
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

January 3, 2024

10:05 a.m.

PRESENT

HONORABLE WES MOORE

Governor

HONORABLE JOHN MARTIN

Chief Deputy Treasurer

HONORABLE BROOKE 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

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

VALERIE RADOMSKY

Chief Procurement Officer, Department of Transportation

LISA GRIGSBY

Recording Secretary, Board of Public Works

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PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNOR MOORE: Welcome to 2024, and also welcome to what I realized -- and Mr. Secretary, I'm sure you know this -- is only one of four mandatory BPW meetings of the entire year. I guess there are only four mandatory BPW meetings according to the Maryland Constitution, Section I, Article 7. It is January, it is April, it is July, and it's October 1st. Every other meeting that we have, with the exception of those four, is because we love this so much.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Just for fun.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Just for fun, so you're all very welcome. But Happy New Year, and welcome to everybody. It's good to see everybody.

And first off, I just want to acknowledge, and once again welcome back, Deputy Treasurer John Martin, who is sitting in today for Treasurer Davis. And Deputy Treasurer, it is always great to see you.

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: It's great to see you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And great to sit to your left here, and Happy New Year. I also want to turn some time over, before we turn it over to the Secretary, over to the Comptroller, who has some exciting news today. And I just want to, I'd like to turn it over to her to share a little bit about the report. So Madam Comptroller, Happy New Year.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Happy New Year, Mr. Governor, Mr. Deputy Treasurer. Happy New Year, everybody. It's great to see you. I'm really excited to announce that earlier this morning, my office released our agency's first ever State of the Economy Report. This is a true labor of love and I want to salute everybody on our team who worked on it. It is the product of

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months of hard work by our Bureau of Revenue Estimates and our new Policy Division. The report takes a close look at economic data from pre-, during, and post-pandemic times in Maryland. We spoke to hundreds of Maryland business leaders all over the State, round tables at Frostburg, and Salisbury, and in the D.C. suburbs, and Southern Maryland, and the Baltimore region, all over. We talked to community organizations, economic development leaders, to get their perspectives on tailwinds and headwinds in the State's economy.

So the report is intended to be a guide and a resource to policy makers and our partners throughout the State, of course to our Governor, to our General Assembly leaders, local government leaders, and more, who are all really working to strengthen and grow our economy. So I hope folks will take a look at it. You can find it at marylandtaxes.gov.

At a very high level, I'll just share briefly that our economy has proven to be quite resilient coming out of the pandemic. We have the country's lowest unemployment rate and we are seeing strong job and GDP growth in several key areas. However, we also have a very shallow labor pool right now. Our labor force participation has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels like it has in the rest of the country. On top of that, during the pandemic we experienced a population decline for the first time since World War II.

There are a lot of factors behind our population and worker shortages, but one of the big ones that comes up in the data and that we have heard about from folks in every corner of the State is a lack of housing options. There are other things about our healthcare system, women who have left the workforce, and more. So I am optimistic that this report will be a valuable tool for addressing some of our State's economic challenges and leveraging our assets and opportunities. And I look forward to talking about it more in the weeks to come and providing updates on the initial research that we have produced.

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I want to thank the Treasurer's Office, the Governor's team for working with us on this. And I know you all need some bedtime reading tonight, so you can go online and download that 65-page report and take a look and let us know what you think. But thank you so much. I appreciate it, Mr. Governor.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much, Madam Comptroller. And we are excited to get going with today's Agenda. Mr. Secretary, Happy New Year, and good morning.

SECRETARY GONTRUM: Good morning, and Happy New Year to you, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Chief Deputy Treasurer. There are 17 items on the Secretary's Agenda this morning. However, at the request of St. Mary's College I am withdrawing Item 12, leaving 16 items on the Secretary's Agenda this morning and three reports of emergency procurement. I am happy to assist with answering any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Wonderful. Thank you so much. I would actually like to take a moment to highlight Item 11, which is a request from the Department of Planning and the Maryland Historical Trust, and that is to award \$5 million in grants to the African American Heritage Preservation Program to support 24 projects and organizations in 15 jurisdictions.

We are really excited about this, and the goal is critically important. It is to identify and preserve buildings and communities and sites of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in the State of Maryland. And the Board is being asked to approve funding for projects that include community centers and fraternity halls, from historic churches and cemeteries, historic houses, a firehouse, a historic funeral home, and also a historic hotel. And I actually just want to take a quick second to talk about that hotel for a second. Because the project that I want to highlight is Henry's Hotel, which is in Ocean City, which is receiving \$250,000 through this item.

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It was built in the late 1800s. Henry's Hotel was formally known as Henry's Colored Hotel, and it is one of the oldest hotels in all of Ocean City. It was also the last hotel that allowed African Americans to access the beach during the Jim Crow era of restrictions. That grant award -- yes, we can celebrate that --

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Woo-hoo!

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: --it is going to support their efforts of being able to turn the building into not just a hotel and just a refurbished building, but also into a museum, into a learning center, a place where people can learn about the history of African Americans on the Shore and all throughout the State, and also just understand the African American contribution to the town's development, and despite the fact of suffering years and decades and generations of discrimination, that just as the hotel received its refurbishing that it is also helping to tell the story of despite it all, still I rise. And I want to thank Secretary Flora, I want to thank MHT Director Elizabeth Hughes, also thank Ms. Stacey Montgomery, who is joining us today and serves as the Capital Programs Administrator for the Maryland Historical Trust. And I just want to thank them publicly for their incredibly thoughtful reviewing of over 107 applications to this competitive program and selecting these recipients. This is making our State better and we really appreciate the work that is being done around it. Madam Comptroller?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Governor. I just want to echo the Governor's comments and associate myself with them. This is a really phenomenal day to see this money go out to these incredible projects. Again, thank you, Secretary Flora and Elizabeth for all of your work. This is a crucial program administered jointly by the Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland Commission on African American History and

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Culture. These 24 projects are just incredible examples of sites that are associated with cultural and historical significance to our African American community. And one of the sites is actually 100 feet from my first home in Fells Point, the Two Sisters' House, the Caulkers' House. And when I first moved to Fells Point and I saw these houses, they were a real eyesore and I had no idea that they any historical significance. And I walked by them every day. And sometimes when people would come to visit me, I would take them other ways because these houses that were falling down, sort of, you know, they made the neighborhood maybe not look so great. And then when I started learning more about them and about their historic significance, the fact that this was a once common building type that was really important in the architectural and physical development of the Port of Baltimore and that it was inhabited by ships' caulkers who worked in the maritime industry in Baltimore. And they were African Americans who worked in this part of the shipping industry. Learning more about it was so exciting. The organization that formed to save these homes was amazing. And today, they look phenomenal. And it is the kind of place where you walk out of your way to go by these homes to learn more about the history of Fells Point and the history of the maritime industry in Maryland. So that work is not possible without volunteers and organizations that step up to restore and keep these, all of these projects going, and through State support. So I'm really excited to see it happen and thank you so much.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you. Thank you. And just two other quick items that I would love to briefly highlight. One is Item 6. It is a request from the Department of Health, and that is to convert 169 contractual positions into 135 permanent positions, in addition to the 144 full time positions that were established, that this Board approved last October. This is resulting from a conversion of 180 contractual positions. This is priority work and it is

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work that is shared by our administration and also our partners over at AFSCME. And I just want to take a moment to acknowledge the important work that Secretary Herrera Scott, that you are doing to continue to lead on this effort and also in close partnership with Secretary Grady.

This is a core and an important frame that is necessary when we talk about what does it mean to rebuild State government in an efficient and in an economically responsible way.

The second item is Item 13, which is a Stadium Authority item for the construction services at the Harry Grove Stadium in Frederick. The reason that I want to highlight this is because that stadium that the Stadium Authority, and when you look at the construction services, that has a 34.5 percent MBE participation goal. The Stadium Authority, I want to give a special shout out to, it consistently submits contracts to this Board for approval with robust MBE participation goals. And I want to commend Chairman Thompson, Director Frenz, and the entire MSA team, for the level of intentionality and the level of diligence in ensuring that our MBEs are getting equitable access and participation in our procurement system.

With that, are there any other discussion items for the Secretary's Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No.

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay. May I have a motion to approve the Secretary's Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much. We

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will proceed with the Department of Natural Resources. Secretary Kurtz, Happy New Year. Good morning.

MR. KURTZ: Good morning. Happy New Year. Happy New Year, Mr. Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Chief Deputy Treasurer. It is a pleasure to be here with you all today. Before I start, Madam Comptroller, I hope you saw the pictures of all of the snow in New Germany State Park. It is beautiful out there. A lot of snowshoeing went on.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: I was there this weekend. It was snowing. It was amazing. Everybody head out to Mountain Maryland. It's gorgeous.

MR. KURTZ: I guess I should -- my apologies, for the record, my name is Josh Kurtz. I'm the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The department has 14 items for your consideration today. Myself and staff are available for any questions you might have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Is there any discussion on the DNR Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Not for me.

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: No.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Do I have a motion to approve to the DNR Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: And is there a second?

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding. Thank you so much. Mr. Hickey, next up, University System of Maryland. Good morning. Good to see you. Happy New Year.

MR. HICKEY: Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Chief Deputy

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Treasurer, Tom Hickey, representing the University System of Maryland. We have four items on the Agenda for your consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No questions for me.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Any questions?

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: No questions.

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

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Outstanding.

MR. HICKEY: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Hickey. We will proceed with the MDOT Agenda. Ms. Radomsky, Happy New Year, and good morning.

MS. RADOMSKY : Happy New Year and good morning, Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Chief Deputy Treasurer. For the record, my name is Valerie Radomsky, Chief Procurement Officer for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Today we are presenting 15 Agenda items for your consideration. MDOT is seeking approval of two contract actions equaling approximately \$3.4 million awarded to certified minority, small, or dually certified businesses. Please note that MDOT is withdrawing Item 11-M. We have representatives available to answer any questions.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you so much. Are there any questions or comments for the MDOT Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Not for me.

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: No.

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GOVERNOR MOORE: Okay. May I have a motion to approve the Agenda, the MDOT Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve the MDOT Agenda.

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: All right. Thank you so much, Ms. Radomsky. Thank you. And we will conclude with the DGS Agenda. Secretary Chaudhry, Happy New Year.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Happy New Year, good morning, sir.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Good morning.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Mr. Governor, Madam Comptroller, Mr. Chief Deputy Treasurer, for the record I am Atif Chaudhry, Secretary of the Maryland Department of General Services. Today the department is presenting 60 items on our Agenda. We will be withdrawing four items: Items 21-S, 22-S, 36-IT, and 58-LT. Our Agenda features over \$10 million in capital grants and loans. I just want to highlight a few of them very quickly.

Item 6-CGL provides \$1.4 million to Calvert Health Medical Center for a new Da Vinci surgical robot. This robot brings robotic technology to Calvert Health Medical Center and its patients for the very first time. The addition of this technology fulfills the need for medical oncology technical services to the residents of Calvert County.

I also want to highlight 15-CGL, which provides \$1 million to the Mary Harvin Center in Baltimore City for the construction of a new Southern Streams Health and Wellness Center. The center will be a 120,000-square foot, five story building that will facilitate affordable healthcare, employment training, and nutritional services for the community.

And then finally, I wanted to highlight Item 16-CGL, which

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provides \$250,000 to the Penn North Out of School Time Initiative in Baltimore City for a newly constructed community youth out of school time hub for disadvantaged school age children in the West Baltimore Penn North community. This project will feature an approximately 8,200 square foot facility, one story structure, that provides an area for school age children for after school and out of school programming to support the community there.

As we continue to keep an eye on minority business participation in contracts in State government, our Agenda does feature five contracts to MBE certified prime contractors totaling \$5.6 million.

We have agency representatives here to answer any questions you may have.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Any questions on the DGS Agenda?

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: No comments on the Agenda. I do want to note that we moved in yesterday to 7 St. Paul Street, our Taxpayer Services Division. We welcomed them with, you know, coffee and donuts and a beautiful new facility. So thank you very much to your team. Of course, it's not done. We have phase two coming now. But it's really a wonderful place for our staff. They were so elated. And it's a great spot for taxpayers to get help during the upcoming tax season. So thank you for everything.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Thank you, Madam Comptroller. I just want to highlight the great work that the DGS Office of Real Estate is doing every day, working very diligently to negotiate leases, manage construction, and move thousands of employees from State Center to the Central Business District in Baltimore.

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: It's a lot. And you realize that when you get into a new place, like when you move into a new house, like, oh we

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have to buy trash cans, hangers, and right? It's all the little things. But that's the fun stuff, because now we are in the building. So thank you.

MR. CHAUDHRY: Sure.

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

COMPTROLLER LIERMAN: Motion to approve.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Is there a second?

CHIEF DEPUTY TREASURER MARTIN: Second.

GOVERNOR MOORE: Great. Thanks, Mr. Secretary. That concludes today's meeting. The next meeting is optional, but we're going to have it.

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR MOORE: It will be Wednesday, January 17th. Happy New Year, everybody. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 10:21 a.m., the meeting was concluded.)