

County Commissioners MeetingTuesday, January 20, 1970

Present: F. Elliott Burch, President
J. Wilmer Bowles, Commissioner
George R. Aud, Commissioner

Paul R. Raley, Administrative Assistant
Recording: Helen M. Bailey (Mrs.), Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

The minutes of the previous meeting which was held on January 13, 1970, were read and approved.

SRC, SMECO, RAILROAD

Mr. Burch expressed the opinion and it was agreed that the County Commissioners would withhold action on signing the Memorandum of Understanding submitted by the State Roads Commission regarding the use of the railroad right-of-way and the dualization of Route 235 until such time as the required enabling legislation has been obtained by our Legislators. It was noted that the County has not, as of this date, been officially advised in writing by the General Services Administration that the County Commissioners do, in fact, have the authority to proceed with finalizing the purchase of the railroad and railroad right-of-way. It was generally felt that the State Roads Commission should use their machinery to acquire the adjacent land, do the surveying, and all the rest of the work required to obtain adjacent right-of-way. A press release was prepared, approved and released concerning the action taken at the Task Force Meeting held in Hughesville at the Southern Maryland Electric Coop., Inc. offices on Friday, January 16, 1970.

Mrs. Frankie (Betty Lou) Harris

Mrs. Frankie Harris appeared to appeal a decision taken to disapprove payment of a bill presented on January 9, 1970 by Mr. Frankie Harris, operator of a local Pool Room, for the repair to the door of the establishment in the amount of \$246.76. It is the Harris' contention that this bill should be paid by the County since it was damaged during the process of an apprehension by Deputy Sheriffs George Quade and Ray Williams, the latter of whom had the glass door slammed into him while in pursuit of the culprit. It was decided to look into the matter further and to determine definitely if the County does have any liability. Mrs. Harris will be advised of our findings in the matter.

Later, the Sheriff recounted what he knew of the incident and it developed that the pursued forcefully swung the open door back into Deputy Ray Williams as the Deputy followed the pursued through the doorway. The Commissioners' Counsel, Mr. David M. Williams, stated that the County did not have any liability unless the claim were presented within 90 days after the occurrence. The incident occurred on September 17, 1969.

Sheriff Benjamin Burroughs

Sheriff Burroughs appeared to apprise the County Commissioners that the use of direct-dial on long-distance calls going through the switchboard could save the County considerable money. The Sheriff stated that he would very much like to have the Commissioners ask the telephone company in to perform a survey of our present system, and to suggest improvements. Mr. Raley stated that he had already been in touch with the telephone company and would arrange to have someone perform a survey and analysis. This action was occasioned by a change-over, by the telephone company, in the rate system, etc.

Legislative Session

Senator Paul J. Bailey and Delegates Henry J. Fowler and John Hanson Briscoe appeared to be briefed on the legislation to be requested for St. Mary's County during the Legislative Session which begins on January 21, 1970:

Board of Recreation and Parks

It was determined that the Board of Recreation and Parks would need legislation to legally empower them to undertake the formation of Recreation Councils and to employ personnel on a part-time or temporary basis. The engagement of volunteer workers, without compensation, was also discussed and the probability of the County incurring liability while these workers are engaged in the County Recreational Program was introduced. It was agreed that we should ask for the legislation. It was also agreed to increase membership of the Recreation and Parks Board from seven to nine members appointed by the County Commissioners and that the two new appointees be from the Youth Commission and that they serve concurrently so that adequate liaison representation may be maintained. Mr. Sterling was requested to check with our insurance carrier to determine the limits of our involvement with part-time, temporary, and/or volunteer workers.

Sheltered Workshop for the Handicapped (Mental and Physical)

The St. Mary's Association for Retarded Children asked for enabling legislation and to acquire legal status as a "Sheltered Workshop for the Handicapped" -- the handicapped to include both mentally and physically disabled persons. The Legislators and the County Commissioners were in accord that we should ask for legislation to permit the County to either deed or lease a tract of land for this purpose, and to obtain authority to hire a Director. It was the general consensus that the land should be leased rather than deeded -- if at all possible -- and that the deed should contain a reverter clause. Senator Bailey was of the opinion that we should not give away any land since we are already in a tight squeeze concerning land and parking space at the present time. The squeeze will tighten with the population growth. Since the Sheltered Workshop for the Handicapped will be operating within the framework and under the aegis of County Government, it was agreed to lease rather than convey land; to confine the use of the land to this specific purpose; and that a reverter clause should be included so that the land would revert to the County in case of an eventuality. The request for legislation was approved.

Youth Commission vis-a-vis Board of Recreation and Parks

Mr. Burch advised the Legislators that our request for specific legislation in this regard would be submitted to them in writing.

Scholarships

It was unanimously agreed that we should ask for Legislation to lift the restriction on authorized courses to be taken by the scholars. At the present time, scholarships are confined to business and teaching and nursing.

Courthouse Addition

Mr. Burch explained that we have not finalized plans for the Courthouse addition because we have not been assured of Legislative support and there is a requirement to deposit 75% of the total fee upon completion of finalized plans. Discussion ensued concerning the County's future planning for additional office space, lack of adequate parking and land space in the Courthouse complex, and the anticipated requirement of moving some of our installations out of the town proper. Senator

Bailey said he thought we should be doing some serious planning for the future. He said he was thinking about the utilization of the space we have and the thousands more who come into these Counties (Charles and St. Mary's) each year. "I think you have got to plan farther ahead than just doing something about this Courthouse. I don't think it will be able to take care of the Judicial functions before long. I can see that we made a mistake in allowing this property to be built up."

It was agreed that the Legislators would introduce the legislation for a \$300,000 addition to the Courthouse upon receipt of the plans as they now exist. When the plans are sent to them in Annapolis, a statement of how this addition will be utilized and fit into the long-range planning will accompany the plans.

Metropolitan Commission

Special legislation for the Metropolitan Commission will be submitted in writing to our Legislators on the scene in Annapolis.

Salary Increase for County Commissioners

Discussion was held and it was felt that a study should be made to consider the reorganization of the County Government, as well as the functions of the Commissioners, and that the question of County Commissioners salaries would be one of the items to be considered.

Condemnation and Indemnification Authority

Special emergency enabling legislation to accommodate the needs of St. Mary's County, the State Roads Commission, and the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc., in the dualization of State Route 235 and upgrading of the electricity needs for the County was discussed. This limited purpose authority would guarantee the County's ability to acquire property in lieu of that which would be transferred to the State Roads Commission for appropriate indemnification, so as to have a continuous strip of property and thus meeting our existing agreement with SMECO vis-a-vis the dualization of State Route 235. The request was approved and Senator Bailey will follow this through with Joseph D. Buscher, Special Assistant Attorney General for the State Roads Commission.

Repeal of the Farm Personal Property Tax, Art. 81, Sec. 9.

It was unanimously agreed to introduce legislation to repeal the personal property tax on farm machinery, farm implements and the like, and livestock. It was the general consensus that such repeal is long overdue since the cost of collecting the tax is prohibitive and the amount of money involved is approximately \$5,000.00.

Payments Approved

Approved payment of \$1,600.00 to Mark Pratt, Pratt Marine Construction Co., on the project at Bushwood Wharf. This amount of money covers materials only.

Payment of \$2,750.00 to David M. Gruber and Co., Certified Public Accountants, for the Metropolitan Commission Audit Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1969.

Payment of \$150.00 to David M. Williams, for filing of three non-support petitions for the Department of Social Services.

Payment of \$239.20 to the Insurance Buyers' Council, Inc., for their Service Contract year ending July 31, 1970 (services and expenses through January 15, 1970).

Payment of \$1,808.80 to the State Roads Commission for work performed on the St. Andrews Church Road, month of November.

Voucher Numbers 36310 through 36332 were signed by Mr. F. Elliott Burch.

P. Roscoe Thompson, Easement Solicitor, SMECO

Mr. P. Roscoe Thompson, Easement Solicitor for the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc. appeared to inquire into the County's intentions concerning McKay's Beach Road. He stated that the SMECO had to rebuild and upgrade the electric line by June 1. He stated that if the Commissioners were planning on widening the road, and the action could be expedited, a great savings could be effected. It was unanimously agreed that the County should attempt to obtain a 40- or 50-foot right-of-way (preferably 50 ft.). Mr. Burch stated that the County Commissioners will make the arrangements for a survey and probably contact John Hodges about obtaining a continuous right-of-way.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Approved,

F. Elliott Burch

F. Elliott Burch

President