



BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

Public Comments

Meeting Date

MARCH 4, 2026

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS
80 Calvert Street
Annapolis MD 21401

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I. Comments Received via BPW Website

| <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>First Name</u> | <u>Last Name</u> | <u>Organization</u> | <u>Position</u> |
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Agenda : Department of General Services

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| 18-GCL | Courtney | Hall | | Support |
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Since 1972, Interfaith Works (IW) has served Montgomery County residents by providing essential services and pathways to self-sufficiency. The IW Women’s Center at Crabbs Branch is a low-barrier, housing-focused emergency shelter serving 35–40 adult women experiencing homelessness. The shelter provides not only beds, but comprehensive support services including intensive case management, medical and mental health referrals, vocational training, and legal guidance—ensuring rapid exits to permanent housing. While Montgomery County is often perceived as affluent, significant need persists.

Approximately 7% of county residents live in poverty. The cost of living continues to rise; there is currently nowhere in the United States where one can afford a 2-bedroom apartment on minimum wage, and in Maryland one must make an \$81,000 household income to afford the average 2-bedroom. That is difficult to achieve on a \$17.65/hr. minimum wage, with 26% of Maryland residents reporting as extremely low-income (at or below 30% AMI). Additionally, research shows that survivors of intimate partner violence are significantly more likely to lose stable housing — in fact, they are about four times more likely to experience homelessness, and between 22% and 57% of women experiencing homelessness report domestic violence as the immediate cause. For women with limited income, health challenges, histories of trauma, or immigration barriers, housing instability can occur quickly. IW’s Women’s Center at Crabbs Branch Shelter provides a vital safety net for those who would otherwise have nowhere to turn. However, the facility currently operates in space not ideally configured for shelter use. Large open dormitory areas lack sufficient partitioning, limiting privacy and quiet space. The current configuration also allows kitchen operations to flow directly into educational and vocational counseling areas, creating disruptions that interfere with programming and client progress. The design, construction, and renovation of Crabbs Branch represents a critical investment in the safety, dignity, and long-term stability of vulnerable women in Montgomery County. The proposed \$350,000 renovation will address these challenges through targeted capital improvements, including:

- Increasing capacity from 33 to 40 beds
- Constructing partition walls and dividers to enhance privacy while maintaining circulation and safety
- Updating flooring, restrooms, and building systems
- Installing a wall-mounted foldable service table to maximize common space flexibility
- Enhancing exterior lighting and security cameras to improve safety
- Installing two-way window tint for resident privacy
- Providing lockers and storage solutions for personal belongings
- Adding a covered pavilion for an exterior smoking area

The Shelter at Crabbs Branch is one of only two year-round emergency shelters exclusively serving women in Montgomery County. Its role in the local housing continuum is essential. Renovation and modernization of this facility represent a responsible, strategic investment in public infrastructure that directly supports housing stability and community well-being. These improvements will not only increase capacity but also create a more dignified, trauma-informed environment. Privacy,

safety, and functional space are essential components of recovery and stabilization. A thoughtfully renovated shelter supports women as they rebuild their lives, pursue employment, and transition to permanent housing. The women residing at Crabbs Branch are not defined by their circumstances; they are individuals actively working toward independence. The physical space should reflect the respect and dignity they deserve. Interfaith Works respectfully urges the State Board of Public Works to approve this investment in a facility that provides safety, dignity, and hope to some of Maryland's most vulnerable residents. Sincerely, Courtney Hall, CEO

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| DGS 21-CGL | Allison | Burr- Livingstone | Support |
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We wish to express our sincere gratitude for the State's ongoing and leading investments, and share the following words: • On behalf of the Baltimore Symphony Endowment Trust, our 85-world class musicians, and the 350,000 patrons that attended the Meyerhoff last year, thank you! The Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall is more than the BSO's Baltimore home. We are honored to welcome audiences of all ages and backgrounds for programs featuring the Orchestra and, with our new Live at the Meyerhoff series as well as longstanding partners such as the Baltimore Speaker Series, events of all genres and kinds. It is a space for civic gatherings, whether one is graduating or attending a community celebration. And thanks to the State – including the Moore-Miller Administration, Leadership, and the Legislature – it is an anchor venue in the 40th district experiencing its first major modernization in 40-years. • The capital grants included in today's agenda are one part of a now multi-year public investment in the Meyerhoff, fueling projects that are designed to make our facility a more functional, nimble, and efficient Hall for All. In 2023, a state capital grant underwrote a new escalator, ensuring comfortable access for patrons to more than 70% of the Meyerhoff's 2,400 seats across multi-levels of the hall as well as the first phase in a multi-year modernization of back-of-house spaces,. The two grants being advanced today have underwritten the second phase in this project, reimaging our green room and musician lounge – and we are excited to be in the position to reimburse the BSO and our vendors for important work that is already changing the way the BSO does business, serving more community partners, and catching the attention of rental clients. • Future capital grants included in the 2026 budget and in the Governor's 2027 capital budget with fuel modernization projects across more spaces, as well as begin to replace and/or repair original systems – mechanical, electrical, and plumbing. Such projects are essential to keep the facility functionally open. • Just as the Hall was built as a public-private partnership, with the State matching the private support of the late Joseph Meyerhoff, its next era is only possible with great public support. We are honored by your ongoing recognition of the power of the arts, and the cultural, economic, and education benefits of a more vibrant and functional Meyerhoff Hall.

II. Comments Received via Email

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Response for the Record
Board of Public Works – March 4, 2026
Item: 10-CGL – Capital Grants and Loans
Board of Directors of The Doleman Black Heritage Museum, Inc.
Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Grant of 2024 – \$150,000

February 26, 2026

Good morning, Chair, Comptroller, and Treasurer.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Doleman Black Heritage Museum, Inc., I respectfully submit this statement for the official record in support of Item 10-CGL, the Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan (Grant) of 2024 for \$150,000 for the Doleman Black Heritage Museum in Washington County.

We are deeply grateful to the State of Maryland for its continued investment in the preservation and elevation of African American history. This capital grant represents more than a financial allocation—it is an affirmation that the stories rooted in the historic Jonathan Street community in Hagerstown matter, are worthy of preservation, and belong within Maryland's permanent cultural landscape.

The funds will support the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of the Museum property, ensuring that our future home is structurally sound, historically preserved, and accessible to generations to come. We acknowledge and fully commit to compliance with Maryland Historical Trust consultation requirements and all applicable procurement and preservation standards.

The Doleman Black Heritage Museum safeguards more than 4,500 artifacts that tell the lived experiences of families in a once red-lined neighborhood whose stories are too often omitted from traditional archives. This investment strengthens our capacity to serve as an educational, cultural, and economic asset to Washington County and to the State of Maryland.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Comptroller Brooke Lierman, the Department of General Services, and the Board of Public Works for their leadership and stewardship. We stand ready to proceed responsibly and in full partnership with the State.

With gratitude and respect,

Ms. Janice Kelsh

Secretary, Board of Directors
The Doleman Black Heritage Museum, Inc.