
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

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

February 28, 2024
10:07 a.m.

PRESENT

HONORABLE WES MOORE

Governor

HONORABLE DERECK E. DAVIS

Treasurer

HONORABLE BROOKE E. LIERMAN

Comptroller

JOHN GONTRUM

Secretary, Board of Public Works

ATIF CHAUDHRY

Secretary, Department of General Services

JOSH KURTZ

Secretary, Department of Natural Resources

THOMAS HICKEY

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

VALERIE RODOMSKY

Chief Procurement Officer, Department of Transportation

RAFAEL LOPEZ

Secretary, Maryland Department of Human Services

LISA GRIGSBY

Recording Secretary, Board of Public Works

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PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNOR MOORE: Good Morning. Hope everybody's great. And we want to welcome everybody to today's meeting of the Board of Public Works. We are going to go ahead and get started with the business of the day. And first, Secretary Gontrum, good morning. It is great to see you.

MR. GONTRUM: Good morning. Good to see you, Governor. And good to see you, Mr. Treasurer and Madam Comptroller. There are nine items on the Secretary's agenda this morning. However at the request of Baltimore City Community College, I am withdrawing Item 3. At the request of Morgan State University, I am withdrawing Item 8. Leaving seven items on the Secretary's agenda this morning for your consideration. Happy to assist in answering any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Wonderful. Thank you so much. Is there any discussion on the Secretary's agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay. And is there a motion to approve the Secretary's agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: So moved.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much. Thank you. We'll proceed with our Department of Natural Resources agenda. Secretary Kurtz, good morning. Good to see you.

MR. KURTZ: Good morning, sir. Good morning, Mr. Treasurer, Madam Comptroller. It's a pleasure to be here today. For the record, my name is Josh Kurtz. I'm the secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The

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Department is presenting seven items for your consideration today. And I'm here, and so is my team, to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Wonderful. Thank you so much. Is there any discussion on the DNR agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Not from me.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a motion to approve the DNR agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thanks, Mr. Secretary.

Now, we're going to the University System of Maryland. Mr. Hickey, good morning.

MR. HICKEY: Good morning. Good morning, Governor. Mr. Treasurer, Madam Comptroller. Tom Hickey, representing University System of Maryland. There are five items on the agenda this morning. We are withdrawing Item 4-S. Happy to answer any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Is there any discussion around the USM agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No real discussion. I'll just note it's nice to see that eight of the firms in 3-C are MBEs.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a motion to approve the USM agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding.

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MR. HICKEY: Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Nice to see you, Mr. Hickey.

MR. HICKEY: You too.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Now, we'll go on to the MDOT agenda.

Ms. Radomsky, good morning.

MS. RADOMSKY: Good morning, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. For the record, my name is Valerie Radomsky, chief procurement officer for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Today, we are presenting seven agenda items for your consideration. We're seeking approval of one contract awarded to a certified small business enterprise. We have representatives to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thank you. Is there any comments or discussion around the induction?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Can I just ask -- Ms. Radomsky, why isn't DGS agenda the retroactive for MTA, MJ Management Services. Why isn't that part of the MDOT agenda?

MS. RADOMSKY: So the replacement contract will be.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Okay.

MS. RADOMSKY: It's always been -- it was previously on the DBM agenda before DGS took over procurement for services and IT in 2019. And DGS has delegated it back to us as a transportation-related service.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Okay. Thanks.

MS. RADOMSKY: You're welcome.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Any other discussion around the MDOT agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a motion to approve the agenda?

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COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding.

MS. RADOMSKY: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thanks so much, Ms. Radomsky. And next we will conclude with the DGS agenda. Secretary Chaudhry, I also want to say we've been going around to all of our departments. Few weeks back, we were over at DNR with Secretary Kurtz, had a great visit. And Secretary Chaudhry, I just want to say truly outstanding work. The visit with all the employees in DGS and watching the high praise of the work that you're doing there was spectacular to see. So good morning. Thanks again.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Morning. Thank you, Mr. Governor. I appreciate it. And we really appreciate you coming out to support the troops here at DGS. It was really, really greatly appreciated by everyone and greatly attended. So thank you, sir. Mr. Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer, for the record, I am Atif Chaudhry, Secretary of Maryland Department of General Services. Today, we are presenting 36 items in our agenda, we are withdrawing two items, Item 16-S as well as Item 13-L -- I'm sorry, 34-LT . 16-S and 34-LT.

Our agenda does feature over \$1.9 million in capital grants and loans. I did want to highlight one item, and that is Item 10-CGL. It does provide \$200,000 in State support to the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department in St. Mary's County to install a ground mount solar power system, which will provide 100 percent of the electricity for two separate stations -- fire stations. One in Calvert and one in -- I'm sorry, one in California and one in Lexington Park, which will eliminate a large portion of the Department's carbon footprint.

As we continue to keep an eye on minority business participation

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in our contracting, our agenda does include four contract awards and modifications to certified MBEs totaling more than \$5.8 million. And we have agency representatives here to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much. Now -- and I'd actually also personally want to highlight Item 9-CGL, which is a \$23,000 grant to the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad. I want to highlight it from a personal position of thanks too, because my family and I had a chance to go and visit the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad over the holidays. And so my wife and our daughter, Mia, and our son, James, all had the fantastic opportunity to go out and ride the railroad, ride the Polar Express --

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: -- which was a magical experience that I'll wish to share. I'd say it was really special because I got a chance to not just hang out with some good friends, with people who were here and I want to introduce, but also sit on Santa Claus' lap --

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: -- and make wishes for the year. And I say it's either -- that Santa Claus was either Senator McKay, or Santa Claus has some very distinctive opinions about medical cannabis.

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: But we also -- we do have some distinguished guests here. I don't know (indiscernible). It's great to see the -- we have here my friend, Mayor Ray Morriss and also Executive Director Wes Heinz, who are exceedingly generous with the hospitality towards me and my family. And I just want to say from the bottom of my heart, thank you. And just, just how much that means and how much it just continues to mean. So I know we have Mayor Morriss, and also our friend Mayor Flanigan all the way from Frostburg.

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And so I'd love to be able to welcome you both here at Annapolis and say thanks again. And you're welcome to come up and share a few words if you would like as well.

MAYOR FLANIGAN: Sure.

(Pause.)

MAYOR FLANIGAN: Governor, very good to see you this morning.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great to see you too. Thank you.

MAYOR FLANIGAN: Madam Comptroller, Mr. Treasurer. I know I was unable to be with you that fine day, but I know exactly what happened because I got to talk to Santa.

(Laughter.)

MAYOR FLANIGAN: And he said you all were very well behaved and your kids were very well behaved. And as always, we always say welcome to the most beautiful part of Maryland, the mountains of Maryland. So we're really glad we were able to host you all. Look forward to doing it again. Hope we can make that an annual thing.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Absolutely.

MAYOR FLANIGAN: And maybe come back out and see us in the spring when the leaves start to get on the trees, and it's really getting pretty. We promised you snow, but Santa didn't deliver much snow this year, so.

(Laughter.)

MAYOR FLANIGAN: But again, we'd like to thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: But all the things that I asked for, he delivered. So it's --

MAYOR FLANIGAN: Well, yeah.

GOVERNOR MOORE: it's great.

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MAYOR FLANIGAN: Yeah, and you were on the good list.

GOVERNOR MOORE: That's right.

(Laughter.)

MAYOR FLANIGAN: So you're okay. We made sure of that. Because we're closer to God way out there, you know.

(Laughter.)

MAYOR FLANIGAN: So, yeah, but I really do appreciate -- we really appreciate the State's help over the past many years I've been on the board. I'm the chair of the board, been on since '13. Last year, we, again with your help and the kind help with the Legislature, not only we're financially put in a better position post-COVID, but we broke every record in 35 years. We hauled more people last year than were ever hauled in a single season. And I think they all, like yourself and your family, got off with big smiles and were very, very happy. So we really appreciate all your help.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Bless you.

MAYOR FLANIGAN: Thank you. Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And congratulations.

MAYOR FLANIGAN: Okay. Have a good rest of your day. Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

MAYOR MORRISS: And I'm not going to say anything other than the Governor looks great in pajamas.

(Laughter.)

MAYOR MORRISS: Yeah, but we, seriously, we want to invite everybody to come out and enjoy the Polar Express and the whole season. Thank you.

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COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you, my friend.

Thank you. Thank you so much. And also please tell Wes that I said hello to the -- executive director.

MAYOR FLANIGAN: He's right behind you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: He is, right. The Executive Director Wes Heinz will tell you, every time they were calling, like, "Hey, Wes," I kept on turning my head, no the other one.

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: But sincerely bless you all. And thank you so much again.

MAYOR MORRISS: You're welcome.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you.

And I'd also like to very quickly also mention Item 36-LT (34-LT), which is something that we're incredibly excited about. It's a leasing and it's actually going to be a leasing for the Department of Service and Civic Innovation. And this is going to be the location -- newly built house will serve as a field office for the participants in Service Year in Maryland Corps for both Montgomery and Prince George's County. So we're really proud of these folks who have just raised their hands and served. And we're really proud of the of the new digs that they now have thanks to 36-LT (34-LT).

So with that, I wanted to also yield to the Comptroller for a few items on the agenda as well.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Well, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Governor. Thank you, Mr. Secretary for being here and highlighting 10-CGL. It's an exciting project I want to acknowledge and extend appreciation to Delegate Brian Crosby for submitting a letter of support for the project and sponsoring the

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bond initiative last year.

And also want to turn to DGS Agenda Item 19-S because I think this is an important step for the State. This is a request to award three firms a contract to develop decarbonization plans for State-owned buildings and facilities. And these plans are necessary in order to meet our state's climate goals. They'll help the State of Maryland transition our buildings to efficient, clean, and cost-saving electricity in order to meet those climate goals. Just think this is a huge step forward and, you know, we passed important legislation, and then it actually has to be implemented. And so this is one of those steps towards implementing that. So I want to thank the DGS Office of Energy and Sustainability for their efforts to get to this point. There's a lot more work to do, but we keep moving forward, which is exciting.

I also wanted to ask if Secretary Lopez could just -- if you could talk about Item 20-S-MOD for a moment. Thank you.

(Pause.)

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thanks so much, Secretary Lopez. And I just want to start by saying I appreciate how responsive you have been. And for including us in your ongoing challenges and opportunities to improve all the work that you are doing and that our state is doing for our youth and for our young people. And I know you inherited a really challenging situation, and you brought in one of the, you know, one of -- a fellow advocate on this issue, Kirill Reznik. And I know you're all working diligently. But I think it's important, every once in a while, for you to update us on the placement of Maryland youth in out-of-state facilities who are receiving care. So thank you for letting us know how things are going.

MR. LOPEZ: Sure. Happy to do so. Good morning, Governor Moore, Comptroller Lierman, and Treasurer Davis. For the record, my name is

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Rafael Lopez, and I have the pleasure of serving as your Secretary of Human Services. We have one item on the agenda that you have pulled, and happy to talk about more in context. In the interest of confidentiality, I won't go into the details of the individual cases, but we'll frame up the cases in the context of the work we're doing to transform Maryland child welfare system and give some additional context.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Great.

MR. LOPEZ: So first of all, in the context of the item before you today, there are currently five Maryland youth at Sandy Pines. Two youth were placed via the sole-source contract beginning the 1st of December of 2021. A third youth was placed on November 20th of 2023. And the original reason for that contract modification to the Board was presented to you. The two youth before you today make up the additional three youths, so that's how we get to this contract in particular.

For context, as of the 26th of February, there are 3,781 children in all of Maryland's child welfare system. Of that total, 26 youth are currently in out-of-state placements. I give those two as reference because obviously one state -- one child out of state is one too many. It is 26 of the total that I want to make sure we're clear about. We've been discussing these challenges and changes, as you know, with the Legislature during this budget season talking about how we want to leverage the work of the Governor's investment in the budget to talk about transforming a new era of child welfare in the State.

So I want to highlight eight of the issues that are part of this larger effort to address out-of-state placements with the larger -- there's no one lever that will change all of this. First of all, the budget that the Governor's proposed includes some significant investments to make up for some lost time at the Department of Human Services.

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First, we're looking at implementing the federal Family First Prevention Services Act in Maryland. Second, ending the practice of youth aging out of foster care in Maryland. Third, creating a kin-first culture. Fourth, reforming how Maryland compensates its care providers across the State. Fifth, addressing hospital overstay statuses. Sixth, addressing hotel stays. Seventh, course correcting MD THINK. And eighth, rebuilding state government reducing vacancies.

I want to speak to a few of those because I think it'll give you, Madam Controller, the Governor, and the Treasurer, a better sense of how this money is spent. So ultimately, we want to reduce unnecessary removals and leverage all federal dollars, and to do this strategically and to do it based on science and the data. We also want to make sure that we're committed to providing Marylanders with family-centered, child-focused, and community-based services that promote safety and child well-being and strengthens their families.

For many years, DHS did not draw down millions of federal dollars. In fact, early in this Administration we learned that since 2018, when the Family First Prevention Services Act authorized states across this country to use federal uncapped entitlement funds for time-limited foster care prevention services, this state did not seize a day and has not drawn down one single federal dollar for prevention services. Zero dollars. And that's in spite of having an approved plan. So we estimate that nearly \$10 million in federal Title 40 funding to prevent foster care was simply left on the table on behalf of Maryland's children, youth, and families.

And we are racing the clock to course correct that. We've partnered with the Annie Casey Foundation, with Casey Family Programs to actually help us rebuild the internal infrastructure and architecture of our

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department to be able to legitimately draw down additional federal funds to augment the investment of State general fund dollars, to make sure we're providing prevention services to all of our families, ultimately having them not come into care. This is just the first step that we're taking to making sure that we're being much more responsible about this.

And specifically on the issue of addressing out-of-home placements -- out-of-state placements, the State of Maryland over a decade ago, made a choice to bring more of Maryland's children's home. That was a fantastic choice. At the same time, however, the investment to build a statewide continuum of care across our 24 jurisdictions so that kids don't have to be placed too far away from their families causing additional trauma for them and their families to visit them, was not done in Maryland. So we're trying to catch up on that right now.

To do that, we're working to create resources as outlined in the Family First Prevention Services Act, specifically, to increase the number of qualified residential treatment programs, or what's known as QRTPs in the State of Maryland. Specifically, there are only six providers with QRTP status in the State of Maryland. We are working with providers now to add two more providers over the next year. We are also providing technical assistance to another seven providers to help them get designated.

What's fascinating to us is that was we learned about the pattern and practice over the last couple of years. Ultimately, to draw down any dollar from the federal government, we need to make sure we're having the most highly skilled, highly qualified providers in order to draw down federal money for the future of Maryland and the future of the country. So that is an opportunity that we're jumping into immediately.

For more than a decade, Maryland has steadily and dramatically

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reduced the number of children in out-of-home care. Youth requiring out-of-home care often present with more complex symptoms and critical needs, as you see on your agenda, ranging from mental health issues to behavioral health issues and clinical needs. Our providers are sometimes not equipped in this state to address those needs.

And specifically in order to leverage federal funds, the Governor's proposed '25 budget -- 2025 budget includes a historic \$26.7 million investment for rate setting and rate reform for child placement providers. This has been a stalled debate for well over 14 years in Maryland. And in less than one year, our team came in, worked with providers, convened them for the first time over almost four years, and said we're moving forward, and are proposing a set of regulations to transform that part of the system.

We are working right now with the General Assembly, to propose new regulations to take effect by this summer and the first since the 1990s. So Maryland has not quite kept up the pace in setting the tone and pace around our what we expect and how we serve our children. That addresses how providers are paid, how they're compensated for their work, and ultimately provide quality care for children. And though we discovered not been done previously, we are being very deliberate in this Administration to track every current provider and their contract. I shouldn't have to say that publicly, but it's, in fact, an issue.

Many of our contracts don't have the right kinds of metrics to hold ourselves, the Department, our providers, and our state accountable for movement and action including a no eject or reject policy for our kids when there are vacant beds. That had not been done prior to coming to this office and understanding this. So we are asking questions on why sometimes our providers will refuse kids in this state. No one case is easy so I'm absolutely not blaming anybody on the record or any providers, but it's a system of accountability for all of us.

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If someone is being paid by the State of Maryland, they have an empty bed, it's a 13-year-old girl named Brooke Lierman, and she can qualify, why aren't you taking 13-year-old Brooke Lierman into that residential facility in the state of Maryland, not out to Florida or West Virginia? From what we understand, this is the first time in a very long time that this has been happening at the Department in terms of contract management. We're doing this to ensure that Maryland's children, youth, and families stay in -- the children or youth, stay in-state as long as possible in the least restrictive setting in a community-based setting. And it will take us some time to turn that around, even though we've made some progress.

With that said, we're doing this in partnership with Secretary Herrera Scott and the Department of Health, with Secretary Schiraldi and the Department of Juvenile Services, and many of our other sister agencies who work to serve children and families to provide a true continuum of care for State of Maryland. With that said, I'm happy to take any other questions.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No. That was very helpful. I appreciate you laying out the system. And I appreciate the ongoing dialogue we've been having. When the Secretary first joined, I said, "By the way I had a bill about this. I'd like to keep updated on it." So I really appreciate you --

MR. LOPEZ: Absolutely.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: -- continuing to talk to us. And appreciate the challenges that you have and that you're working diligently to address them. And both appalling to hear that we were leaving federal money on the table, but I'm glad that you've identified that and are working to make sure that we can secure it. So thank you. Thanks.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Any other comments or (indiscernible)? Okay. Wonderful. May I have a motion to approve the DGS agenda?

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COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the DGS agenda.

TREASURER DAVIS: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much. All right.

That concludes today's meeting of the Board of Public Works. Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 13th. Hope all is well. And congratulations for getting all the way through February successfully.

(Whereupon, at 10:36 a.m., the meeting was concluded.)