

PUBLIC HEARING
FISCAL YEAR 2003 RECOMMENDED BUDGET
(Held at Great Mills High School Auditorium)
April 25, 2002

Present: Commissioner President Julie B. Randall
 Commissioner Joseph F. Anderson
 Commissioner Shelby P. Guazzo
 Commissioner Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr.
 Commissioner Daniel H. Raley
 Alfred A. Lacer, County Administrator
 Elaine Kramer, Director of Finance
 L. Jeannett Cudmore, Deputy Director of Finance
 Kaaren Burke, Sr. Adm. Coordinator (Recorder)
 Judith A Spalding, Administrative Assistant to the BOCC *(left at 8:00 p.m.)*

The Hearing opened at 7 p.m.

Mr. Lacer moderated the Public Hearing, introducing the Board of County Commissioners, Finance Director, Deputy Director of Finance, Recorder, and the Sheriff. It was announced the speakers had three minutes and they would be flagged at 30 seconds before their three minutes expired. Mr. Lacer explained the record would remain open for written comment until the FY03 budget is adopted.

Elaine Kramer presented an overview of the recommended budget and Mr. Lacer opened the hearing for public testimony.

The following individuals spoke:

William and Willie Hamel, 38701 Hidden Pond Court, Mechanicsville – stated the County needs soccer fields at in the north county area.

Cindy and Shelby Gardiner, 46549 Dennis Pt., Drayden – stated if Parks and Recreation increases fees for gymnastics, they will have to drop the program. Gymnastics builds confidence but financial support is needed.

Daniel Grenier, 6000 Swanson Creek Lane, Hughesville – stated he must play soccer in the field at his coach's house. It's dry and dusty and better fields are needed to play soccer.

Alan Kutz, CSM, and P.O. Box 910, La Plata – stated he was grateful for the BOCC's support for the Small Business Development Center hosted by CSM. In St. Mary's County the Lexington Park office has been staffed on a 5 day per week basis. They have seen over 200 clients and trained 50 attendees in 10 difference training courses. The SBDC has offered \$500,000 in small business loans and would hope continued funding will continue. Farmers have begun to participate in one of the SBDC's programs which will aid them in determining their future business plans.

Jody Payne, SM Child Care Resource Center, 2130 Great Mills Rd., Lex. Park – stated her appreciation for funding previous years. They work with child care providers, hold programs for children and parents. The Center provides behavioral management, training, licensing, technical assistance, and a credentialing program, and a locate system and more. Please continue your support.

Lt. John D. Horne, St. Mary's Co. Sheriff's Department – stated law enforcement has to beg, barter, and plead with the Board every year for the required resources needed to perform the jobs they are hired to do.

Michael S. Barnett, Pres., SMC ALS Unit, and Chairman, Emergency Services Committee, and Pres. Life Support Unit, P.O. Box 709, Leonardtown – stated the budget for the Life Support Unit should not be negotiable. The proposed budget is 47% of the requested sum and puts citizens at risk. ALS needs an increase of \$41,500 in the FY03 budget.

Ed Bergin, 22403 Cross Bill Lane, Leonardtown – stated as a member of the Recreation and Park Commission, he wants to thank the Board and county staff for concluding settlement negotiations with First Colony that will result in the building of a much needed swimming pool. As the President of the largest civic group in SMC, The National Association of Retired Federal Employees, with 1700 members, and as one of the founding members of the Senior Coalition with 7000 county seniors, he wants to thank the Board for their support of senior initiatives. Please consider enacting legislation to cap senior's property taxes at the level reached at age 65 and tie it to an economical development effort to attract more seniors to Southern Maryland.

H. S. Lanny Lancaster, 40423 Breton View Dr., Leonardtown – stated as Executive Director of the Three Oaks Center, he and his Board want to thank the BOCC for considering them in the FY03 budget. It is wonderful to see such excellence in County government.

Dave Staso, 44563 Mistletoe Lane, California – stated there are 3000 participants per year in gymnastics. The average cost of participation in this sport has risen over the past seven years from \$52/month to \$134/month, an increase of 158% over that period. They need a facility provided by the County and they need additional funding.

Carol Wible, Events Coordinator, Sotterley Foundation, 41481 Miss June Ct., Leonardtown – stated the Board's support is appreciated and would hope the Board continues to provide support this budget cycle. Sotterley volunteers have provided 19,400 hours in support of Sotterley.

Carolyn Hoey, Visitor Interpretation Coordinator, Sotterley Foundation, 44143 Woodmount Dr., Leonardtown – stated that over 6,000 SMC school children come to Sotterley every year for their education program. Need the Board's continued support.

Sgt. Michael R. Merican, St. Mary's Co. Sheriff's Office - stated as Acting Director of Corrections, he wanted to advise the Board what their inaction has done to the Department of the Sheriff. The Detention Center is experiencing 20-25% vacancy rate. Over the past two years, the officers have been forced to work 3719 hours overtime in FY01 and 6620 in FY02 so far. The office offers no air conditioning and entry level wages have been reduced. Look at Charles County for a good example of recruitment and retention efforts. Housing 30 additional federal inmates would further stress staff abilities.

Capt. Steven M. Doolan, St. Mary's Co. Sheriff's Office – stated he feels the Sheriff's are not treated with enough respect. Local law enforcement numbers must increase to meet demands for service directly attributed to the increase of population and service calls. Vehicles and equipment must be replaced. The time has come that the Sheriff's office will not be able to maintain their effectiveness because of the lack of funding and personnel.

Christine Kurley, Columbia Commons Association, 46359 Columbus Dr. #606, Lexington Park – The Sheriff's department is not paid top dollar but they are absolutely necessary. Neighborhood issues were discussed with Sheriff Voorhaar and the department is very responsive. Put more money into the Sheriff's department they are the backbone of our community.

Lieutenant Harvey, 13025 Sounding Rd., Lusby – Represents the Minority Business Alliance which is a non-profit organization. They've existed since 1982. Please take a hard look at their request for a grant. LOT Enterprise is a direct result of the MBA who built the Hampton Inn on Hwy 235 which is 65% minority owned. Please help the MBA.

Christopher Wilson, 45806 Hictory Lane, Lexington Park – stated as a member of the Board for Big Sisters/Big Brothers of Southern Maryland, he would like to thank the Board for supporting the organization and hopes for their continued support.

Arlene Cooper, Commission on Aging, 44022 Flagstone Way, California – thanked the Board for their support of seniors. Seniors need dedicated attention. Please reinstate the funds for the future of our seniors.

Dr. Elaine Ryan, College of Southern Maryland, 22950 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown – Because CSM has grown so fast, they are a victim of their own success. Dramatic increased full time enrollments means the need of full time faculty. Technology costs are increasing and the software used goes out of date rapidly. Workforce shortages in SMC means the college must address filling those shortages. Salaries, therefore, must be competitive to attract the best qualified instructors. CSM had asked for 18% additional State funding, but will receive \$138,000 less than requested. The County's contribution is \$ 36,000 less than requested – or forfeiture of one FTE.

Tom Sacks, So. Maryland Sheriff's Department, 21091 Jenks Way, Leonardtown – stated that as a resident and Sheriff's Personnel Officer, the FY03 will have a negative impact on the Sheriff's department. Maintenance, equipment, and training cuts put deputies in harm's way. Other counties add to their budgets for staffing, equipment, training, and capital improvements. Already the Sheriff's office is \$100,000 below last year's approved budget!

Bill Raddatz, President, Fraternal Order of Police – stated the FOP represents 96% of the Sheriff's officers in SMC. The County grows leaps and bounds but the Sheriff's department has had nominal growth. The public wants DARE and resource officers, hot spot communities need officers and specialized canine units must be ready to respond to terrorist threats. Where will these officers come from? Need additional funds!

Joseph A. St. Clair, 38520 Ah Ha Lane, Avenue – stated that as a businessman, SMC must "grow your own." Need more than 5% funding for CSM. Must have full 7%! Educated youth is our future. A better educated employee is the County's best consumer. Also support the Sheriff's of Southern Maryland.

Rocky Rowland, 41720 Shiloh Way, Hollywood – use tax returns to reduce County property taxes and restore the Ag Preservation funds or budget for the life support equipment. Use the monies received from taxpayers wisely.

Ramon Veras, LaFamilia, P.O. Box 2232, Patuxent River – to the BOCC, thanks for your continued support. Our Fiesta will be held June 15 so come and celebrate with us!

William E. Phillips – 48420 Mattapany Rd. Lexington Park – as a part of the SMC Corrections Department, he's tired of the manpower situation – it's critical. They handle approximately 170 inmates every day. Since 1999, 24 officers have left for various reasons. One-half have departed within the last six months. Take action to deter this trend!

Richard J. Voorhaar, Sheriff, St. Mary's County – Page 40 of the proposed budget reflects a total budget of \$15,537,814 – this is a \$97,529 decrease (1%) from last year's budget. This is unacceptable! This has been the lowest budget in ten years and it comes at the worst time possible. The academy class graduating on May 3, and for the first time since 1989, will not have one SMC sheriff graduate in the class due to no new approved positions. The Sheriff's will continue to serve but when the funds run out, the bills will be sent directly to the BOCC.

Mary C. Donovan, 23274 White Elm Court, California – stated the gymnastics program helps children stay out of detention centers. Please provide our youth positive programs like gymnastics. In the competitive program, there are 52 gymnasts, there used to be 85. The reduction is due to rising costs. Please help change this trend.

Joan Marsh, 21540 Breton View Court, Leonardtown – as a member of the Library's Board of Trustees, she wanted to thank the BOCC for its support. However, restoring \$150,000 to the FY03 budget will enable them to hire needed staff.

Karen K. Lowrey, P.O. Box 5001, St. Mary's City – stated a fully funded public library is very important and deserved.

George Kennett, P.O. Box 47, Avenue – stated the crown jewel of the County seat is the College of Southern Maryland. Please keep fully funding CSM and support the Detention Center!

Joseph H. Cullison, 45382 Sypher Road, California – stated hat tax relief at 65 years of age is important. 2600 signatures were presented on a petition to the BOCC but no action has been taken yet. Please act on the request.

Kathleen M. Fean, 37740 Apache Road, Charlotte Hall – represents the Northern Senior Center and wanted to thank the BOCC for their funding of their new Senior's Center and asked for additional funding for home-delivered meals.

Jenna Donovan, 23274 White Elm Ct., California – stated that her personal success is attributed to her participation in gymnastics. The fees have increased dramatically and financial help is needed for this worthwhile program.

Toni Robinson, 29786 Adams Rd., Mechanicsville – stated soccer is near and dear to her heart. The program is huge and self-sufficient. Chaptico Park needs funding now for additional soccer fields!

Mary Ann Chasen, 45915 Pine Road, Lexington Park – stated her appreciation of the Board's strong support of the public library system. However, they need more assistance. The new Smartcard will be discontinued after the one year grant expires. Other services and new staff are not funded. Please restore the \$150,000 in the budget.

Louise Snell, 25060 Old Brick Way, Hollywood – Represents the Board of the Friends of the Library. As a result of a very successful book sale last February, the Board will present a check of \$6,000 to the SMC Library System. Thanks to the community for supporting this great asset in our community and to the Board, please restore the \$150,000 to the FY03 budget!

Barry and Valerie Lewis, 28841 Riverwatch Dr., Mechanicsville - as Board member of the Northern Soccer League, and coach of three teams, he requests the Board fund at least the soccer fields at Chaptico Park.

Commissioner President Randall assured the audience that \$1.5 million total has been funded which will provide soccer fields.

Bill Scarafia, SMC Chamber of Commerce, 28290 Three Notch Road, Mechanicsville – Visitor/Information Centers costs money and more funding is necessary. Funding levels have stayed the same over the last four years and they have lost money. Serving as the first line for building tourism, the request of \$17,000 is very reasonable and necessary.

William Knoeller, 42473 Riverwinds Dr., Leonardtown – on behalf of the SMC League of Women Voters, requests a needs assessment be funded for affordable housing. It's a major issue for the coming year. The Fair and Affordable Housing committee urged the County hire its own director who is capable for planning to develop a housing plan. Start a search now!

Mark Boas, 24785 Cougar Ct., Hollywood – as President of the NSL, the proposed budget will have NSL families waiting several more years in a declining for adequate park facilities and soccer fields. Fifteen hundred families in northern SMC have been waiting patiently for their soccer fields. The current budget is insufficient.

Dana Brown, 47024 Tanner Ave., Lexington Park – as a resident of SMC for thirty years, she is concerned about the affordable housing needs. The Cohen report strongly recommended the adoption of the mandatory inclusionary zoning clause into the County's zoning ordinance. Why accept these studies and ignore their recommendations? Do something to take care of your county residents!

Jimmie Coontz, 47002 East Rennell Dr., Lexington Park – Congratulations to the Commissioners for doing a good job. However, need to remind you about low income housing. Please find homes for the low income people.


Mike Thompson, 29744 Sotterley Road, Hollywood – stated that the budget does not list the debt itself. Please include in the budget for the general population. Apparently the County does not know who paid what in taxes to SMC. Also, please help the Library.

Elaine Kramer responded that the budget on file in the Library has the debt listed – about \$95 million dollars. SMC does not learn about the specific allocation on revenues until distributions made in June and August.

Doug Ritchie, 26590 Three Notch Road, Mechanicsville – The Board must tax the “big guy.” Change who you tax. With new county commissioners, state delegates, a new governor, new congressmen, changing who is taxed may be done for you.

The hearing adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

**Minutes Approved by the
Board of County Commissioners on 2/30/02**


**Judith A. Spalding, Administrative Assistant
to the Board of County Commissioners**