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## AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Members of the Rho Kappa History Honor Society recently visited first-grade classrooms at Ocean City Elementary, Showell Elementary and Buckingham Elementary schools to share the inspiring story of Ruby Bridges in honor of African American History Month. Through this program, they helped young students learn about courage, perseverance, and the importance of history.

## Speed cams catch more than 9,000

Berlin's system recorded more 3,000 in one month

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) The speed cameras implemented in Berlin last summer have been successful in reducing speeding on Flower Street and Seahawk Road, officials said this week.

Each apparatus has two camera heads, for a total of six among the three locations of Flower Street at Railroad Avenue, Flower Street at Peach Lane, and Seahawk Road near Stephen Decatur High School, and records when drivers' speed ticks past 12 mph over the posted legal limit of 25 mph.

All cameras were live in August. That month, the devices picked up 3,113 speeding violations. That figure has steadily decreased, and in December, the safety technology recorded 926 incidents of drivers going 37 mph or over. In total, from July-December, there 9,084 speeders issued tickets.

See CAMERAS Page 11

## OPA OK's \$12.8 million budget

Created from bottom up, plan reflects 'foundation of our strategy,' Heavner says

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) The Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors unanimously approved the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget at the community's regularly scheduled meeting last Saturday.

The final spending plan includes revenues and expenses of \$12,846,393 and sets the basic non-water assessment rate, which consists of 6,775 lots, at \$875 (up from \$850).

The assessment rate for the 78 lots

classified as non-water/ estate is \$1,313; the 1,361 water lots will have an assessment of \$1,515 (from \$1,465).

The assessment for the six water/ estate lots is \$2,273, and the 288 water/ non-bulkhead lots will have an assessment of \$965. The sole water/non-bulkhead/ estate lot assessment is \$1,448.

"The budget approval vote is the culmination of a well-designed and proven process by [OPA General Manager] John Viola and his operational staff," OPA Board of Directors member Jeff Heavner said. "This process provided transparency throughout multiple opportunities for opinion. This beautiful, bottom-

up balanced budget is the foundation of our strategy ... to ensure Ocean Pines remains a premier community with exceptional value and quality of life."

The budget was created with input and collaboration from Viola and his staff, the OPA Budget and Finance Committee and public feedback.

This included a Feb. 5 budget town hall, where homeowners had the opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns. The work towards completing the financial document began last September.

During this year's budget process, a point of contention was the introduction of a single racquet center mem-

See OP BOARD Page 11

## New meeting space for OP? Well, maybe

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) Ocean Pines leadership will consider a new multi-purpose meeting space, provided a cost analysis, drawings, and blueprints are compiled.

Per a unanimous vote by the Ocean Pines Association's Board of Directors, General Manager John Viola will prepare estimates of cost, drawings and blueprints of "appro-

See NEW Page 5

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# Property tax revenue picture clears for county

Maryland releases constant yield rates ahead of county, municipal budget sessions

By **Bethany Hooper**

Associate Editor

(Feb. 27, 2025) The county and its municipalities received a first look at the constant yield tax rates that will guide budget discussions for the coming fiscal year.

Last week, the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation notified the state's counties and municipalities of the tax rate that would be needed to produce the same revenue as the year prior. Known as the constant yield tax rate, the figure is based on the new assessed value of taxable properties in a jurisdiction.

Simply put, as assessments rise, for example, the tax rate should drop so

that the revenue derived from the property tax stays the same.

This appears to be the case for Worcester County and its municipalities, which saw net assessable real property bases rise in 2025.

In Ocean City, for example, this year's assessable base increased from \$10.8 billion to \$12.1 billion. While resort properties were not reassessed for this year, increases from the most recent assessment are phased in over a three-year period.

As a result, the new constant yield tax rate is 39.58 cents per \$100 dollars of assessed value, or a figure lower than the city's actual tax rate of 44.26 cents.

It remains to be seen if Ocean City will adopt the constant yield tax rate or a different rate altogether. Prior to 2024, a jurisdiction could not set a tax rate that exceeded the constant yield tax rate without first advertising its in-

tent to do so, according to the Department of Assessments and Taxation. Now, a jurisdiction cannot set a tax rate that exceeds the current taxable year's real property tax rate without advertisement.

The good news is that primary residences are insulated by the Homestead Tax Credit, which limits the increase in taxable assessments each year to a fixed percentage. In Ocean City, for example, the Homestead cap is set at 0%.

In Worcester County, this year's assessable base increased from \$19.5 billion to \$21.4 billion, resulting in a constant yield tax rate of 77.03 cents per \$100 of assessed value, the state reports. That rate is lower than the actual rate of 84.50 cents.

Berlin's net assessable base also increased this year, from \$594 million to \$631 million. The actual tax rate is set at 82.75 cents per \$100 of assessed

value, and the constant yield tax rate is calculated at 77.99 cents.

Moving farther south, Snow Hill reported a \$9.4 million increase in the net assessable base, with an actual tax rate set at 93.75 cents per \$100 of assessed value and the constant yield rate set at 88.08 cents.

In Pocomoke, tax rates are divided between owner-occupied properties and nonowner-occupied properties.

For owner-occupied properties, the net assessable base increased from \$146 million to \$155 million, which resulted in a constant yield rate of 88.02 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The actual tax rate is set at 93.75 cents.

For nonowner-occupied properties, the net assessable base increased from \$172 million to \$186 million, resulting in a constant yield rate of \$1.0466 per \$100 of assessed value. The current rate is set at \$1.1311.

# Mayor breaks council tie on EDU financing

By **Tara Fischer**

Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) In a tie vote broken by Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall, the Town Council approved a property owner's request to purchase and finance four equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) for an addition to a Bay Street housing complex.

At the municipality's Monday, Feb. 24 meeting of the Mayor and Council, the council authorized developer Zachary Grauer to finance four EDUs in his project to repurpose a vacant structure on the north side of his Bay Street parcel. The initiative would see the construction of five new apartment units. One unit will be a two-bedroom space, while the remaining four will be one-bedroom, at around 700 to 800 square feet.

The discussion, which examined whether Grauer should be permitted to finance the EDUs rather than pay the \$66,774 cost outright, was met with spirited debate, resulting in a tie that was broken by Tyndall. In the case of a stalemate, the mayor is given the authority to offer a vote by code.

Council members Steve Green and Jay Knerr supported the project. Council members Jack Orris and Vice President Dean Burrell opposed the motion, citing issues with the town's financing policy, using taxpayer money to offer the loan and neighborhood overpopulation.

While Council member Shaneka Nichols was absent from Monday night's meeting and could not participate in the vote, the mayor maintained that an earlier conversation between the two revealed that she had reservations regarding Berlin's financing policy.

In 2017, the town approved a policy that allows developers to finance

five or fewer EDUs over five years. The motion earlier this week aligns with the policy and permits Grauer to finance four EDUs from the town for \$66,774 at 525 Bay Street. The developer is to pay a 10% deposit of \$6,677 and be charged a 3% financing fee to cover administrative and staff costs.

Despite disapproval from some council members, the town has a precedent for offering Grauer a financing agreement, including previous deals with Sunrise Church, Twisters, Renaissance Plaza, Strawberry Fields and others. Officials said that the municipality has had success with the policy.

"As far as I know, we haven't had any defaults or delinquencies," Berlin Administrator Mary Bohlen said.

Still, the discussion was met with objection.

Burrell argued the proposed area is "busting at the seams," and more housing units would increase traffic and population congestion on Bay Street.

He added he approves of the developer's plan to construct these apartments, but he does not believe it should be completed using taxpayer dollars. Instead, if the property owners wished to proceed, they should be solely responsible for the funding.

"The area is saturated now and is overpopulated," Burrell said. "This project will add to that situation. I think this project is detrimental to the Town of Berlin. It will impact the quality of life in neighboring areas... This is your project, and I really do believe that it should be completed on your dime."

Tyndall reminded the council and the public that Grauer is not receiving a price cut. Instead, he has agreed to pay the full EDU cost within five

years.

"[The developer is] not getting a discount," the mayor said. "He's paying a premium for the EDU and just doing it over a set period of time... [He's] not getting a gift from the tax-

payers."

Tyndall and the two council members who supported the motion emphasized that the project aligns with the strategic plan objective of increasing housing.

See COUNCIL Page 4



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# 'Keep Berlin Cool' effort seeks grant support

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) The Berlin Horticulture Advisory Committee will move ahead with plans to apply for a mini-grant from the Maryland Coastal Bays Program for tree plantings following the town council's approval Monday.

The horticulture group will apply for a grant from MCBP for a "Keep Berlin Cool" tree-planting initiative. The maximum request is \$5,000, but committee representatives do not currently believe they will ask for the full amount. The application includes a one-page narrative with an attached budget and is due by March 7.

"Trees are necessary, especially in an urban setting, for habitats for our birds and pollinators, for shade, and for stormwater runoff," horticulture

committee member Victoria Spice said.

If the group is approved for the grant, the project would include planting native trees between private residences, town-owned property, and congregations. Town staff would not be required to work on the initiative. The horticulture team would spearhead the program, creating site plans and determining which trees would be ideal for each particular spot.

"The town would not be liable for the maintenance of the tree or the success of the tree's growth," Spice said.

The committee member added that the group would work with the homeowner to designate the type of trees. If they prefer a certain color or species, as long as it's native, the

planting could be tailored to the resident's goal.

If awarded, MCBP will notify the Berlin committee in April. Spice said that the project would likely take place in the fall, which is an optimal time to plant trees. Zack Tyndall, the town's mayor, added that should the initiative proceed, the group should plan an appropriate distance between the new flora and electrical lines.

"Plan for how far we should plant [the trees] away from electrical lines just to make sure that wherever they plant, it won't grow right into the electrical line," he said.

The grant is reimbursable. This means that project leaders will be able to purchase the necessary materials should they be given the financial go-ahead from MCBP, and they will be able to invoice the nonprofit

for the funds immediately.

Spice said that MCBP had the funds secured for the mini-grant program as of 3:30 p.m. Monday. However, she emphasized that the program's fate is uncertain, given the Trump administration's streak of pulling this type of financial backing.

"[MCBP] does have the funding in hand for the mini-grant program," Spice said. "Obviously, with the political climate, that can get taken from them, and at that point, they would notify any folks awarded, halting spending. They don't think that's a possibility at this time, but it's unknown."

The town council authorized the horticulture team to apply for the grant. The vote was unanimous.

## Council to revisit financing policy

Continued from Page 3  
ing the town's affordable housing.

"We have financed a lot of projects," Green said. "... I feel that we need to be consistent. To me, affordable housing is in the strategic plan document ... we can't pick and choose what that means and what that looks like. I don't look at it as getting done with taxpayer dollars. There's no harm to the residents. I think that we are allowing affordable housing to move forward."

Orris argued that the town should not be in the business of offering loans.

"I am not sure this is a road we should delve down to any further," the council member said. "We are not a bank."

However, given the current policy, supporters of the Bay Street financing maintain the project aligns with the 2017-approved guidelines. While it would be easier for developers to pay the entire sum at once, Tyndall said that the standard is in place, and if it is "palatable" for the property owners to take advantage of it, then the governing group must honor that request.

"If we still stand by that policy, then they are fitting squarely within the mark," the mayor said.

The EDU financing agreement was ultimately approved Monday night. However, to address the policy concerns that emerged during the discussion, the 2017 guidelines will be reviewed at the March 24 Mayor and Council meeting following a motion by Orris.

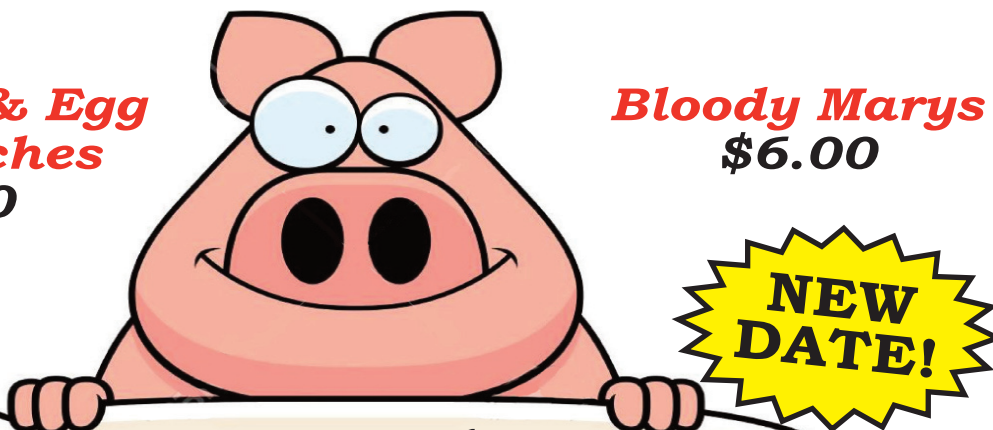
"If you have language or alterations to this policy, or if you feel it needs to be removed entirely, that is the direction that we need because it sends the wrong message to the public," Tyndall said, addressing the council.

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# New meeting room suggestion to be explored

Continued from Page 1

private renditions for a modular meeting room that meets the needs of the association for its annual meeting as well as committee meetings," a motion brought forward by board member Steve Jacobs said.

The materials are to be available for consideration by the start of the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget preparation.

The vote at the body's Saturday, Feb. 22 meeting does not mean OPA is bound to approve the project. Simply put, Viola and his team will consider the feasibility of creating a new area for official gatherings. The findings will be available to guide the board in the future if they wish.

If the board votes to move forward, concrete planning or construction is three or four years out, officials said.

"The information sought should be comprehensive enough to address the locations of a meeting room, modular arrangement, space, and parking arrangements, impact on other activities, including for argument's sake, the farmers market on Saturdays, quality of acoustics, video, and audio capabilities, assurance of quality hybrid connections as well as design and appropriate reasonable outfitting of chairs and workstations," Jacobs said.

The board member added Viola may also suggest changes to the current Clubhouse Meeting Room. The motion's intent is to determine whether constructing a new space would make financial sense for the association.

"The board seeks to compile information to gauge the desirability, cost, and workability of such an undertaking," Jacobs continued. "This is not an attempt to vault a meeting room ahead of other particular capital budgets. It is simply to get it in the queue for further consideration."

The board member noted the issue has come up in the past, yet a viability analysis has never been completed, halting any serious consideration.

"No one has ever put together a package that is worthwhile, so this is a step to do that and will determine where we are depending on our budget needs and other demands for our members and what we can financially support," Jacobs said.

If the initiative eventually moves forward, the new boardroom will alleviate the limitations of the current Clubhouse Meeting Room.

Jacobs said that some work has been done to improve the conditions of the meeting space currently in use. Panels were added to address acoustic issues, for instance, but the board member maintained that the situation is still "cumbersome."

He argued that the audience sometimes sees things that the indi-

viduals leading the meetings cannot and that there are audio lags and delays when community members watch virtually. Jacobs said that he would defer to Viola and his staff to determine if an entirely new room is needed or if there is more to be done to work with what is available. Still, he said that if he had to take a position, he believes a "room other than [The Clubhouse]" is necessary.

The remainder of the board agreed that a feasibility evaluation is beneficial. Member Jeff Heavner said the body "owes it to the association to do our due diligence" to look at all options and that the motion "obligates us to nothing." However, he argued that neighborhood leadership has not exhausted all possibilities available to spruce up the Clubhouse. He was asked "very recently" to be part of a group that will consider improvements to the existing facility.

OPA Board of Directors Secretary John Latham said the group needs to consider all possible choices, including the cost of a new space and what can be done with the current facility. However, ongoing projects like the new South Station Fire House, golf course irrigation, and regular maintenance are the priority.

"I want to be clear that none of this is at the expense [of other projects]," he said. "We have a fire department that is job one right now. We have a racquet sports center; we need to continue contributing to our reserves, roads, bulkheads, and drainage, so in my mind, these are the things that are important to us... I think there is no cost other than time and evaluation...just to see what the options could be for the future. There's no burning platform here for us to move quickly on anything, but it would be nice to know our options."

OPA Board Vice President Rick Farr added that preparing a cost analysis and having drawings is a "best practice" and that it's a good idea to get a budgetary baseline on what a multipurpose space that could

be used for committees, the board and other membership functions would entail.

"This gives us an estimate on the cost moving forward," he said. "If it's something we will put on the radar in the next three or four years from now, at least we have a baseline of what this would cost for us."

If the leadership eventually proceeds with the project, it could include constructing a large room with ample seating, enough for 100 to 150 people for the annual meeting. It may also have redesign capabilities for smaller committee and board gatherings. Some walls could be opened, and others could be closed. Jacobs described it as a "convertible room."

There was some community opposition to the motion.

During last week's public comments portion of the regular board meeting, OPA resident Amy Peck argued that it is financially irresponsible of the board to consider a new space when the community has "significant expenses on the horizon."

"This board has already funded several costly, non-revenue producing projects, such as the Tiki Bar extension and electronic signs opposed by the community," Peck said. "Let's avoid adding a dedicated boardroom

to this list."

Following the Feb. 22 assembly, Peck wrote on Facebook that the board considered a new meeting space in 2023 that would hold 150 seats. She claimed it could cost between \$450,000 and \$600,000. The board did not indicate a price estimate at its gathering last week.

However, the 2023 discussions were dropped because, according to Peck, the idea was met with homeowner pushback. The resident said the town's most recent town halls, a Touch of Italy questions and answers held at the community center and a budget session at the Clubhouse Meeting Room, had "plenty of space" and that committees do not require additional room.

"If OPA cannot afford amenity increases in line with inflation, improve road safety for pedestrians and bikers, and afford a leaf truck, it should not be able to afford an infrequently used, unnecessary new meeting space," Peck said. "It's time to tighten our belts and not spend foolishly. I'm asking you to focus on needs, not wants."

Still, the board unanimously approved the motion to instruct Viola to compile a cost estimate and drawings and blueprints for a new meeting room.

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# Possible cell tower remains in talk phase

### Police chief researching possibility and locations, but concerned with service

**By Tara Fischer**  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) Officials said a potential and controversial cell phone tower is still possible for Ocean Pines, yet the project is still in its earliest stages.

At the community's Saturday, Feb. 22, board of directors meeting, Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson updated the neighborhood on the poor reception alleviation initiative. Robinson said he is part of the "driving committee" to try and find a solution to abysmal cell phone service but that any leads for a cell phone tower are "still in the talking phase."

"We've done nothing more than talk to people on the telephone about what is possible and what are the best options," Robinson said.

The chief said he has spoken to "multiple contractors," around three, besides Milestone Towers, a vendor referenced at previous meetings. None of these companies have completed a site visit. According to Robinson, this could happen in the future, but currently, officials are simply discussing what is possible regarding re-

ception remediation, like constructing a tower.

"Once we have a better idea of where we're going, we will hopefully be doing a nice presentation for everybody to see," the police chief said. "We are going to be very transparent with this."

A possible cell phone tower project was first discussed among community leaders publicly at a September OPA Board of Directors meeting. The idea was a new tower could improve slow cell phone reception in the wooded neighborhood, particularly during holiday weekends and large gatherings.

"I realized it was an issue, especially when I could not make phone calls to my wife from the grocery store on July 4 weekend," Robinson said in September. "I was getting no signal. In all seriousness, what worried me the most was if someone had to call 911, which was their only opportunity, they could not get through. If there is no signal, you cannot get through."

In November, Robinson said Ocean Pines had communicated with Milestone Towers, a potential cell phone tower contractor.

The chief noted that if an agreement was signed, the partner would put up a tower at its expense and ensure all the necessary permits were

obtained. He added Milestone Towers has built sites at three Wicomico County high schools.

"If it is all good, once we sign the contract, [Milestone Towers] will pay a one-time fee prior to building the tower, plus it will be a monthly 40% revenue share for Ocean Pines," Robinson said at the time.

Officials said at the November board meeting the project was in the preliminary phase and no contract had been signed or negotiated. Last week, officials continued to emphasize the initiative is still in the talking stage, and they have had conversations with possible contractors outside of Milestone Towers.

At a board meeting in January, officials clarified the project's status in response to community chatter.

During last month's gathering's public comments portion, resident Dave Tanner criticized the potential construction, inciting strong clarification from community leaders that no concrete plan is in place for a cell site.

"The Ocean Pines board needs to put an immediate halt to discussions with a contractor to erect a tower in our community," Tanner said. "Folks chose to live in Ocean Pines because of its natural beauty and the assurance that no commercial structures will be built in the neighborhood. Cell towers

degrade property values and may have radio frequency health issues."

OPA Board President Stuart Laker-nick addressed Tanner's statements, arguing that, "There is no planned construction; there is no planned site. The only thing our chief decided to look into was the safety issue of getting through to 911. If you can't call 911 without service, it is a safety issue. But at this time, there is absolutely no planned construction, no site, no contractor."

Officials last week continued to maintain an Ocean Pines cell phone tower may or may not be constructed and that any definitive moves are still far out. However, they are talking about what is possible to address the poor reception.

Robinson also addressed rumors that any tower would be "gargantuan and massive." If the structure were to be completed, the chief said it would be discreet.

"One thing I want to be clear is that nobody is more cognizant than I am of the beauty and the view of Ocean Pines..." he said. "Some companies we're talking about can look to see how [a tower] can be disguised or camouflaged, so we are very cognizant of any possibilities we are doing, and I want to stress that that is where we're at right now."

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# South Fire Station work in OP expected to start in fall

Career firefighters will move to North Station during major construction project

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) The Ocean Pines Association and the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department continue to work toward a new South Fire Station, with an estimated construction start date of October, given the timeline remains on track.

At the Ocean Pines Association's Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, Feb. 22, OPVFD President Joe Enste, OPVFD Chief Joey Widgeon, and OPA General Manager John Viola updated the community on developments to the fire department's new South Station. This project will see the construction of a new firehouse at the South Station property, located at 911 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines.

Per workgroup meetings, which included Widgeon, Enste, and OPA officials, the current site proposal accounts for a 15,370-square-foot facility. This is a decrease from the initial 19,100-square-foot plan but with an additional 760 square feet from a previous determination of 14,610 square feet to increase the facility's functionality.

"When we started looking at the fit-out, there were certain additional spaces and realignments of hallways to try to make ease of access during an emergency in the evening so that our career staff could get in and out without having to go zig-zag through the firehouse," Enste said. "We had to shift some of the interior walls, and with that, it kind of limited the space we had in other areas of the offices, the kitchens, and the living quarters, and so at that point, we realized we needed to extend the building by about 760 square feet."

Fire officials delved into the project's finances. According to Enste, the initiative has \$1.7 million in grants and bonds exclusively reserved for the South Station. Of that, \$1.3 million is already in a dedicated bank account. The department also has \$750,000 through fundraising and additional savings that will be used for the new facility.

Enste said that as they continue to outline the project, they are working to ensure compliance with National Fire Protection Association standards.

"With this being a firehouse, there are certain NFPA standards that we as a fire department have to meet, from wind ratings to essentially being the last building standing if there ever is a catastrophic event, so that the fire department can continue to respond and provide help to the community," the fire official noted.

Additionally, initiative leads have evaluated fit-out costs and transition costs to ensure the department is able to continue effective operations during the interim period while the new structure is being built.

"We also evaluated the transition costs of what is going to be to have to move out of the one firehouse and continue operations so that the community is still fully protected," Enste said.

The workgroup has confirmed pricing for the fire suppression, vehicle extraction, and station alerting systems. According to Enste, the vehicle extraction system "essentially plugs into all the fire apparatus to make sure that every time that fire engine or that medic unit starts, it's going to suck out all of the bad gases and process it and put it back out into the environment after it goes through filters."

"Right now, with our current station, all those fumes and exhausts just go on everything that is in that engine bay, which is not great, especially in the business that we are in, so that is one thing that is going to be very important moving forward," the fire president added.

OPVFD's career team will relocate to the North Station during the construction of the new South facility. This move will help avoid any costs associated with utilizing temporary facilities, like trailers, which Widgeon said cost approximately \$140,000.

"We determined that moving to the North Station made the most financial sense," Widgeon said. "We couldn't justify spending nearly \$140,000 on temporary trailers when we have existing living quarters available."


OPA Public Works will also provide the department with access to additional space to ensure fire service may continue.

Viola said that OPA and OPVFD are working on the new station's plans with an architect. The general manager maintained that the parties will receive preliminary architectural drawings by Feb. 28, with final plans arriving in April. The association is also determining funding options and will seek board approval for a referendum vote.

The referendum will align with the 2025 OPA Board of Directors election this summer, allowing homeowners to vote on funding the enhanced facility. If all remains on track, construction work will kick off in October. The South Station is expected to be completed around early 2027.

"This has been a constructive and productive team effort, with careful consideration given to every dollar spent," Viola said.

Questions and inquiries about the fire station project can be directed to [info@oceanpines.org](mailto:info@oceanpines.org).



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# Berlin ends moratorium, explores new idea

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) The Berlin Town Council has fully lifted the development moratorium enacted last year, allowing the planning office to again receive and consider rezoning and annexation requests.

The council also amended the motion to require the drafting of small area plans specific to areas under consideration for rezoning or annexation.

At the Berlin Mayor and Council's Monday, Feb. 24 meeting, the group voted to entirely terminate the moratorium that was established last July to pause certain actions of the planning commission, including final site plan approval and rezoning and annexation requests in the absence of a full-time planning director following the passing of former position holder Dave Engelhart in April.

The temporary halt was extended several times until January when the council voted to expire the specific ban on final site plan approval. Ryan Hardesty, an experienced senior code enforcement officer with the City of Salisbury, was hired as the new acting planning director.

The moratorium remained in effect for rezoning and annexations to ease Hardesty into her role, which she

officially began at the beginning of this month. At the Berlin Town Council meeting Monday, the governing body elected to finally lift the ban fully, now allowing the planning group to review annexations and rezoning requests, in addition to final site plans. The vote was unanimous, with council member Shaneka Nichols absent.

Part of Monday's vote was to also require the drafting of small area plans specific to spaces under consideration for rezoning and annexation requests. The new modification would extend the timeline for these asks. Rezoning requests are currently given an estimated 60 to 90 days. With the small area plan, this would be extended to 150 to 180 days. Annexations would be pushed from six to nine months to nine to 12 months with the new small area plan requirement.

"You are not going to be able to produce that small area plan quickly; there is a period of time," planning consultant Rick Baldwin said. "... While the normal rezoning process is in that 60 to 90 days just for notifications and public meetings, you have more work to do, and more time must be requested. Just trying to give you a reasonable time frame ... and to find a way not to have a moratorium but not be overwhelmed."

According to Baldwin, small area plans will allow rezonings and annexations to proceed. Preparing these guidelines will give town officials an opportunity to determine the impact of the decisions regarding these requests so they may align with Berlin's values.

The town also wants to update its comprehensive plan, which was last updated in 2010. Given that the document is 15 years old, its lack of upgrades over the years could complicate land-use decisions today. Baldwin maintained that the State of Maryland requires local jurisdictions to maintain an up-to-date comprehensive plan to guide rulings, like annexations and rezonings. The small area plans would be incorporated as amendments to the larger, overall comprehensive plan.

"In essence, we are kind of [improving rezonings and annexations without a comprehensive plan], with ours being so outdated," Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall said. "...we cannot continue to move forward in our planning department without the tools that we need...The small area plan gives the Mayor and Council and the planning commission the ability to analyze more information about the impacts of such a change before you act on that type of request."

The mayor added that the municipality will incorporate enhancements to a comprehensive plan during the upcoming budget process and is looking to hire a consultant to manage the project. It's estimated based on other municipalities the cost to hire a consultant to lead the process could cost \$150,000.

"Once that small area plan is completed, it should be viewed as an amendment to your comprehensive

plan," Baldwin said. The consultant added that "these would be portions of that much larger plan so you can be consistent with the state's desire" and align with Berlin's values today.

The small area plan will provide a clearer picture as town officials work to make these land-use decisions.

"What we're asking with this small area plan is that it will kind of take the information that exists and then update it so we have an idea of whatever the request is to change," Tyndall said. "This is the material that is fresh and current, and then what I'm hearing from [Baldwin] is that it will then be added as a new action step or a new piece of information within the comprehensive plan."

Councilmember Steve Green agreed with the decision to move forward with the small area plan requirement, emphasizing that it's time to end the moratorium in full, and this process will allow for that.

"I like the strategy because I do think it's time to lift the moratorium, but I don't want to put the team back in square one without the correct tools in the box," he said.

Under the new requirement, when rezoning and annexation requests are brought forward, staff will develop the small area plans and present them to the planning commission with the request, along with a staff memo and recommendation.

"It doesn't change the flow of the process; it adds information that is available when the planning commission makes their recommendation and this body approves," Tyndall said. "...It's trying to think about that request holistically and how it might impact the neighborhoods or adjacent parcels and provide more information to the bodies."

## Md. Coastal Bays Program offers senior scholarships

(Feb. 27, 2025) The Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) will be offering three scholarships valued at \$1,000 each to qualifying high school seniors from Worcester County Public Schools interested in a future in the environmental field.

They are seeking applicants who are pursuing a four-year or two-year college or university, trade school, or Corps position with a focus on the environmental field.

"We did not want to restrict these scholarships to those students applying to 4-year universities. Gateways into the environmental world can take different paths, and that might include not attending college at all," said Liz Wist, Education Coordinator at the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

To be eligible for the Coastal Bays Scholarship Program, applicants must be a student in the Worcester County Public School system, graduating high school in the spring of 2025, and must submit a completed application including two essay questions that will provide the opportunity for the applicant's voice to be heard.

"The essay portion of the application is the most determining element of the application. It's a chance for us to hear about the applicant's interest and passion for the environment, and the impact it has had on their own lives," said Wist.

Applications for the scholarship are due by Friday, April 4. To read more about this new scholarship program, please visit <https://mdcoastalbays.org/funding-opportunities/>

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# WPS Junior Ring Ceremony



Class of 2026 students stand with their alumni parents. Pictured, front from left, are Lena Parker and her mother Linsey Parker '94, and Preston Adkins with his father Law Adkins '93; and, back, are Beckett Green and his father Steve Green '93, and Jake Campbell with his mother Erika Campbell '88.



WPS junior Jake Timmons celebrated with his parents, Andy and Sara Timmons following the Ring Ceremony.

The annual Junior Ring Ceremony took place at Worcester Preparatory School on Feb. 6. It is tradition that seniors present the juniors with their class rings along with a few insightful comments as to why the recipient is special to them. The Ring Ceremony is always an inspiring event showing the bond and friendship between peers.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS/  
BAYSIDE GAZETTE



WPS juniors gathered following the ceremony for a group photo. Front, from left, are Lena Parker, Renata Lovitt, Sydney Mize, Ayla Yonker, Sam Botempo, Kobe Bouzaglo and Jamie Nguyen; second row, from left, Livi Owens, Emily Patrowicz, Anisha Batra, Catherine Cullen, Marina Farlow and Quinn Solloway; third row, Beckett Green, Jake Campbell, Chase Ginnavan, Max Carpenter, Joshua Greulich, Jay Moyer and Preston Adkins; and, back Dawson Davis, Michael Herbert, Jake Timmons, Kain Crossett and Ansh Batra.



Senior Sydney Tingle presented junior Marina Farlow with her class ring.

WPS seniors Jayden Scopp, far left, Danielle Carr, fourth from left, Avery Roselle, second from right, and Naz Unal, far right, were in attendance to present juniors with their rings. Junior pictured, from left, are Emily Patrowicz, Anisha Batra, Catherine Cullen, Sydney Mize, Ayla Yonker and Kobe Bouzaglo.



# Speed cameras bring in \$180k

Continued from Page 1

“Behaviors have changed,” Berlin Chief of Police Arnold Downing said.

By law, speed cameras are only permitted to operate and issue citations between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, Downing maintained that when the devices are not in use, officers return to the three locations and hand out tickets with higher fines and license points to speeding drivers.

“Don’t think that because they are operational only at certain times, we’re not coming back,” he noted. “[The cameras] are supporting us being in other places during those times, but we’re coming back... and getting people that think, ‘well, it’s not operating, so I can speed a bit.’”

The chief added that to date, the violations have secured \$180,000 in revenue for Berlin, accounting for the 55-60% split deal with speed camera vendor Red Speed.

The agreement provides that driv-

ers who exceed 36 mph face a \$40 fine. Berlin receives \$26 of each ticket. Red Speed, responsible for mailing the violations, collects the remainder of the payment.

Officials emphasized that Berlin’s funds from the speed camera citations stay within the town’s police department to be used for capital expenses.

“We are going to use those funds and accomplish some capital needs that exist within the police department so this money can be turned around into community policing and increased resources that the department needs, as well as a campaign to increase speed awareness downtown,” Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall said.

Town Council Vice President Dean Burrell, who lives near the speed camera sites, echoed Tyndall’s statement, reminding the public that while the revenue is a product of the speed camera initiative, it was not the intent.



FILE PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

One of the speed camera locations is pictured on Flower Street where the speed limit is 25 mph. Motorists are only ticketed once if they seen going 12 mph over the limit.

“The objective we are trying to obtain is to slow folks down, and this is working the way in which it was intended,” the councilmember said. “I

believe one of these months we’re going to come in here and have a total of zero, which would be great for Berlin.”

# OP board approves new budget

Continued from Page 1

bership. Previously, residents could choose to purchase memberships for individual sports, including pickleball, tennis, and platform tennis, which would grant them access to those activities only.

The decision to eliminate this old model and create the multi-sport combo was made to address costs associated with maintenance and operations at the center. Membership dues in the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget are now \$495 for a family, \$295 for individuals, \$590 for the non-member family option, and \$270 for a non-member individual.

The board members expressed their continued support of this decision ahead of the budget’s final approval last Saturday.

“We were told at our [budget review] session that there’s a \$70,000 hole to cover in Racquet Sports,” Director Steve Jacobs said. “We’re talking about basic maintenance. Nets, seats, tables, umbrellas, fencing, electric [and] salaries.”

“Everyone’s got to share in the cost,” he added.

Director Elaine Brady noted that the membership modification is overdue.

“I’ve always wondered why it wasn’t that to begin with,” she said. “The entire complex is for the benefit of all who play there, and the cost of maintaining that facility is borne by everybody there. Why each sport had a different membership number never made sense to me.”

Brady continued, arguing that past prices have been too low, contributing to the center’s struggle to generate revenue.

“Part of the reason that the racquet center has not been making money over the years is that the majority of the people who play there have had a membership rate well below the local market,” she said. “We’re just bringing that up a little bit so that we can get the racquet sports center into a positive position.”

All members of the board supported the budget.

“Not to support this budget, in my mind, would be fiscally irresponsible,” OPA Board Secretary John Latham said. “Each one of the directors did a thorough job in walking through their respective area of business.”

The entire spending plan can be viewed on Ocean Pine’s official website.

## Marlene Ott

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# County bolsters vehicle insurance coverage

Major increases in policy premiums necessary after recent uptick in accidents

By Brian Shane  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 21, 2025) A rising trend of costly car crashes in Worcester County-owned vehicles has prompted officials to upgrade their auto insurance policy to include comprehensive and collision coverage.

Without this coverage, the county bears the full financial burden of repairing or replacing vehicles damaged by accidents, weather events, or deer strikes, according to Human Resources Director Stacey Norton.

“This out-of-pocket expense can be substantial as we have seen with recent vehicles that were totaled,” she wrote in a Feb. 9 internal memo. “Due to our trend of accidents, spending the extra money on the additional coverage will offset the costs of repairing and/or replacing vehicles.”

In the last five fiscal years, insurance claims for county vehicles have been rising: there were 10 in 2021, 13 in 2021, 17 in 2022, 19 in 2023, and 27 last year, according to data provided by Norton. From 2021 to 2024, the county’s vehicle insurance claims

spiked 170%.

Those wrecks have cost the county between \$71,000 to \$88,000 a year in premiums. And, being self-insured, it means the county must pay for its own claims unless there is another involved party who pays.

One memorable incident from last summer saw a Roads Division truck on a stone delivery slip off a narrow roadway into a soft shoulder. It cost \$260,000 to replace that vehicle, Norton said, which also doubled as a winter snowplow.

For the 2025 fiscal year, which started July 1, there have been 16 vehicle claims: 3 deer strikes, 2 times where debris damaged a vehicle, 2 times where a vehicle struck a fixed object, 2 times striking another vehicle, and 7 times where another car struck a county vehicle.

Adding collision to their policy will cover accidents, regardless of fault. Comprehensive coverage is for non-collision events like theft, vandalism, or natural disasters, Norton said.

With comprehensive collision insurance, the county pays the deductible, which ends up being less costly than replacing a totaled vehi-

cle. In this year alone, the county has spent about \$88,000 on policy premiums, \$61,000 on repairs, and \$84,000 in vehicle replacement costs.

The department with the most crashes so far this year has been the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office, with 8 total. Most have been deer strikes, and none have been the fault of the deputy behind the wheel, officials said.

Overall, this long look at insurance upgrades started last fall, prompted by serious wreck: a sheriff’s deputy traveling on Race-track Road on was struck head-on by a panel van on Nov. 8

Nobody was hurt and the deputy was not at fault, but it cost a lot to replace the mangled SUV. Insurance only covered the \$50,000 vehicle replacement cost – but not the extra \$25,000 for the police package of lights, sirens, and radio upgrades, which the county had to pay for.

Another accident happened after a sheriff’s SUV hit a deer, causing about \$25,000 in damage. With just liability coverage, the county had to pay every cent out of pocket for repairs.

Those financial losses led to a conversation about a new insurance policy, according to sheriff’s deputy Lt. Chris Larmore. He said the new coverage will allow the sheriff’s office to start budgeting for the inevitable cost of car repairs.

“Now all we pay is the deductible,” he said. “In the long run, this is going to save the county a lot of money.”

Notably, five out of 10 brand-new sheriff’s vehicles purchased in 2023 have been involved in collisions. The sheriff’s office has about 100 total vehicles in its fleet. Agency wide, sheriff’s deputies put on about two million miles worth of patrolling annually, in and out of state, according to Sheriff Matt Crisafulli.

“When you’re on the road that much, of course you’re greatly increasing the changes for collision and deer strikes. We’re fortunate that we haven’t had any major crashes with injury or losing someone,” he said.

The County Commissioners approved the coverage upgrade at their Feb. 18 meeting. It will cost an estimated \$46,148 in additional policy premiums for this fiscal year and another \$136,450 in fiscal 2026, according to Norton. The county’s insurance provider is the nonprofit Local Government Insurance Trust, or LGIT.

**‘In the long run, this is going to save the county a lot of money.’**

Lt. Chris Larmore,  
Sheriff’s Deputy



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| Friday 1-3pm                  | 9500 Coastal Hwy. Unit 17J, Pyramid, Ocean City | 1BR/1.5 BA       | Condo              | \$449,900      | Kevin Heselbach/Engel & Völkers Real Estate |
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| Saturday 10am-Noon            | 4 84th St. #2C, Unit 6, Ocean City              | 2BR/2BA          | Condo              | \$574,900      | Team Bouse House/ReMax Advantage Realty     |
| Saturday 10am-1pm             | 11421 Manklin Creek Rd., Ocean Pines            | 3BR/2BA          | Condo              | \$297,500      | Jeffrey Messick/BHHS PenFed Realty          |
| Saturday 10:30am-3pm          | 6201 Atlantic Ave., Unit 108, Ocean City        | 2BR/2BA          | Condo              | \$699,900      | Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty        |
| Saturday Noon-2pm             | 23 Seagrave Lane, Ocean Pines                   | 3BR/2BA          | Single Family      | \$359,900      | Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate          |
| Saturday Noon-3pm             | 9500 Coastal Hwy. Unit 17J, Pyramid, Ocean City | 1BR/1.5 BA       | Condo              | \$449,900      | Kevin Heselbach/Engel & Völkers Real Estate |
| Saturday 1:30-3:30pm          | 5603 Atlantic Ave., Unit 301, Ocean City        | 3BR/3.5BA        | Condo              | \$1,499,900    | Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty        |
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# Obituaries

## WALTER POVLOSKI

Ocean Pines

Walter "Walt" Povloski passed away peacefully at home in Ocean Pines with his family (including the dogs) by his side on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025.



Walter Povloski

Born in Cleveland, Ohio to the late Clarence and Caroline Liptak Povloski, he was the oldest sibling of two sisters and one brother. Walt graduated from West Geauga High School, class of 1964, soon after entered The United States Marine Corps "Oorah"!

While stationed at NSA, he met the love of his life, Janice. Soon after moved to Linthicum where he and Janice raised their son and daughter until they moved to Ocean City in 1997. After serving his country, Walt entered an electrician apprenticeship then changed his career path by entering the Fire Academy where he heroically served his community for 25 years with the Anne Arundel County Fire Department.

A devoted son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, brother in law, uncle, US Marine, firefighter, and friend, he will always be remembered as the life of the party, his jokes, making everyone around him laugh, being a prankster and always willing to help others; without hesitation. He enjoyed spending time with his family, friends, dogs and birds; cheering for the Ravens, Browns, Indians, Orioles, and O-HI-O State Buckeyes; cooking, duckpin bowling, flag football, coaching his kids sports teams, Hot Rods, his cup of coffee, Coors Light, Captain Morgan, and margaritas.

He is survived by his son and daughter, Christopher and Amy Povloski; sister-in-law, Judy Hoffman; grandchildren Pierce and Peyton Redmond; siblings Paula Heckman Povloski and Michael Povloski; and a number of nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife Janice Hoffman Povloski and Sister JoAnn Povloski Gura.

Cremation followed his death. Please join Christopher and Amy as they celebrate Walt's life the only way he wanted: With family and friends, great food, cold beer, peach moscato, music, and laughter. For those traveling from out of town and in need of accommodations, please reach out to Christopher or Amy.

Walt's Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, March 1, from 5-9 p.m., at Sisters Wine Bar & Gift Store, 113 N Main Street, Berlin, Md. 21811.

Letters of condolences can be sent to the family via [www.holloway](http://www.holloway). In lieu of flowers, donation may be made in Walt's memory to US Kennels Inc: Whose mission is to train

and provide service dogs for disabled Veterans and first responders on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia.

Warrior Dog Foundation: who transitions our country's working K9s from an operational environment into retirement. Providing mental and physical rehabilitation, and rehoming options to Military Working Dogs (MWD), Contract Working Dogs (CWD) and Law Enforcement K9s that otherwise would be euthanized. <https://www.uskennelsinc.org/>, <https://warriordogfoundation.org/>

## GEORGE EDWARD BECKETT

Ocean Pines

George Edward Beckett, age 86, of Ocean Pines, formerly of Pasadena, died on Jan. 29, 2025.



George Beckett

George was born May 18, 1938, in Baltimore, the only child of the late George W. and Estelle A. Beckett. He is survived by his dedicated and loving wife of 50 years, Barbara (nee Woehlke), who he often affectionately called "Steve." George is also survived by a son, William, two grandchildren, Billy and Brittany, and two great grandchildren Colton and Olivia. He was predeceased by a daughter, Teresa M. Beckett, the child of his first marriage.

Following graduation from Glen Bernie High School in 1956, he forged a career as a professional electrician earning his Master's License in 1972. He was a founding member of Materials Handling Systems, Inc. of Howard County, using his talents to design, construct and sell robotic equipment to many major businesses,

George was a 170-year member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge 2645 of Ocean City. As dedicated fans of all Baltimore sports, he and Barbara followed the Colts Coral to Miami for the AFC/NFC championship game now known as the Super Bowl V.

With a reputation for kindness, integrity and generosity that will long survive his passing, George was known as a true gentleman. He will be missed by his many friends, relatives and co-workers whose lives he touched.

## MICHAEL HRECHKA

Berlin

Michael Hrechka, age 95, passed away on Tuesday, Feb/ 18, 2025, in Salisbury. Born in Vita, Manitoba, Canada, he was the son of the late Wasyl and Mary Bugucka Hrechka.

Mike was a dedicated laborer most of his life. As a teen, one summer, he worked as a lumberjack. Before marriage and later when starting a family,



Michael Hrechka

he worked at an iron foundry producing iron train wheels. While working at the foundry in 1956, right after Debbie was born, he started farming mink. About 1960 steel replaced iron and the iron foundry shut down. Mike expanded his mink farm several times. At the Canadian National Mink Show in 1967 Mike won first place with dark and medium brown mink and second place with light brown. The same year he moved his family and mink to a larger farm in Minnedosa, Manitoba. By the end of the same year unfortunate events brought Mike's mink farm to an end.

In early 1968 he was sponsored to manage a mink farm in Millville, New Jersey. His family had to remain in Winnipeg, Manitoba. On September 28, 1968 his family was permitted to travel to the United States and join him. Summer 1969 he moved his family to Berlin, Maryland. He worked at Eastern Animal Foods for almost twenty years. While working at the animal food factory he purchased a farm this time raising chickens and pigs. After about a year he specialized in raising pigs. On one occasion Mike received a letter from the University Of Maryland Department Of Agriculture that a hog they purchased from him was found to have 12% less body fat than a typical hog. This garnered Mike preferential treatment and a premium price for his pigs from that day forward. Mike raised pigs for over twenty years. Old enough to retire he got a job driving a tractor at a local golf course cutting the grass on the fairways. Hard work was never a guarantee for success.

In his own way Mike loved animals and over the years he adored all his pets.

For many years, Mike and Joyce attended Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, outside Whaleyville. Mike was the president of the church. He assisted the priest for many years like an altar boy. Both Mike and Joyce relished in the company of church friends and parishioners.

In his late 70's Mike sustained a stroke with miraculous recovery. In the last few years health issues started to accumulate. On February 18, 2025 at 12:32 pm Michael Hrechka's soul left his body, free of pain he could join God in Heaven.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce Hrechka; two sons, Dr. Kenneth Hrechka (Katherine), and Brian Hrechka (Sue); two daughters, Deborah Parker (Michael), and Cheryl Hrechka; four grandchildren, Sean Parker (Keemia), Ashley Gibbs (Jeff), Julia Hrechka, Michael Hrechka, Breann Green (Dylan), and Will Hrechka; four great grandchildren, Addison Gibbs, Ava Gibbs, Kameron Parker, and Nova Green; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, John Hrechka, and two sisters, Effie Kowaluk, and Nellie Susik.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Michael's name can be to Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 7927 Circle Rd., Whaleyville, MD 21872, or The Worcester County Humane Society, 12330 Eagle's Nest Rd., Berlin, MD 21811.

A funeral service will be held on Tuesday, March 4, at The Burbage Funeral Home in Berlin. A viewing will be held one hour prior. Interment will follow at Evergreen Cemetery in Berlin. Letters of condolence can be sent to the family via [www.burbagefuneralhome.com](http://www.burbagefuneralhome.com). Arrangements are in the care of The Burbage Funeral Home.



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# Opinion

Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to [editor@baysidegazette.com](mailto:editor@baysidegazette.com) by 5 p.m. Monday.

## Guilty plea first step in closing sad chapter

A heartbreaking chapter that left friends, families and members of the public saddened and outraged over the exceedingly slow grind of justice ended Tuesday when Tyler Mailloux, 24, of Berlin pleaded guilty to leaving the scene of the July 11, 2022, accident that claimed the life of 14-year-old Gavin Knupp of Ocean Pines.

The plea, entered during a hearing in Worcester County Circuit Court in Snow Hill, came after the court denied a flurry of defense motions that sought to upend the case. Among them was one asking that the Worcester County State's Attorney's Office, which had been chasing Mailloux's conviction for two-and-a-half years, be removed from the case.

There was a time, as the public's angry demand for swift justice went unfulfilled, that some residents might have agreed, openly wondering as they did why State's Attorney Kris Heiser seemed to move so methodically rather than immediately.

The short answer is she could not. This was a case where theoretically knowing what happened on Grays Corner Road that night when a car mowed down the youth and kept on going was not the same thing as proving it.

Without solid corroborating evidence from others who might have been involved, and knowing that a failed prosecution in court would further inflame the public, Heiser, her staff and investigators had to put tiny bits of information together to build a winnable case.

Her office obviously accomplished that, leaving Mailloux little to no legal recourse once the court threw out his defense team's motions. It took more time to get to that point than the public wanted, and the question of whether the harshness of the punishment is equal to the tragic circumstances will remain debatable.

But Mailloux's admission of guilt and the sentencing that will follow is something and it may be enough to allow the community to begin the healing process.



BRIAN SHANE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Tom Prevas, attorney for US Wind, addresses the Worcester County Commissioners during a Feb. 18 public hearing.

## County tables WOC harbor zoning code

By **Brian Shane**  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) Worcester County officials last week stopped short of tweaking the zoning code in order to prevent an offshore wind developer from legally operating as a public utility in the West Ocean City fishing harbor.

The county's Board of Commissioners at its Feb. 18 meeting considered a bill that would make immediate zoning changes to the Commercial Marine District, where the harbor lies. One section of text would be changed to prohibit any "portside infrastructure or associated facilities that are intended to support offshore energy production." Another bans "public utility structure" as a permitted use.

The zoning zinger aims to stymie developer US Wind, who plans to build an operations and maintenance facility at the mouth of the harbor that would service a planned 114-turbine wind farm located about 11 miles offshore.

Faced with legal uncertainty, however, the commissioners instead decided to table the vote following a public hearing for further deliberation and legal review.

"I don't know that we need to move forward with this today," said Commissioner Joe Mitreic (District 7, Ocean City), who moved to postpone the vote for a future meeting.

"I'm telling you right now that this is, to me, to protect

our commercial fishing harbor moving forward."

Most of the 16 people who spoke at the bill hearing Tuesday were supportive of the county's counterpunch in its ongoing slugfest against US Wind. They included Jim Motsko, founder of the famous White Marlin Open fishing tournament, as well as several representatives from the fishing and marina community.

"The people I hear from are fully enthusiastic about what you're contemplating with this action here," said Ron Sloan, on behalf of the Glen Riddle community in Berlin. He urged the commissioners to "stop what we consider an egregious effort to desecrate our environment for corporate profit."

Opponents, however, called it a procedural violation that blatantly ignores traditional re-zoning protocols and may even be unconstitutional.

"The law is unconstitutional under various clauses ... and it is being undertaken for the purpose of denying rights provided under the Constitution and with intent to harm US Wind," wrote Tom Prevas, attorney for developer US Wind, in a 24-page letter delivered to county officials last week. "If the County enacts this Text Amendment, US Wind will sue to preserve its interests and seek damages."

Prevas added that the county instead should "re-

engage" with US Wind and state environmental officials toward a memorandum of understanding, which he called "the appropriate and effective tool for addressing any disruption to commercial fishing resources at the Harbor," the letter states.

In response, Commissioners' President Ted Elder pulled from the liner of his blazer and held aloft a pocket-sized copy of the U.S. Constitution, which he carries with him. "I could not find anything in the Constitution that says anything what we're doing is unconstitutional," he said.

"Our inheritance that we pass down to our posterity. That boils right to it. We need to protect what we have from outside forces coming in. It's just big money looking for more big money," Elder added, to a smattering of applause.

US Wind's planned operations and maintenance facility would be built upon what are now two longstanding commercial fish houses, Southern Connection Seafood and Martin Fish House.

The owners of Southern Connection, Pat and April Reese, appeared at the public hearing. They argued that a re-zoning not only circumvents the county's comprehensive plan but would devalue their land and violate their property rights.

"From our perspective, the See PROPERTY Page 15

**BAYSIDE GAZETTE**

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# School budget seeks \$10M county funding jump

**By Tara Fischer**  
Staff Writer

(Feb. 27, 2025) The Worcester County Board of Education unanimously approved the proposed fiscal year 2026 school system budget totaling \$145,221,039.

Worcester County Public Schools Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert presented the spending plan at the body's Tuesday, Feb. 18 meeting. He maintained the increased total figure, approximately \$12 million more than last year's approved operating budget of \$132,335,748, accounts for employee salary raises, an elevation in health insurance costs, bus contractor rate increases and previous budget cut restorations.

Worcester County is deemed the wealthiest Maryland district under the state's property tax formula, so the majority of the school system's funding comes from the local government. If the Worcester County Commissioners agree to fund the FY26 budget, they will be responsible for covering around \$115 million of the board's approved \$145.2 million. Last year, the commissioners provided around \$105.4 million to the educational system.

Board member Katie Addis said that while this is the "best-proposed budget" since her tenure on the board, she is concerned about asking the

commissioners for \$115 million, a \$10 million jump from what was approved in FY25.

"This year, it looks to be a 9.69% increase in the overall budget that we are asking the county to fund," Addis said. "My main question is, have we had conversations with our county commissioners to determine whether or not that big of an increase will be feasible?"

Worcester County Board of Education President Todd Ferrante is hopeful the school system will receive a good chunk of their ask. He main-

tained that conversations were had with the commissioners, and while they did not offer their approval and only two local government representatives were present at these discussions, "they did not seem to take issue [with the budget] at the time."

"As far as the developing and the passing of the budget, it's our job as a board of education to develop this budget so we make sure we're fulfilling the needs of the students and the community in Worcester County," Ferrante noted. "We feel that this budget

does that. It's up to the county to decide whether or not they want to fund our budget. If they decide they don't want to fund it, then we'll have to figure out ways to do with less, but that doesn't mean we desire to."

WCPS Superintendent Lou Taylor added that if the county cuts something, his team has discussed how they will proceed and is prepared for that possibility.

"Are [the commissioners] going to cut something? That's possible, and we See COUNTY Page 17

# Property owners oppose code change

Continued from Page 14

issue is this is a downzoning of our property that's not going through the proper procedure. The notion they're going to take away permitted uses from my clients' property is ridiculous. That is a taking without compensation," said attorney Hugh Cropper, representing the Reese family, at the hearing.

Even if US Wind buys their property, the Reeses intend to remain in the commercial seafood business in the West Ocean City harbor, Cropper added.

The zoning proposal is one of several efforts by Worcester County to monkey-wrench US Wind and to protect the commercial fishing industry in the West Ocean City harbor.

County leaders recently approved a \$100,000 expenditure towards an anti-wind public relations campaign. They also are pursuing eminent domain as an option, which would see the county acquire the fish house properties by edict, rather than allow a private sale to US Wind, according to County Administrator Weston Young. "There's a threat of the harbor be-

coming industrialized, and there's a threat to the commercial fishing industry, and that's our main focus. It's more pro-commercial fishing that it is anti-wind," Young said in an interview.

It's unclear at this time what the future holds for offshore wind. President Donald Trump on Jan. 20 signed an Executive Order that puts a pause on all pending domestic offshore wind projects. Trump stated publicly that he opposes offshore wind as being "an environmental disaster" and propped up by subsidies.



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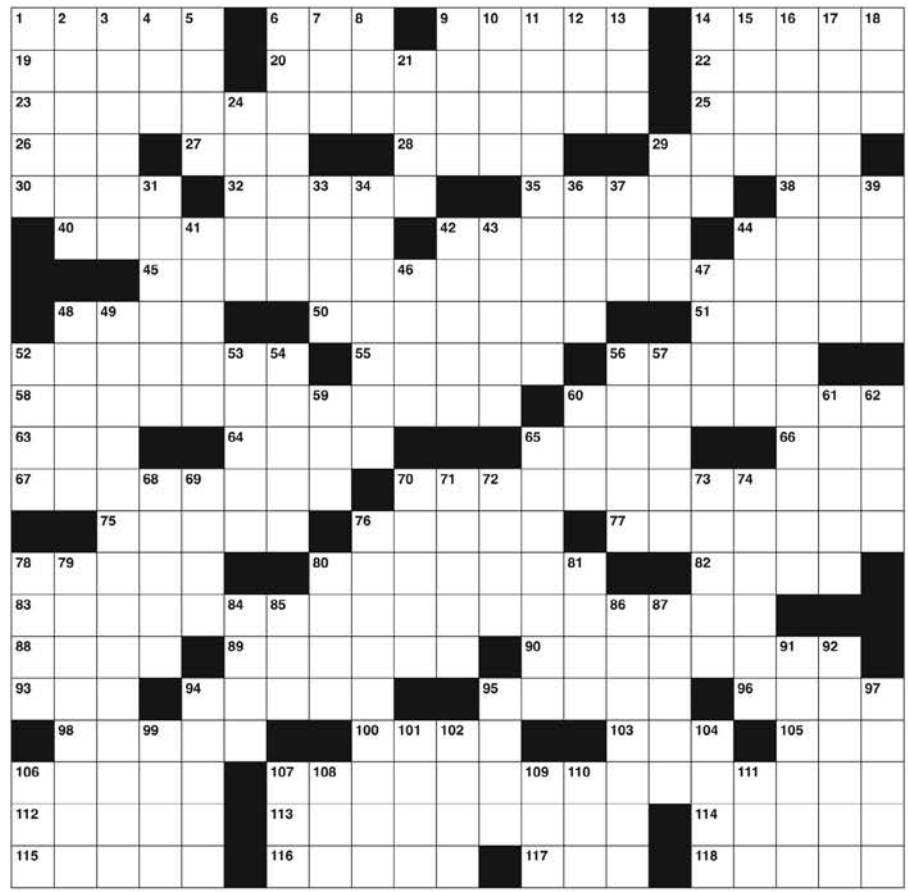
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# Puzzles

## SQUARE TO BEGIN BY JOHN KUGELMAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

John Kugelman, of Gainesville, Va., is a software engineer and musician. Remarkably, this is his seventh Sunday Times crossword since January 2024 — by far the most of any contributor. "All the time and creative energy I used to pour into music," he says, "now goes to crosswords. I used to spend my nights writing music. Now it's all crosswords, all the time. It seems to scratch the same itch." — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Shopper's thrill
  - 6 Clock part
  - 9 Brand
  - 14 \_\_\_ Lakshmi, host of TV's "Taste the Nation"
  - 19 Some computer-generated images nowadays
  - 20 The masses
  - 22 "Full steam \_\_\_!"
  - 23 "Omgod, omigod, jackpot!?"
  - 25 Some college students, quaintly
  - 26 Space heater?
  - 27 \_\_\_ fly
  - 28 Smart-alecky
  - 29 FaceTime alternative
  - 30 "Eww!"
  - 32 Instruments with large bells
  - 35 Great Lakes mnemonic
  - 38 Org. whose employees wear badges
  - 40 Atlantis and others
  - 42 Hawkish
  - 44 Bad thing to be caught in
  - 45 Tempest in a teapot?
  - 48 Oh-so-precious
  - 50 Journalists quote them
  - 51 Oniony vegetables
  - 52 Body of water that was once the world's fourth-largest lake
- DOWN**
- 53 Good signs in stock reports
  - 56 Challah bread feature
  - 58 Religious gymgoer on leg day?
  - 60 Souvenir from the Sea of Tranquility, say
  - 63 Typical Passover mo.
  - 64 Many clay relics
  - 65 Not just mine
  - 66 Kanga's kiddo
  - 67 Whimsically imaginative, as writing
  - 70 Sound from some freshly cleaned floors?
  - 75 Oozes
  - 76 Heighten
  - 77 Yo-yo-like toy with a devilish-sounding name
  - 78 "\_\_\_ mia!"
  - 80 Michael Jordan's nickname, with "His"
  - 82 Trash
  - 83 Money under the mattress, e.g.?
  - 88 Meyer who directed 1965's "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!"
  - 89 Cialis alternative
  - 90 Backslid, say
  - 93 Word before or after down
  - 94 Pasta often cut at an angle
  - 95 Hazard cleanup, in brief
  - 96 Hindu honorifics
  - 98 Weapon whose name is an acronym
  - 100 "\_\_\_ tell"
  - 103 Legendary bird
  - 105 Number of jurors who originally vote "Not guilty" in "12 Angry Men"
  - 106 Mean little suckers?
  - 107 Repeat something clever, as parrots might?
  - 112 "Gesundheit!" prompter
  - 113 "Diet" for the defeated
  - 114 Tied up
  - 115 Facebook has more than three billion of them
  - 116 Aspirations
  - 117 "Downton Abbey" network
  - 118 Flies out of sight
  - 17 Brought in big bucks
  - 18 Elements of pay-per-click campaigns
  - 21 Punching sounds in the comics
  - 24 Coffee shop order
  - 29 Feudal worker
  - 31 In a big way
  - 33 Pot growers?
  - 34 Classifies
  - 36 Mice hunters
  - 37 Great Leap Forward leader
  - 39 Bitter brews, for short
  - 41 Lock of hair
  - 42 Something strapped for cash?
  - 43 Go-kart, e.g.
  - 44 Beaten at \_\_\_ own game
  - 46 Command+Q, on a Mac
  - 47 Family group
  - 48 Writing cliché
  - 49 Style sported by Theodore Roosevelt and Mark Twain
  - 52 Forehead-slapping shouts
  - 53 Outfit
  - 54 Mysterious qualities
  - 56 Yawning, say
  - 57 Hollywood's Portia de \_\_\_
  - 59 "Raggedy" doll
  - 60 Make faces for a camera
  - 61 Barbecue bits
  - 62 Gorilla who famously learned sign language
  - 65 "If I had to guess ..."
  - 68 They're around for the long haul
  - 69 Scorch



- 70 More refined
- 71 Loma \_\_\_\_, Calif.
- 72 Monthly util. bill
- 73 Host of the 2022 World Cup
- 74 Horseshoe-shaped pipe fasteners
- 76 Boat equipment for removing water on board
- 78 Car sticker no.
- 79 Parasailing, water polo, etc.
- 80 "Watchmen" writer Moore
- 81 What many freelancers work on
- 84 Many a road tripper, informally
- 85 "Ich bin \_\_\_ Berliner"
- 86 They make sounds when they're tickled
- 87 Wood joint piece
- 91 Beethoven's Third
- 92 What Sidney Poitier's character famously came to, in a 1967 film
- 94 Currency in seven American countries (and one Asian)
- 95 Van \_\_\_ (beard type)
- 97 Germs
- 99 Toffee candy bar
- 101 Broccoli \_\_\_
- 102 Leather-working tools
- 104 Cartoon collector's collection, maybe
- 106 Greek letter that's the symbol for torque
- 107 [I'm trying to watch the movie!]
- 108 Status follower
- 109 Slack or Zoom
- 110 Fudge the facts
- 111 Language mutually intelligible with Thai

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### HARD - 97

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertical column, every horizontal row and every 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, without repeating any. There is really only one solution to each puzzle.

|     |   |   |     |     |   |   |  |     |
|-----|---|---|-----|-----|---|---|--|-----|
|     |   | 5 |     | 3   |   |   |  | 9   |
|     |   |   |     |     |   |   |  | 6   |
|     |   |   | 7   |     |   |   |  | 5 3 |
|     | 1 |   |     | 7 2 | 9 |   |  |     |
|     |   |   |     | 1   | 8 |   |  |     |
|     |   | 4 | 9 6 |     |   |   |  | 2   |
| 8 2 |   |   |     |     | 1 |   |  |     |
| 7   |   |   |     |     |   |   |  |     |
| 5   |   |   |     | 9   |   | 1 |  |     |

### Answers to last week's puzzles

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| 9 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 1 |
| 1 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| 4 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 2 |
| 8 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| 2 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |

|         |             |            |        |
|---------|-------------|------------|--------|
| CLAD    | DAB         | SPY        | ENTOMB |
| OAHU    | NOAH        | ORES       | LEADER |
| SPECIAL | REQUEST     | ATTILA     |        |
| MEATS   | BLUR        | MOET       | TOOT   |
| OLDSAWS | MANUAL      | RECOUNT    |        |
| YAKS    | DOMAIN      | LOSS       |        |
| ATMS    | GILA        | TAM        | OTOE   |
| SHOWRE  | MORSE       | ROADIES    |        |
| PALEO   | GEO         | DEBUNK     | MOO    |
| STEEPLE | ALOGOBI     | HIND       |        |
| SPEECH  | RECOGNITION |            |        |
| TSKS    | SHOULDWE    | KETTLES    |        |
| LEI     | STINGY      | ODE        | ERODE  |
| CANTEEN | SPOT        | REMOVER    |        |
| HERA    | CEL         | NCAA       | DENT   |
| CHAIN   | CHASER      | HIVE       |        |
| CHAIN   | REACTION    | LETSEAT    |        |
| HURL    | OATH        | GAELE      | TILDE  |
| ARMANI  | HIGH        | RESOLUTION |        |
| IRONED  | ANTE        | DARE       | ETRE   |
| RONDOS  | GOD         | TBS        | SENT   |



# County to review WCPS budget

Continued from Page 15  
 have talked about options should that occur," Taylor said. "We have not come up with anything concrete, but we have looked at options, and we have spelled out where each amount of money is going, so when they cut it, they'll have an opportunity to be specific about what they don't want to fund. And then we'll have to go back and do some heavy lifting. I feel very confident based on meetings and work sessions and all the fine-tuning we have done."

The FY26 school system budget looks to restore previous cuts. This includes \$315,000 for summer and afterschool salaries, \$56,361 for field trip student transportation, and \$36,123 for student transportation for summer and afterschool sessions.

The budget document breaks down how the funds are dispersed among the different categories.

Of the proposed budget total, 39.63% is allocated for instructional salaries and wages, 2.49% is for textbooks and instructional supplies, 10.15% is for special education, 5.61% is for student transportation, 23.36% is for fixed charges, 6.95% is for instructional support services, 6.86% for operation of plant, 1.02% for maintenance of plant, 0.16% for capital planning, 1.61% for administration, 1.05% for health services, 0.31% for student personnel services and 0.80% for

other instructional costs.

The Worcester County Board of Education unanimously approved the budget, which will be presented to the Worcester County Commissioners in early March.

In addition to the proposed budget, the board also approved the addition of non-recurring costs for the implementation of Zonar, or GPS, software into all school system buses.

Tolbert said the state has a process that "allows certain additional expenditures funded by our local government to be considered a non-recurring cost and to be excluded from the annual maintenance of effort funding formula in future years."

The FY26 proposed budget includes a request to purchase and install Zonar on all buses next year for a total first-year cost of \$65,118, including a one-time implementation cost of \$42,098.

Tolbert said he and his team are "recommending that this one-time implementation cost be considered non-recurring in FY26."

The board agreed to consider the implementation fee non-recurring. The Worcester County Commissioners are next to review the inquiry and offer their approval or disapproval. If the local government accepts the request, it will be submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education for a final blessing.

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Classifieds appear in OC Today-Dispatch & Bayside Gazette each week and online at [octodaydispatch.com](http://octodaydispatch.com) & [baysideoc.com](http://baysideoc.com)



### HELP WANTED

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**Please email your resume to: [info@kiteloft.com](mailto:info@kiteloft.com)**

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Year-round, full time, RENTAL AGENT for established local company. Must work weekends and have own transportation. Looking for someone that wants a career with opportunity to do sales on the side. Call for details.  
**Resort Rentals/OCVacations, 410-524-0295**

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### RENTALS

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**YEAR-ROUND RENTAL Berlin area**  
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**Call 443-880-8885**

**Industrial Space**  
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Classifieds  
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### SERVICES

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### MISC./OTHER

We spoke of sorrow,  
My mistakes and surrender,  
Those last few moments.  
He knew, my dear friends!  
With a smile, He knew!

### SERVICES

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 State's atty., sheriff say crime rising in schools  
 Call for police role in school admin.  
 Subscribe to respond at public and broadcasted press conference Friday  
 — PAGE 3

**Short-term solution ahead?**  
 ASAC SERVICE  
 Commission discuss need to control short-term rentals  
 contemplating what that could mean for neighbors, parking availability and what new rules, if any, might be needed.

**BAYSIDE GAZETTE**  
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# Calendar

Please send calendar items to [editor@baysidegazette.com](mailto:editor@baysidegazette.com) by 5 p.m. Monday. All community-related activities will be published at no charge.

## Thurs., Feb. 27

### STORY TIME: SNAKES ON THE JOB

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes. For ages 0-5 years. 410-632-3495

### STORY TIME: IF YOU GIVE A PIG A PARTY

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Songs, stories and crafts. For ages 0-5 years. 410-208-4014

### LET'S MAKE .. TOTE BAGS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1 p.m. Hand-sewn totes are perfect size for spur-of-the-moment shopping. All materials provided. Register: 410-641-0650, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org).

### LET'S TALK MOVIES

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Join the monthly movie club, where they discuss timeless classics and newer box office hits. This month's topic is the 2023 musical remake, "The Color Purple." 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### FIRESIDE CHAT

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3 p.m. A popular and entertaining book discussion featuring books you have read and want to share. Come and find your next great read. 410-641-0650, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### QUIT SMOKING & VAPING CLASS

Gudelsky Family Medical Center, 10614 Racetrack Road, Ocean Pines, 5-6 p.m. Participants receive one-on-one support, group support, weekly prizes and quit resources. Register: 410-632-1100, Ext. 1103 or [www.worcesterhealth.org](http://www.worcesterhealth.org).

### OCVFC LADIES AUXILIARY - CASH BINGO

Ocean Downs Casino (Event Room), 10218 Racetrack Road, Berlin, 6 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. Featuring \$100, \$200 and \$500 games; door prizes; 50/50; and chance auction. Food available. Tickets cost \$35 in advance. Tickets: Joanne Wagner, 443-235-1222.

### DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF WORCESTER COUNTY MEETING

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 6-8 p.m. Meeting begins at 6 p.m. <https://dem-clubwcmd.org>

## Fri., Feb. 28

### MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in for a fun morning of playing tile Mahjong. Feel free to bring your own

tile set. 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### ARTSY HOMESCHOOLERS

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 11 a.m. Every fourth Friday, come for an art project that includes everything from painting, writing, crafting and more. For ages 6-18 years. 410-632-3495, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### 2025 OC CHAMBER ANNUAL AWARDS CELEBRATION - 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 6-10 p.m. This year the theme is Diamond in honor of the Chamber's 75th anniversary. Cost is \$125. <https://www.ocean.com/event/2025-oc-chamber-annual-awards-celebration-75th-anniversary/2196/>, 443-664-3052

### KIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO

*Fridays* - Knights of Columbus, 9901 Coastal Highway, behind St. Luke's Church. Doors open at 5 p.m., bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. Light snacks available before bingo and at intermission. 410-524-7994

## Sat., March 1

### INDOOR FLEA MARKET AND BAKE SALE

Bethany United Methodist Church, 8648 Stephen Decatur Highway, Berlin, 8-11 a.m. Vendors, to make a reservation, contact 443-614-2261, [fcbumc21811@gmail.com](mailto:fcbumc21811@gmail.com).

### SATURDAY WRITERS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10 a.m. Novice and established writers gather to share their writing projects. Structure includes critiques and appreciation, market leads and writing exercises. Drop ins welcome. 410-641-0650

### BOOK SIGNING WITH ANNA DOLLE BUSHNELL

Ocean City Life-Saving Museum, 813 S. Atlantic Ave., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. "Images of America: Dolle's Candyland, Inc. Book" includes more than 200 photographs of Dolle's 110 year existence on the boardwalks of Ocean City and Rehoboth Beach, DE. [www.ocmuseum.org](http://www.ocmuseum.org)

### ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT FRIED CHICKEN DINNER

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 36540 Mount Pleasant Road, Willards, 11 a.m. Includes vegetables, beverages and desserts. Cost to dine in is \$17 for adults, \$8.50 for children and free to those 5 years and younger. Cost for car-ryout is \$15. 410-835-8340

### FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

*Saturdays* - White Horse Park, 239

Ocean Parkway, 9 a.m. to noon. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

## Sun., March 2

### A.J. CROCE - HEART OF THE ETERNAL TOUR

Ocean City Performing Arts Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 7 p.m. Celebrating A.J. Croce's music and those of his father, Jim Croce. Tickets cost \$45/\$55. <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/51478880/ajcroce-heart-of-the-eternal-tour-ocean-city-oc-performing-arts-center>

### ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BREAKFAST

American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, 2308 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 8-11 a.m. Menu includes eggs, pancakes, bacon, ham, sausage, hash browns, coffee, orange juice and gravy and biscuits. Cost is \$15.

### BERLIN FLEA MARKET

*Sundays* - Uptown Emporium Parking Lot, 13 S. Main St., Berlin, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vendor opportunities available. Julie, 410-726-9012; Bill, 410-629-9656

### SEWING FOR A CAUSE

*Sundays* - Buckingham Presbyterian Church, 20 S. Main St., Berlin, 10:30 a.m. to noon. Learn how to sew while making a difference. 410-641-0234

### JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

*Sundays* - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 10 a.m. [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)

## Mon., March 3

### LITTLE LEARNERS PROGRAM

Museum of Ocean City, 217 S. Baltimore Ave., 10-11 a.m. John "Laughing Wolf" Moore will teach his Native American heritage through the music of his drum and dance. Registration requested: [oc-museum.org](http://oc-museum.org). 410-289-4991

### ESL CONVERSATION CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Join other non-native English speakers for casual conversation practice and a short lesson prepared by an ESL instructor. 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. The group is reading from Book 6 of the Great Conversations Anthology. The focus will be on "Mario and the Magician" by Thomas Mann. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### STORY TIME: WILDLIFE

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Crafts, songs and stories. For ages 0-5 years. 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4 p.m. Families, partners and other caregivers share similar challenges and rewards of providing care for adults who have any type of serious illness. Nicole Fry, [nfry@atlantic-general.org](mailto:nfry@atlantic-general.org), 410-641-2626

### RESEARCHERS MEET UP

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 3 p.m. Meet with fellow researchers to discuss local history, get tips from the local history librarian, and work on the citizen research projects. 410-632-3495, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### WARHAMMER

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Let's play Warhammer. Use the library's armies or bring your own. Tutorials and demos will be available, so novice and veteran players alike are welcome. For ages 12-18 years. 410-641-0650

### DR. SEUSS CRAFT: OOBLECK

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Create a substance found only in a Dr. Seuss book. Is it a liquid? Is it a solid? Let's find out. Be ready to get messy. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### T.O.P.S. OF BERLIN - GROUP #169

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6:30 p.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and living a healthy lifestyle. Rose Champion, 410-641-0157

### WOMEN OF WORCESTER COUNTY

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5:30 p.m. The Worcester County Historical Society will present this program for Women's History Month. 410-632-3495, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### BRIDGE

*Mondays* - Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st Street, Ocean City, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Reserve a spot: Tish, 410-804-3971. [www.Worcoa.org/oceancity](http://www.Worcoa.org/oceancity)

### DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

*Mondays* - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 6:00-8:00 p.m. All ladies who love to sing invited. Mary, 410-629-9383 or Carol, 302-242-7062.

# Calendar

## OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

*Mondays* - Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 7-8 p.m. No dues or fees. 410-459-9100

## Tues., March 4

### STORY TIME: DR. SEUSS

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, stories and crafts. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### STORY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Featuring seasonal themes designed to support early literacy skills with stories, songs and finger plays. Geared toward ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, rhymes and stories. Stay after to socialize with other families. For ages 0-2 years. 410-632-3495, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### OC KNITTING GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Do you love to knit or crochet? Bring whatever project you happen to be working on. 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### MASTER GARDENERS PLANT CLINIC

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 11 a.m. Master Gardener Ginny Rosenkranz talks about all things plants. Bring any questions and feel free to show your plants as well. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Learn about plants for pollinators and other wildlife that help keep our water clean. Take a look at invasive plants and their native alternatives. 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### COMIC BOOK CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Learn about comics and create your own. Each month will feature a different graphic novel author. No experience required. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE DINNER

Stevenson United Methodist Church, 123 N. Main St., Berlin, 4:30-6 p.m. The dinner is all-you-can-eat. Cost is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children and free to those 5 years and younger. Carry-out available. Proceeds benefit Stevenson's Children and Youth.

### PANCAKE SUPPER

Whaleyville United Methodist, 11716 Sheppards Crossing Road, Whaleyville, 5-7 p.m. Supper will include pancakes, sausage and assorted beverages. A love offering will be taken at the door to benefit the Youth Group.

### MILLENNIAL-ISH: SHOW & TELL

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 5:30 p.m. Have any collectables or hobbies? Bring them in and meet new friends also in their 20s-40s who share your passions or learn something new. 410-524-1818, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### BEACH HEROES-OC

*Tuesdays* - Volunteer beach clean-up group meets from 9-10 a.m., year-round. Trash bags, grippers and gloves provided. Check the Facebook page "Beach Heroes-OC" for weekly meeting locations. All are welcome.

### JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

*Tuesdays* - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 7 p.m. [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)

### TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

*Tuesdays* - Worcester County Health Department, 9730 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3:30-4:30 p.m. TOPS is a weekly support and education group promoting weight loss and a healthy lifestyle. 410-289-4725

### OC KNITTING CLUB

*Tuesdays* - Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m.

### ARGENTINE TANGO PRACTICE

*Tuesdays* - Experienced dancers and others interested in watching or learning more are welcome, 7-9:30 p.m. No partner required. Info: [TangobytheBeach.com](http://TangobytheBeach.com).

### ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS

*Tuesdays* - Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. [zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com](mailto:zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com)

### WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AND WELLNESS GROUP

*Tuesdays* - Holy Trinity Cathedral, 11021 Worcester Highway, 2-2:45 p.m. Use the weight loss program/app/plan of your choice. Free and open to everyone. 410-641-4882, [www.htcanglican.org/activities](http://www.htcanglican.org/activities).

## Wed., March 5

### BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Online Zoom call held the first and second Wednesday of each month. For non-surgical patients. Atlantic General Bariatric Center, 410-641-9568.

### COMPUTER AND INTERNET BASICS

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke

Branch, 301 Market St. Call to make an appointment for one-on-one assistance: 410-957-0878.

[www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### GRACE PARKER BREAKFAST

First Presbyterian Church of Ocean City, 1301 Philadelphia Ave., 7-11 a.m. Eggs, pancakes, sausage, grits and more. Cost is \$10 to carryout and \$12 to eat in.

### PUZZLE SWAP

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1-5 p.m. Bring a gently used puzzle and swap it for a new-to-you puzzle. Don't have a puzzle but still want one? That's OK too. All puzzles must be in their original box. 410-641-0650,

[www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Group provides discussion and education on the topic of diabetes. Patti Yocubik, 410-208-9761, [pyocubik@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:pyocubik@atlanticgeneral.org)

### KICKSTART KINDERGARTEN

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4:30 p.m. A special six-session series built to help preschoolers get ready for kindergarten. Families will also receive a snack and tips for continuing at home. For ages 3-5 years. 410-641-0650

### KIWANIS CLUB MEETING

*Wednesdays* - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. Last Wednesday of the month meetings are offsite and information can be found on the website and Facebook. [www.kiwanisofopoc.org](http://www.kiwanisofopoc.org).

## ONGOING EVENTS

### MARCH INSPIRATION CHALLENGE

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., during March. Art, photography or poetry competition for all ages. Pieces will be displayed in the library for viewing. The theme is "Stormy." Due by March 26. 410-632-3495

### COMMUNITY JOURNAL: TELL HER STORY

Pocomoke library, 301 Market St. Drop in anytime during March and write a story in the community journal about a woman who has inspired you and share your thoughts and hopes for a better future. 410-957-0878

### FREE IN-PERSON TAX PREPARATION

Takes place through April 15. By appointment only, call 443-584-5661 or online at the following sites.

- Mondays at the Ocean Pines library, [www.tinyurl.com/t8km843p](http://www.tinyurl.com/t8km843p)
- Tuesdays at the Berlin library, [www.tinyurl.com/2rvvha2y](http://www.tinyurl.com/2rvvha2y)
- Saturdays at the Ocean City library, [www.tinyurl.com/3bt6ujx7](http://www.tinyurl.com/3bt6ujx7).

The program is open to taxpayers of all ages. AARP membership is not required. Find sites near you:

[aarpfoundation.org/taxaide](http://aarpfoundation.org/taxaide).

### BUS TRIP TO PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW

Takes place at the Philadelphia Convention Center on March 1. Depart from the Ocean Pines Community Center at 8:30 a.m. Featuring a day of stunning floral gardens, unique plants and artistic displays. Enjoy shopping, live music, entertainment and learning opportunities. Cost is \$80 and includes transportation and show ticket. Reservations: 410-641-7052.

### PHILLIES VS DODGERS BUS TRIP

Bus departs from Ocean Pines Community Center at 8:30 a.m. on April 6 for Citizens Bank Park. Game time is 1:35 p.m. Cost is \$85 and includes transportation and ticket. Tickets: Ocean Pines Recreation & Parks, 410-641-7052.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH COLLAGE

Pocomoke library, 301 Market St. Drop in anytime during February and add pictures, words, poems and anything inspiring to the collage featuring famous Black Americans. For families. 410-957-0878

### TEENY ARTS

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., during February. A themed craft program available in the teen section all month long. February Teeny Art is "Post-It Art Show." For ages 12-18 years. 410-632-3495

### TEEN TIMESHARE

Ocean Pines library, 11107 Cathell Road, during February, 3 p.m. to close. Drop in and create a seasonal craft or study for a test in your own teen area. For ages 12-18 years. 410-208-4014

### FEBRUARY INSPIRATION CHALLENGE

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., during February. Art, photography or poetry competition for all ages. Pieces will be displayed in the library for viewing and voting by age bracket. The theme is "Fantasy." Due by Feb. 20. 410-632-3495

### QUEEN OF HEARTS

Weekly virtual drawings on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. Winner receives 60 percent of jackpot. [www.opvfd.com/queen-of-hearts](http://www.opvfd.com/queen-of-hearts). Sponsored by the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department.

### 2025 KIWANIS LOTTERY TICKETS ON SALE

On sale every Saturday morning at the Ocean Pines Farmers Market from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. One \$20 ticket is good for all 365 drawings in 2025. Benefits the youth of the community.

### OCEAN CITY-BERLIN ROTARY CLUB

Meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at Don's Seafood & Chop House at the South Gate of Ocean Pines, 6 p.m. [ocberlinrotary@gmail.com](mailto:ocberlinrotary@gmail.com)

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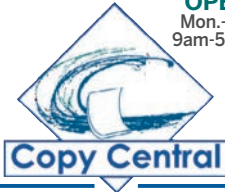
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