recognize him. He is the former president of the Greater Remington Improvement Association. And so we are -- he and the neighborhood, I know so many folks who are really excited to see this parcel turn into this 60 modern workforce-rental apartments. It's going to be a great use of this space and a further -- really a furthering of the renaissance of Remington, which is exciting to see.

And Mr. Governor, you know, I certainly appreciated your executive order. You know, I've long shared your concern about housing, and have loved working with Secretary Day, his, the Agency's Affordable Housing Needs Assessment that came out this summer, your executive order. We are

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excited to release a report on the importance of housing in mid-October that we've been working with his team, and many others are. Just to underline really how essential it is that we build and we build for people who want to live in Maryland and, you know, raise a family here, retire here, and more. So thank you for your leadership on solving our housing crisis.

And thank you, Tebow, for being here and for working with the community so well and respecting their needs and concerns. I'm excited to see this move forward. Thanks.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a motion to approve the Secretary's Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the Secretary's Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And I will second it. And so there's that, thank you so much.

We'll proceed with the Department of Natural Resources. Ms. Wilson, good morning.

MS. WILSON: Good morning, Governor and Madam Comptroller. Emily Wilson, Maryland Department of Natural Resources. We have eight items on our DNR Real Property Agenda today for your consideration. I'm happy to try to answer any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you.

Is there -- by the way, I just want to say thank you to your team. Y'all rolled out deep and strong for the State Fair, so it was great --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yeah, it was great.

GOVERNOR MOORE: -- seeing so many out there.

MS. WILSON: That's a great building there.

GOVERNOR MOORE: It was a great day.

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MS. WILSON: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on the DNR Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Nope.

GOVERNOR MOORE: May I have a motion to approve the DNR
Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the DNR
Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And I will second it.

Thank you so much, Ms. Wilson.

MS. WILSON: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Ms. Wilson, thank you.

Next up, the University System of Maryland. Mr. Hickey, good
morning.

MR. HICKEY: Good morning, Governor and Madam
Comptroller. Tom Hickey representing the University System of Maryland.
There are three items for your consideration. And I'm happy to answer any
questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much.

Is there any discussion on the USM Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Nope.

GOVERNOR MOORE: May I have a motion to approve USM?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve USM Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And I will second it. Thank you so
much.

And we'll proceed with the MDOT Agenda. Ms. Radomsky, good
morning.

MS. RADOMSKY: Good morning, Governor and Madam

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Comptroller. For the record, my name is Valerie Radomsky, Chief Procurement Officer for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Today, we are presenting eight agenda items for your consideration and withdrawing Item 9-C.

MDOT is seeking approval of one award to a tri-certified small minority veteran-owned business valued at \$211,000, and one award to a State certified small business valued at \$11.9 million. We have representatives available to answer any questions you may have.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I don't have any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay. Motion to approve the MDOT Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the MDOT Agenda.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. And I will second. Thank you so much.

We will conclude with the DGS Agenda. Secretary Chaudhry, good morning.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Morning, sir,- Mr. Governor and Madam Comptroller. For the record, I am Atif Chaudhry, Secretary of the Maryland Department of General Services.

Today, the Department is presenting 53 items on our agenda. Our agenda does feature 21 capital grants and loans totaling over \$13 million. I did want to highlight one in particular. That's Item 3-CGL, which provides \$6.8 million to Hood College of Frederick for the design and construction -- of the renovation and expansion of Hodson Science and Technology Center in order to expand STEM programs there on campus. As we continue to keep an eye on our minority business participation in our contracting, our agenda does include nine contract awards and modifications to certified minority businesses totaling more

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than \$7.2 million. And we have Agency representatives here to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary.

And I understand we have a few speaker requests this morning. So in the interest of time, I would just ask that the speakers hold their remarks to no more than three minutes. And Secretary Gontrum, if I could ask you to serve as timekeeper on that, please.

And our first speaker request we have is for Item 20, which is a request to award a \$75,000 capital grant to the fantastic Naval Academy Primary School to purchase and install new doors in and around the school, and also serving as a safety measure to keep both the students and the faculty safe.

And I believe we have Robyn Green here. There she is. Hi, Ms. Green. Who's the Head of School for the Naval Academy Primary and Secondary School. And we are happy happy to have you here. Good morning.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Good morning.

MS. GREEN: Good morning. I'm Robyn Green, as the Governor said. Thank you for having me.

I'm here representing the Naval Academy Primary and Secondary School located in Annapolis, and I am the Head of School. We're located just a few miles from the Severn Bridge, and we're extremely grateful for the gift of \$75,000 grant to our school. We serve and educate the personnel at the U.S. Naval Academy, their athletic staff, active duty military members, retired or currently serving, for all branches of the military to include the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, and Space Force.

We are a private school located on federal property, nestled between -- beside the golf course on Greenbury Point Road. We also cater to the

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greater Annapolis community with students from Arnold, Bowie, Crofton, Glen Burnie, and Severna Park. Some of those families are not affiliated with the military. Today, the Naval Academy Primary School educates 324 students with a staff of 54 people, ranging from preschool to 8th grade. This grant will allow us the opportunity to add cameras to exterior places and within our lobby doors, as a way to increase security on doors, and locks, and windows. We will also add additional training for our staff in an effort to make the school safety our number one priority.

Our budget is small, but our hearts are large. Little feet and hands walk through our school every day, so we want to thank you for the opportunity to experience -- to increase their educational experience by a safe and loving, nurturing environment. I stand here alone, but know that the community of almost 500 people with students, staff, parents, and grandparents thank you too. Thank you for your diligence and effort in this process. We are beyond grateful. Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much, Ms. Green.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thanks. Thanks for the work and leadership as well. Thank you.

I would next like to highlight Items 10 and 17, which are two requests to award a combined \$950,000 in capital grants to the Fair Hill Training Center in Cecil County to replace their facility's synthetic track surface.

Fair Hill, we are proud of -- you know, it's not just one of ours, but it's one of the premier training facilities for thoroughbred racehorses, and Fair Hill trained horses that have won some of the biggest races in the industry. And that includes the Kentucky Derby, the Belmont Stakes, the Dubai Cup, and also multiple Breeders' Cup races.

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It is also a growth engine within the entire region where it employs over 750 direct employees and drives over \$34 million in direct economic impact. And just this Labor Day weekend, Fair Hill hosted their first series of races on a turf track within the Special Event Zone since 2019. The races at Fair Hill are truly not just a powerful tradition for our state, but something that has been doing this now for over 90 years. And so when you think about the nearly 4,000 attendees that have had a chance to see and benefit from it, you realize that they are all just part of a larger legacy that has been taking place for decades all throughout our state.

And for those who have not had a chance to see it, do not worry, because in October, Fair Hill is going to be hosting the Maryland 5 Star, which is one of only two five-star events in the nation and one of only seven five-star events that we have throughout the entire globe. And we are very excited about the continued growth that we're going to see over in Fair Hill. And Items 10 and 17 are going to help to replace 6,000 tons of their synthetic track that is nearly 20 years old and providing it with the safest track that we have in the industry.

And we're joined here by Buddy Jones to share a few words this morning. Good to see you again, sir.

MR. JONES: Good morning. Thank you, sir.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Nice to see you. And again, thanks. Thanks for the leadership you continue to show.

MR. JONES: My name is Buddy Jones. I'm here from Fair Hill Condominium Association, which manages the Fair Hill Training Center, which has, as you have already mentioned everything that I was going to speak about, so you have saved me a lot of time. One thing everybody at Fair Hill wanted us to relay is our thanks for supporting us in this project, so we can maintain our status as a premier training center in the country so well. We'd also like to invite anyone

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to come up. They can contact myself or J.R., and then, we can give you the \$20 tour of the whole facility.

(Laughter.)

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: \$19, I think it has to be, yes.

MR. JONES: If you're going to be up for the 5 Star, we'll all be there. We're just right across the street. So again, everybody at Fair Hill appreciates your support. Not only for our side of the road, but for the other side of the road. The race two Saturdays ago was an incredible day. They did a great job. Anyway, again, we thank you for all your support.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you. It's been fun. I love -- I've been to the 5 Star a few times. I have a great time. My sister-in-law competed in it, when it was a 3 Star, I think, don't quote me on this, I think she won it, actually. So my mother-in-law has been there many times too with her.

MR. JONES: It is -- it is --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: It's an incredible place for the event.

MR. JONES: -- it's an incredible event with --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: It is.

MR. JONES: -- the best riders in the world, best horses in the world.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yep.

MR. JONES: They're all competing for an opportunity to maybe go to the Olympics --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yep.

MR. JONES: -- so you can see just some incredible horsemanship there.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Very cool. Yeah, thanks.

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MR. JONES: Again, thank you very much.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Appreciate you. Thank you so much, again.

Next, I'd like to highlight Item 26, which is a request from the Department of Human Services to award a \$279 million contract with 31 vendors to provide treatment, foster care, and independent living programs to youth all throughout the State of Maryland.

And I would like to invite Secretary Rafael López to share more about this item. Mr. Secretary, deep appreciation. Good morning.

MR. LÓPEZ: Good morning, Governor and Madam Comptroller. Thank you for the opportunity to share a little bit of context on this particular item and the work that we've been doing to move with urgency.

In January 2023, we found antiquated and almost completely manual processes for how the Department of Human Services and its 24 local offices received youth into our foster or out-of-home care placement system. There were no uniform statewide standards of practice, and Maryland kinship placement rate was at 23 percent, which is well below the national average of 37 percent.

Best practice in research, and quite frankly common sense, reminds us that placement with kin, whether by blood or by choice, increases stability, results in better mental and physical health outcomes, reduces the risk that youth in out-of-home care will be trafficked, and keeps children connected to family, community, and culture.

For years, DHS did not seize opportunities to modernize our care provider framework and meet the needs of Maryland's children and families with improved behavioral health and developmental disability opportunities. So what

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we have done is move with great urgency to change how we serve Maryland's 3,746 youth that are in care today.

We have done so in three major areas that are important to highlight because they're all part of the contracts before you today. And number one, we are focusing on kinship. With the leadership of the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly, we enacted and implemented last fall a kinship care law to offer new resources and training to invest in and empower Maryland's kin caregivers. Second, we have focused like a laser on hospitals and hotels, which have been a challenge for Maryland for many decades. Earlier this year, we implemented a new unlicensed State policy, which has dramatically reduced the number of hotel and hospital overstays.

House Bill 962 from this year will codify our definition of a hospital overstay as 48 hours or more beyond medical necessity as of October 1st of this year. In February of 2024, 21 youth experience hospital overstay and 54 youth were in hotels. On September 5th of this year, we had 10 youth in hospitals and 11 in hotels. And while this is still 21 too many of our young people in Maryland, we are determined to get to zero for the first time in Maryland's history.

We will continue to lower our numbers by strengthening our provider system of care across the State, making sure we are seamless in all 24 jurisdictions, and really operating as one statewide system. And we are coordinating in a very different way with hospitals and providers to meet our youth needs. This work is not yet complete, but an important step in the right direction.

The third piece of this is our rate reform efforts, which are squarely on the agenda today. And as part of the Governor and the General Assembly's investment and child placement agencies, or CPAs as they're known, in State

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Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 budgets, we are now able to bring those new contracts to you to expand in-state capacity and provide better care to our youth for the first time in decades.

As we promised you in April 2023, when we first briefed the Board of Public Works on this issue, we have taken the past 18 months to focus on three very specific issues. One, to reorganize our provider services into categories that better meet children's needs. Two, to set new expectations of providers and proactively engage them regularly. They haven't been met with for years, prior to our Administration, including holding them accountable for 24 acceptance of referrals and placements, a no-reject/no-eject policy, and sharply limiting unplanned discharges. We're not just holding them accountable; we're holding ourselves accountable for changes in this space.

And the third area there is providing increases in provider rates to meet the new service expectations. So where we are headed today, as we bring the next phase of our rate reform modernization work to this Board and we have 31 new CPA contracts. As a result of the new rate structures that I mentioned and our standardized categories of care across the State, again for the first time in Maryland's history, upon approval by the Board today, we will increase our statewide capacity by 93 beds from 1,920 beds to 2,013 beds, including a significant increase in independent living program beds from 290 to 335.

We have added two new providers to Maryland's toolbox. And for the first time ever, established a minority business enterprise subcontracting goal in line with this Board's guidance and the Governor's executive order. It is worth mentioning that DHS was inconsistent in doing this for many, many years. And we take this very serious in terms of raising the standards of excellence and expectations, both for ourselves and our providers.

We will continue to partner with you on the future of rate reform

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and our child welfare work. And thank you for this opportunity to brief you. Me and my team are here and are happy to answer any questions you might have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much, Secretary. Any questions Secretary?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No, I'd just like to note for those who don't know all the background. You know, I extend my appreciation to your Administration and the partnership of the General Assembly, who's -- in collective efforts, have culminated with what we're doing today.

I will not forget the 2020 session, when I was a State delegate. That was the year that I brought legislation working with others on the hospital and hotel overstay issue. It's cruel. It's unnecessary to subject youth in foster care to overstay in hotels and hospitals. And I think it says -- it says a lot about states. You know, when you're engaging in these kinds of practices about where your priorities are.

And so I think under this Administration, what we've seen is a shift in priorities to make sure that we're taking care of the kids who have been left, you know, in a situation that they didn't ask for and that is out of their control. And you know, I think this Administration -- and also, I want to give a shout out to the advocates that have pushed agencies to get to the right place. Because it's not easy to do this work, and I think outside advocates have played a really big role in making sure that we see these children, that we understand how cruel this is, and that we take action. So you know, Leslie, Mitch (ph.), so many folks at Disabilities Teams, like they've been amazing. So you know, the contracts with these 31 providers really demonstrate, I think, a key first step in the State's commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our youth.

This is, I think you said, a 5 percent increase in total child placement agency program beds. This is obviously just one of the legs of the

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stool of rebuilding our foster care system and our child placement system. And I think that the 3 percent goal for minority business enterprises is a first for this contract series. So it's great to see that. Your agency, MDH, and others have been updating my team and me regularly throughout the past couple of years on the work that has been going on to ensure that we're taking care of these children and young people. And you know, certainly want to continue those conversations and hope that your office continues to work with the advocates and move quickly toward resolution on the legal matters and towards continuing to do this work.

So thank you to your agency for bringing this. And thank you, Governor.

MR. LÓPEZ: Thank you. It's worth mentioning we're deeply grateful to you and your leadership when you were in the General Assembly. As you well know, Comptroller Lierman, as we talked about even privately before, turning around years of this work is an enormous mountain climb. And we are not saying it's done perfect, but we are with you on continuing to say how we treat our kids every single day and hold ourselves accountable in new ways that matters.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I agree. Thank you.

MR. LÓPEZ: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Secretary.

And lastly, I'd like to recognize Items 51 through 53, which are a series of requests from DBM, our Department of Budget and Management, to extend several contracts related to State employee benefits for dental insurance, for life insurance, for flexible spending accounts. And I'd like to welcome Secretary Grady up to be able to share more about these items.

Madam Secretary, good morning. It's good to see you.

MS. GRADY: Good morning. Good morning, Mr. Governor and

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Comptroller Lierman. And thank you for the opportunity to share some context on the DBM request that's before you today to modify and extend three employee benefits third-party administrator contracts. As you mentioned, these are for dental, group term life, and AD&D, and flexible spending accounts.

Just in terms of the facts behind the request before you today, for the dental contract, our current vendors are Delta Dental and United Concordia. The original award was for January 1st, 2020, with a five-year base period and no options. It was scheduled to expire on 12/31/24, but the Board extended that contract for one year through 12/31/25. Today, we're recommending the BPW extend an additional two years through 12/31/27.

On life and AD&D insurance, our current vendor is MetLife. Our original award was January 1st, 2019, with a five-year base period and no options. The scheduled expiration would have been 12/31/23. The Board extended that contract for two years through 12/31/25. And today, we're back requesting an extension for an additional two years through 12/31/27.

Flexible spending accounts, our current vendor is P&A Administrative Services, Inc. The original award was January 1st, 2017, for a one-year base period and four one-year renewal options. The scheduled expiration would have been 12/31/2021. After all options were exercised, it was extended for four years through 12/31/25. And today, we are recommending the BPW extend one additional year through 12/31/26.

Given the previous extensions on each of these three contracts, the Comptroller and her team have appropriately raised to DBM the question of why we are seeking further extensions now, rather than being prepared with new contract awards today.

First, I want to share some important context regarding the timelines for benefits contract awards relative to open enrollment and our

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calendar year plan year for benefits. Our plan years begin January 1st and run on a calendar year. This means when there's a new procurement, we need to have the contract award in place by April or May, June at the absolute very latest, which is not ideal, the year prior to the effective date of the contract for onboarding and preparation of the plan and the vendor details ahead of open enrollment, which is in October of each year.

So we need an award in place approximately eight months prior to the January effective date of the benefits contract. Therefore, for these three contracts to expire in December 2025, we would have needed new awards in place in April or May of 2025. This means we would have needed to have posted the RFPs no later than fall 2024, summer 2024 to be safer, and that would be what we'd be looking for. But fall could have been feasible, if procurement was smooth.

Now, I want to share some important context about the competing priorities on the plates of our Employee Benefits Division and the DBM Secretary's team in late summer and fall of 2024, which is the basis for why we ended up having to defer these three procurements. Two critical priorities consumed the attention of our teams in 2024: the transition of our Medicare eligible retirees and dependents to Medicare Part D for prescription drug coverage, and the completion of the reverse procurement auction for the State's pharmacy benefit contract, and the transition from the incumbent pharmacy benefits manager to a new vendor through the fall of 2024. I remember speaking to you in summer of 2024 about those priorities and the fact that alongside the historic budget solution that we were working on, those were going to be the top priorities for DBM.

We were also working at the same time on the medical RFP, which was our next top priority. The medical plan is by far the largest, probably most

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critical, most important plan to our employees, retirees, and dependents. Both of these prior two implementations were our top critical priorities for important reasons and were prioritized over completion of the dental, life, AD&D, and FSA RFPs. I'm pleased to report that both were also implemented effectively due to the diligence and attention of the DBM team.

Our current status, the medical RFP which I mentioned, is not on the agenda today, but it is really the next top priority among the benefits plans, was posted to eMMA on August 9th, 2025. The pre-proposal conference was held on August 25th, and we have received questions from vendors and are working through them now. All questions are due, I believe this week, and proposals for the medical are due September 23rd. So that one's on track for award prior to hopefully needing another extension.

Flex spending account, October 2025. Actually, next month is our target release, that RFP. Work on the RFP by DBM is completed and is with Office of State Procurement, as I understand it, for review. Dental, our current target date is April 2026 to have that RFP released. And group term life AD&D, we are targeting October 2026 to release that one. Hence, the current extension periods, we are working to stagger the contract expiration so that all of these RFPs are not coming down the street at one time. Neither DBM, or I would venture to say OSP, has the bandwidth to do all these or more than one or two of these really at one time.

Also, want to acknowledge that the benefits team has worked hard during this period of extensions on a couple of challenges. One, within dental, the team has been able to work between plan years with our vendors. Delta Dental on expansion of the services covered under the dental HMO, and United Concordia with regard to expansion of the network under that in response to feedback we get from members. So while the contract's been extended, there's been improvements

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between plan years. On group term life AD&D, we are very confident in the pricing that the State still has that we are still at market and, therefore, are comfortable kind of prioritizing that RFP last.

I also want to acknowledge discrepancies in the information provided to the Board regarding MBE VSBE compliance. I will share that all of these vendors in my three years here have had very difficult time meeting their MBE VSBE goals. We have been really aggressive and proactive at demanding corrective action plans and working with the vendors on opportunities for them to subcontract more. These are benefit contracts so, as you know, the vendors are really the plan administrators. The expense, the bulk of the expense overwhelming, is in the actual claims cost where there's not necessarily particular opportunity for MBE VSBE participation.

But on the administration side, there is -- we've been working with all the vendors to improve post-pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, all of the -- almost all of the MBE VSBE participation was achieved through open enrollment period with, in particular, in-person fairs that were held for employees statewide. Those stopped during pandemic and so much of that MBE VSBE participation stopped as well.

We've been working with the vendors. One, we've been relaunching the in-person fairs and increasing them year over year. We also do virtual fairs now, which the employees and members really like. So again, that's a challenge when it comes to the subcontractor performance. But we've been working with the vendors to, one, identify additional subs who can participate. And a couple of the vendors have changed out, both MBE and VSBE, over the last year or two. And also, to identify additional opportunities for subcontracting.

I do understand there's still questions and discrepancies on the paperwork that's come through for today's awards. And on the MBE VSBE

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compliance, we're definitely committed to clarifying all of those details and making sure we're tracking those compliance rates correctly. And we will certainly work with Comptroller's team between now and the next meeting to make sure that's all squared away. But I did want to acknowledge that we absolutely have compliance challenges on these contracts as well. Happy to take any questions.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

MS. GRADY: The other thing I should mention -- I'm sorry -- too is part of the reason that we're here today, after pulling these items on the last August agenda, is because we are preparing for open enrollment. We're relying on these plans and these vendors for January 1st. We really don't want to advertise the plans or the details without having legal authority in place for the contracts.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thanks. No, I mean thank you for being here. Thank you for the detailed explanation. Thank you for saying that -- I think the phrase was "appropriately raised questions". I'm hoping all the other secretaries heard that lovely phrase. You're the first to say that, so thank you. But no, we -- and thanks for taking time to talk with us about what -- you know, these are huge and very important contracts and so take a lot of time.

And every agency needs more procurement staff and, you know, so totally appreciate it. I'm really encouraged as well by the progress that you all have made. So it's great to see that many of these contracts are about to hit the street. And, you know, thank you for letting us know which plan year you hope these will hit and for answering all of our questions. And, you know, also I'm not sure if I'll see you here again. So thank you for all that you've done over the past few years and for being a great partner. Thanks.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you, Madam Secretary. And

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again, this is a tremendous amount of work in a short period of time, so we really appreciate you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Yeah.

MS. GRADY: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: (Indiscernible), thank you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there any further discussion on the DGS Agenda?

MR. CHAUDHRY: Mr. Governor?

GOVERNOR MOORE: I'm sorry.

MR. CHAUDHRY: I just wanted to highlight, Secretary Gontrum reminded me, I neglected to mention that there was actually four hand carries, three of which were DBM, Items 50 through 53. I just want to put that on the record. There were in fact four hand-carried items on the agenda today. I blame the Treasurer for not being here. It threw off the juju in the room, you know?

(Laughter.)

MR. CHAUDHRY: It threw me off a little bit, but there was three hand-carried items, 50 through 53. 50 was for MDH for Medicaid. And the ones we discussed here today were 51 through 53 for DBM employee benefits.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I'd give a shout out. Frederick County has a lot in here and it's really exciting to see.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Yeah.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Kudos to their General Assembly members, to the whole team. There's also something for -- there's funding for the Brunswick Heritage Museum building in the City of Brunswick. And I was just in Brunswick, and they've been working hard to make sure they can rebuild their Main Street and make sure the State knows what Brunswick has to offer. And so

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kudos to the Frederick County team for getting their CGLs in. Yeah, thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: That's great. Is there a motion to approve the DGS Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the DGS Agenda?

GOVERNOR MOORE: I will go ahead and second it.

And now that concludes today's Board of Public Works meeting. The next meeting will be October 1st, so thank you all. Meeting adjourned.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 10:41 a.m., the meeting was concluded.)