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TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

MEMORIAL DAY TRADITION

The Sparkling Rubies of the local Red Hat Society chapter showed off their patriotic spirit at this week's Old Fashioned Memorial Day Parade in Berlin. See more photos on page 17.

OP cell tower talks begin anew

Contractor looking at sites to consider, but be beyond that no decisions pending

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) The possibility of a cell phone tower in Ocean Pines inches closer as a contractor scopes out potential sites for the build to alleviate abysmal and unsafe reception.

At a May 24 Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors meeting, Tim Robinson, the neighborhood's police chief, said his team is working with Milestone Towers to consider possible sites for a structure to address poor cell phone reception in the community. Based in Reston, Virginia, the company has built similar towers at three Wicomico County high schools.

"The point we're at right now is we

are looking at locations here that are Ocean Pines property," Robinson said. "[Milestone Towers] is studying these locations. I am waiting for the official proposal that this is where we want to build, on this piece of property."

The chief assured that the process would be transparent. He added that when a location is selected as the most viable, representatives from

See OP Page 6

Buckingham's plans approved in early going

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) The Buckingham Elementary School replacement project continues to move forward, as this week, the Worcester County Board of Education approved the schematic design for the new facility. Upon the

See SCHOOL Page 12



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Referendum to decide new Pines fire station funding

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) Due to the Ocean Pines Association’s estimated \$3.4 million share of the volunteer fire department’s new southside station, the community’s board of directors agreed to move forward with a referendum coinciding with the annual election to garner community approval of OPA’s financial contribution to the replacement fire station.

At a May 24 OPA Board of Directors meeting, General Manager John Viola updated the community on the initiative to build a new South Fire Station for the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department at 911 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines.

The project will see the construction of a nearly 15,000 square foot facility to replace the existing, deteriorating South Fire Station. According to Viola, an assessment of the current structure, built in 1981, was completed in 2020. The evaluation revealed size and capacity issues, safety concerns, design flaws, crumbling conditions, and outdated infrastructure. At the time, a recommendation was made to replace the building with a new station.

The project has been progressing, with ongoing work group meetings between OPA officials, OPVFD President Joe Enste, and Chief Joey Widgeon. Architectural drawings are expected to arrive next week. Construction is estimated to begin in October, with a completion estimate of 65 weeks.

Viola said that pending a study of the community’s finances, he recommends that OPA use the HOA’s general reserves to fund their portion of the firehouse rebuild. An evaluation will be completed in August or September, and a final funding method will be decided.

“I mentioned we have a goldilocks situation, which means everything is good, I believe, but we need that evaluation,” Viola said. “That evaluation will either tell us we are right on target

with our funding reserves, or it might say we need more. It might even say we need less. But we need to go through that process.

“I’m recommending to the board today that this very important initiative to fund this building comes through our general reserves ... If the study comes in and it says we are well funded, then it would come out of the reserves. If it says we are not where we should be, it will probably hit the assessment.”

At a February board meeting, officials said that during construction of the South facility, OPVFD’s career team will relocate to the North Station to avoid additional costs incurred by temporary facilities like trailers. OPA’s public works group will also provide additional space.

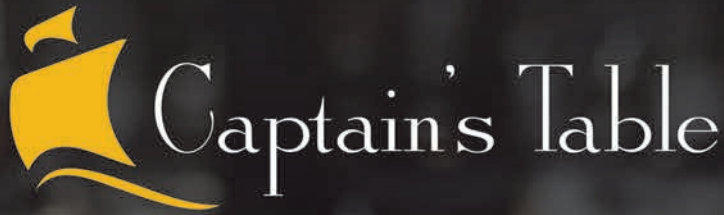
The project has been an ongoing discussion for a few years, making concrete steps toward a replacement structure last summer.

In July of last year, OPA and the OPVFD inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining each party’s role in the project, including the funding responsibilities, as a milestone step to advance the new facility.

The contract determines that the fire company will use “grant and bond funds previously secured toward the project’s construction cost. The department shall also utilize funds raised through charitable fundraising efforts or otherwise available for the Department for the project.”

Ocean Pines will be responsible for the remaining costs, “subject to OPA having exclusive control over the ultimate cost and scope of the project, as well as management after that,” the MOU reads.

OPA’s estimated financial contribution to the project is \$3.4 million, with a 10% contingency for unforeseen expenses. Per the board’s approval, a referendum on matters pertaining to the South Fire Station’s funding will take place in accordance with this year’s board of directors’ election.



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Golf course irrigation project will continue

First phase began last fall with further work expected to start after season in Oct.


By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) Officials said that phase one of the Ocean Pines project to replace and improve the golf course's failing 50-year irrigation system is complete, including work on the pump station, the first and ninth holes, and the driving range. Ocean Pines Association's Golf Course Superintendent Justin Hartshorne said that the work on the facility's irrigation system at holes one and nine, the driving range, and the pump station, which began in September last year, is finished and "has gone really well." The official

added that his team would conduct one final walkthrough with the contractor, Irrigation Services, to ensure everything was operating as it should. "We're going to test every single head that was installed, walk through every area they were in to get the final check, make sure everything is good before we move on to phase two planning," Hartshorne said. The second phase will likely begin around October and stretch into the winter. At the community's May 24 board of directors' meeting, the neighborhood's governing body unanimously approved the capital request of \$810,500 for the project's second stage, which will see irrigation improvements at holes four to eight. The golf course project's purpose is to replace the old, failing system with enhanced irrigation that will be

longer-lasting and more efficient in terms of coverage and water usage. OPA General Manager John Viola said the estimated lifespan of the new system is around 50 to 75 years. Hartshorne said that the most recent work has already had an influence. "We are going to see efficiencies," he said. "There is an immediate impact with the new pump station and the new underground pipes. Looking back, tracking last year, March, April, and May, we had about 14 inches of rain. We are at about 12 inches of rain this year, and our water usage is drastically down. As far as total irrigation I've applied at this point this season, we've used only about 600,000 gallons compared to last year we used about 3 million in irrigation at this point." The upgraded irrigation system is vital to maintaining the community's golf course, which officials often call one of their most successful amenities. According to Viola and OPA Board of Directors President Stuart Lakernick, the facility is a money maker for the homeowners association. "Our base assessment at \$875, with safety taking almost half of our assessment costs, we are still able to fund our irrigation," Lakernick said. "The conditions at this golf course are unbelievable. The golf course is the economic engine that keeps our assessments low. The investment in that critical infrastructure continues to make it affordable for us to live

here." The general manager agreed, stating that the golf course is expected to remain profitable. "The golf course will be in the black this year, after depreciation," Viola said. "I believe we will be also in the black, again talking down the road, even after this irrigation system." OPA Board of Directors Vice President Rick Farr added the community continues to invest in the golf course because of its success, but the property needs to be respected. According to the official, he has seen residents using the facility for activities other than its intended purpose. "We are putting a huge investment in our golf course ... which is a destination golf course," he said. "One of the things I will say that is a little disappointing that I see is people playing on our golf courses, playing soccer, and on our greens. Having dogs on the golf course playing catch ... They are not supposed to be out on our golf course. We have other amenities for that ... we have dog parks ... we have soccer fields here in Ocean Pines ... I just want the community to know that this is a huge investment, and we must ensure we treat this amenity as it should." The second phase of the golf course irrigation initiative will begin later this year, with minimal disruptions to players. The enhancement work will be a multi-year project with additional stages over the next few years.



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OP evaluating cell tower sites

Continued from Page 1

Milestone Towers will likely attend a public board meeting to answer any questions community members may have.

The cell phone tower project has been a hot topic among community members. Robinson first brought up the initiative in September 2024, when he said at a board of directors meeting that cell phone reception is poor in the wooded neighborhood, particularly during congested holiday weekends. This issue is especially alarming if someone has to dial 911 in an emergency and is unable to reach a dispatcher. As such, the chief has spent the last several months investigating the possibility of constructing a tower to remedy the safety hazard.

Robinson indicated how the cell phone tower arrangement with a contractor would work in November. If a contract is signed, the chief said at the time, Milestone Towers would put up the structure at their expense, ensuring all required permits are secured.

“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 last year.

The chief also maintained that, based on the company’s work with Wicomico County, the structure’s aesthetic appearance could be disguised, meaning it may not resemble a cell phone tower, and instead uphold the community’s natural look.

“I have stressed to [Milestone Towers] that whatever we do, it stays in line with making sure Ocean Pines stays as beautiful as possible,” Robinson said.

The project has been met with some pushback from OPA residents. During public comments at a January board meeting, citizen Dave Tanner criticized the potential cell tower, calling the move unnecessary as the community is surrounded by coverage just outside its boundaries, including a tower near the Ocean Pines North Gate.

Tanner argued that reception issues are the responsibility of the consumer to address. Switching carriers, he said, is how customers should address dissatisfaction with service, rather than a community cell tower. The resident added that the structure would degrade property values.

Following Tanner’s remarks, the board intervened, stating that there was no concrete plan to build a tower. Robinson later said, in response to a clarification inquiry, that OPA was still in the discussion stage of what was possible for the community.

At the May 24 meeting, the police chief stated the community is working with Milestone Towers on the initiative and is in the preliminary phase of studying potential properties. Robinson’s team will provide updates to residents as they come.

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Pines police chief provides updates, compares stats

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) The Ocean Pines Police Department reviewed traffic concerns, presented crash data and briefed the community on bicycle and pedestrian safety this week at the neighborhood's public board of directors meeting.

Ocean Pines Police Department Chief Tim Robinson attended the Ocean Pines Association's Board of Directors meeting on May 24. The chief presented a brief traffic safety presentation as summer begins and the Eastern Shore area prepares for an influx of beach tourists.

Robinson compared crash data over the past few years, only mentioning reportable accidents handled by the OPA police department. In 2022, the OP officers saw 38 crashes, 10 of which included personal injury and eight property damages. In 2023, 23 accidents were reported. Of these, two included personal injury, 21 included property damage, and one resulted in a fatality.

The community police team saw 33 crashes last year, 10 of which included personal injury, 23 included property damage, and one led to a fatality. So far in 2025, the Ocean Pines law enforcement group has responded to 11 accidents, with two resulting in personal injury and nine in property damage.

To put those figures into perspective, the police chief referred to two recent traffic studies. In the fall of last year, a radar counter was placed at the 100 block of Ocean Parkway from Sept. 23 to Oct. 5, which revealed that an average of 2,300 vehicles drive down that road a day. Another study from March 28 to April 15 showed a daily average of 1,600 cars passing Ocean Parkway at Camelot.

"You can look at how few reportable accidents we have compared to how many vehicles are traveling," Robinson noted.

The chief also mentioned some safety enhancements he and his team have identified and completed. These include crosswalks throughout the community, like on Robin Hood Trail, assisting the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition with a additional safety improvement efforts, such as adding more crosswalks at locations such as Ocean Parkway at White Horse Park, Cathell Road at the Ocean Pines Library, and Ocean Parkway at Manklin Center.

The police team is also considering sharing road signage to remind vehicle drivers and cyclists that both groups have a right to the streets in Ocean Pines.

More information about the community's safety efforts can be obtained by reaching out to the Ocean Pines Police Department directly or contacting the Ocean Pines Association at info@ocean-pines.org.

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Viola summarizes recent, current projects

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) An upgraded racquet center sports building, new bocce ball courts, ongoing landscaping and maintenance, and additional operational services are just a few ways the Ocean Pines Association is gearing up for the busy summer season.

At a recent board of directors meeting, OPA General Manager John Viola presented his report on ongoing and new initiatives. According to the official’s update, the enhanced racquet center sports building was recently completed.

Viola said that his team’s goal of having the enhancement work finished before Memorial Day was met. The project scope primarily included improvements to the structure’s bathrooms and the front pro shop.

Still, the general manager maintained that unexpected upgrades to the facility also had to be completed.

“We did have to do more than we initially thought,” Viola said. “Once we opened the walls and saw what was there, it was clear that we needed to basically do a new building, which the board approved, and this association has paid for. That is one solid building down there.”

Viola added that while he still has a few final bills coming in for the new racquet center sports building, the final cost estimate is around \$275,000.

Two new bocce ball courts at the Yacht Club are also coming along. Viola said that Southwest Greens Delaware Valley, the company contracted to complete the project, began installing the play spaces on May 19.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The recently completed Racquet Club building in Ocean Pines is pictured.

The work was briefly delayed by weather, but the courts will be completed within the next two weeks.

The general manager said the two courts coincide with a new community bocce league. Over 100 people have signed up, and play is set to begin next month. Kickoff and introduction meetings were held on May 14. The cost of the new bocce ball courts is around \$50,000.

“We’re all excited about this,” Viola said.

With registration from the new bocce league, the general manager said in March that the enhanced courts should yield a return on investment within seven years.

The new play areas will be professional synthetic bocce spaces. Officials weighed the pros and cons of natural versus synthetic materials, but they opted for synthetics because they require less maintenance.

“The two courts we are proposing to build are synthetic,” said Mike Galello, the Ocean Pines bocce ball club director earlier this year. “We are doing it right, so we have 10 years on this court before it even needs maintenance. That’s the advantage of going synthetic versus natural. Of course, you need constant maintenance, like rolling it. Synthetic is where we need to be.”

As the summer season arrives, the

community has increased its landscaping efforts, said OPA Senior Director of Administration Linda Martin. For instance, more palm trees were added to the North Gate, the Yacht Club, and the Beach Club.



Per a request, Martin added that a new gazebo is planned for the dog park. The pavilion will be added as a rain structure with seating for 12 to 15 people. The new structure will cost around \$6,000 and be delivered by the Bishopville-based Woodland Sheds in six to eight weeks.

The new gym floor at the Community Center at White Horse Park was also completed before the busy season. Martin said the work to replace the surface began on May 12 and was finalized on May 17, followed by a week of curing time.


Dynamic Sports Construction completed the floor at a total cost of \$62,300. A leak damaged the former hardwood, identifying the need for an entirely new surface.



The new installation, a DynaForce System, incorporates a poured floor with padding underneath. The improved surface has been implemented in spots like the Salisbury Salvation Army, and is beneficial when playing sports like basketball, as it is shock-absorbing to the body.

“It’s quite impressive,” Martin said of the new floor.



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Berlin's newest restaurant opens after license approval

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(May 30, 2025) Liquor board officials in Worcester County declined to green-light a "liquor locker" concept for a downtown Berlin bar and restaurant but still approved its liquor license transfer to a new ownership group.

The bourbon and tequila joint Bour-Agavé is no more at 104 North Main Street. It reopened May 23 as CounterClox, a new restaurant with an industrial vibe, said Patrice Ottey, part-owner of the business.

"Berlin being a kind of 'step back in time' place, we felt like CounterClox really is a pause in time," she told the Worcester County Board of License Commissioners (BLC) at a May 21 hearing. "We feel Berlin is like that, and that's how we kind of came up for the name for that. So, it'll be a very industrial theme when you walk in, very casual, very comfortable atmosphere and inviting."

The BLC considered the request to transfer Bour-Agavé's liquor license to a new ownership group of Ottey, Meghan Newberger, and Fredric Leibowitz. Newberger had been the proprietor of Bour-Agavé and now shares 40% ownership with Ottey in CounterClox, while Leibowitz has a 20% interest, according to their BLC application.

The board did unanimously approve the license transfer, pending the owners meeting the 70-seat minimum required of a Class "B" beer, wine, and liquor license.

However, at the hearing, a line of inquiry by board members injected some uncertainty to the outcome when CounterClox introduced the concept of a "liquor cabinet" — where customers rent a space to hold liquor for a 12-month period, not unlike a wine cabinet at other fine dining establishments.

Guests would have to purchase liquor from the restaurant, not from outside, and CounterClox would keep those bottles under lock and key. Diners could ask the bartender to pour from a bottle in their cabinet. Customers would never touch the bottle, and all liquor would stay on the premises.

While "liquor cabinets" would help

the business with inventory management control — guest-held bottles are paid for, as opposed to sitting on a shelf generating no revenue — the main reason is to just get people in the door with something unique, explained Kristina Witkowski, an attorney representing CounterClox.

"So, this is really to help your regulars kind of feel like VIPs," she said at the hearing. "It's not a club. It's really a public but private offering. And it's a quieter space."

BLC chairman Billy Esham politely paused Witkowski's testimony, and turned to ask board attorney Tom Coates: "Is this legal?"

Coates said, on first blush, the liquor cabinet seems to violate BLC rules.

Once upon a time, bars in Worcester County would lure customers by offering 3-for-1 or even 4-for-1 drinks. To combat this practice, the BLC adopted a regulation, Rule 8, which prohibits the sale of more than two drinks at one time, Coates explained.

"Since they're selling the bottle to a customer," Coates said, "that would violate Rule 8. There's no locations in this county that has any type of service like that, and that's because of this rule."

Coates added that, if there are any other local bars now offering some version of a liquor cabinet, then that also would be a Rule 8 violation. "They didn't ask permission of this board for that privilege," he said.

Part-owner Leibowitz jumped in to say that the bartender is still the one regulating the pour.

"So they pre-purchased the inventory. That doesn't mean they're getting service," he said. "We withhold that judgment, as the bartenders, to cut someone off — to say, you've had your two drinks. ... We're still controlling the distribution of what's poured out of that bottle."

Esham ultimately stated, almost apologetically, that the liquor cabinet concept isn't permitted under BLC regulations — for now. He didn't rule out the possibility that the board could rethink the locker concept.

"I'm just telling you, I don't think we'll do it," he said to the applicants.



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Education advisory council recaps current school year

Group established to allow teachers a voice, chances to offer recommendations

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) An education advisory council (EAC) for Worcester County Public Schools bridges teacher and administration concerns to better student success and educator efficiency. Representatives presented their work from the current year at a board of education meeting last week.

Members of the education advisory council, Ocean City Elementary School teacher Melanie Coleman and Berlin Intermediate School teacher Michele Hundley, spoke of the EAC's ongoings from this past academic year at a Worcester County Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, May 20.

The EAC is comprised of three members appointed by the Worcester County Teachers Association and three named by the superintendent each year. This year, the body operated under the guidance of Dee Shorts, chief academic officer for grades preK through eight, Annette Wallace, chief safety and academic officer for grades nine to 12, and Beth Shockley Lynch, Snow Hill Middle School educator and teacher association president.

According to the presentation, EAC "provides teachers with an opportunity to evaluate the school system's policies, procedures, and practices...and offers recommendations to enhance teacher effective-

ness, increase efficiency, and promote student achievement."

The EAC is comprised of various educators from across the district who meet once a month via Zoom to discuss issues brought to the council's attention, such as the system's cell phone policy and school safety. For instance, Hundley noted that the group has worked to ensure that all schools have door scanners to restrict access from unauthorized visitors.

Coleman said other concerns to be discussed are bus issues, particularly at the southern end of the county, internet outages at Stephen Decatur High School, paper shortages at the schools, and how to increase teacher attendance at professional development days. Following a series of snow days last winter, the council also addressed virtual learning days.

In February, OCES was placed on a lockdown due to an unverified threat, school officials said at the time. As a result of the incident, the EAC discussed emergency communication systems regarding how information is sent out within the building and countywide.

The board of education noted that the council connects teacher and administrative concerns and is a valuable asset to the school system.

"Historically, teachers did not question administrative authority, but there was always a need to know why things were done a certain way, because there is always a reason," said William Buchanan, board vice president. "Teachers, a lot of times didn't know why it was happening, but now there's a way this can be discussed ... This is a good thing."



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School design approved by board members

Continued from Page 1

board's unanimous yes vote, the plans will be presented to the County Commissioners next month.

Brad Hastings and Allison Shockley of Becker Morgan Group, the Salisbury-based engineering and architectural firm, presented the design plans to the board of education on Tuesday, May 20. The governing body unanimously approved the blueprints.

The next step in moving the BES project forward is a design presentation to the Worcester County Commissioners on June 17. The hope is that following the commissioner's review of the outline, the schematic design will be forwarded to the state for their evaluation of the documents. If all remains on track, the new facility is expected to break ground in May

2027 and be completed just in time for fall 2029.

The design presentation included site and floor plans, the building massing and a budget review.

Hastings noted that the new building is expected to have a vehicular entrance off West Street and a bus entrance from Main Street, keeping the two types of traffic away from one another, a requirement in school creation. He added that the new BES's parking is planned for where the current building now sits.

Coming off West Street, the property has open green space that will be used as playing fields. Both sides of that entryway will maintain pedestrian paths, and a playground area is planned for the facility with easy access from the school.

The design presentation also in-

cluded floor plans. According to Shockley, the improved Buckingham will be a two-story school. The first floor is estimated at 69,387 square feet, and the second floor will likely be 21,364 square feet, for a total of 90,751 square feet between the two stories.

PreK3, preK4, kindergarten, and first grade are planned for the first floor, while second, third, and fourth grades will be located on the second floor.

Shockley said the administrative and health suites will be placed adjacent to the main entrance to guarantee good visibility of all those coming into the facility. Kindergarten will be located close to the preK3 and preK4 classes, which will sit near the main entrance, and a courtyard. Additionally, the plan includes areas for spe-

cial education offices, a guidance suite, and an ELL (English Language Learner) suite.

The second floor will include individual teacher resource rooms, shared spaces, and second, third, and fourth-grade classrooms.

The property will include a Judy Center for Early Childhood Learning, STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) spaces, a media center, a gym, music classrooms, and a community health clinic.

Shockley added that the primary and bus entrances have secure vestibules to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff during school hours.

"The main entry leads to the reception area, so you would have that secure checkpoint before entering the school," Shockley said.

Furthermore, the main entryway will include a covering under which students, school personnel, and visitors will enter.

The Becker Morgan representatives added that during the schematic design phase, the team considered the school in the context of Berlin's historic charm. Hastings said they are weighing the use of brick and natural wood elements, but these will be studied further. To guarantee durable school construction, the engineers will prioritize long-term materials requiring minimal maintenance.

All project advocates aim to avoid constant upkeep of a brand-new structure by using supplies and building elements that have a long lifespan.

“As I said in the feasibility discussion, please make sure that all the materials are maintenance-free to the extent possible so we don’t have to replace them in five years,” Board of Education member Jon Andes said. “We need to be able to replace them in 50 years because that’s probably the length of time Buckingham will be in place until someone in the future has a feasibility study done again to replace Buckingham Elementary School.”

The Becker Morgan team outlined the estimated cost of the project. Construction of the new 90,837-square-foot facility will cost around \$52 million. Demolition of the current school will cost \$550,000, and site development will cost around \$8 million, with a \$3\$ construction contingency, for a total of around \$62 million.

The budget also factors in additional project costs, such as relocating the portable classrooms, equipment, furniture, technology, playground costs, and fees for architectural engineering services and construction management. Thus, the total cost of creating a new BES comes to a little over \$71 million.

That price tag is aligned with a memorandum of understanding be-




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SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Last week's presentation to the Worcester County Board of Education included site and floor plans for the two-story structure as well as bus and vehicle entrance and exit intentions.

BES project specifics detailed

tween the local government, the board of education, and the state. Per the agreement, Maryland will provide around \$25 million to replace BES, while approximately \$46 million will come from Worcester County funding.

After the board of education unanimously approved the schematic design, the next step in the replacement project is to present the same outline to the Worcester County Commissioners in June and, hopefully, after that, send it to the state for review.

In addition to passing the BES plans, the board green-lit the contracting of Becker Morgan Group to handle the Berlin Intermediate School feasibility study.

The old BIS will also be renovated or rebuilt in conjunction with the BES project. The feasibility study will determine whether improvements can be made to the current Berlin facility or if an entirely new structure will need to be constructed. Per the board's approval, Becker Morgan will handle the preliminary evaluation.

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Commissioners to reduce income tax rate

County officials also vote to reduce homestead tax credit from 3% to zero

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(May 30, 2025) Worcester County officials, as part of their fiscal year 2026 budgeting, have decided to both lower income taxes and set the homestead tax credit rate to zero.

Officials on May 20 said they hoped the moves will offer some financial relief to residents and taxpayers, given the county's estimated \$7.85 million budget surplus going into fiscal year 2026, which starts July 1. The current surplus includes major decisions made in recent weeks, including slicing the proposed cost-of-living-adjustments from \$4,000 for county employees to \$2,000.

The commissioners have stated a desire to help county property owners with their rising expenses.

"That would help retirees, and with the income tax reduction by a quarter percent, we would be helping working people," County Commissioner Chip Bertino said at the May 20 budget meeting. "So, we're getting both ends there."

The County Commissioners voted

unanimously at Tuesday's budget hearing to drop the county's income tax rate a quarter of a percent, from 2.25% to 2%.

Reducing the income tax does represents a potential revenue loss to the county of about \$1.9 million for fiscal 2026, as well as another \$5.5 million for the 2027 fiscal year, according to county administration.

Worcester is projecting a massive tax revenue wind-fall for 2026, the result of higher property tax assessments that yielded about \$18 million in new revenue.

The county is also projecting about \$6 million more from income tax revenue. Other revenue increases of about \$1.4 million came from real estate and transfer taxes.

Not all that money is fair game for spending. County policy mandates setting aside 15% of revenue in reserves, as well as 22.2% of income tax revenue toward employee pensions.

County leaders also voted to drop the Homestead Property Tax Credit from 3% down to 0%. Commissioner Joe Mitrecic (District 7, Ocean City) introduced the motion Tuesday.

A zeroed-out homestead tax credit means eligible homeowners would effectively freeze their property tax rate, according to County Administrator Weston Young.

"Whatever your tax rate is, you will lock that in until you sell," he said.

Other counties and municipalities set their own tax cap, which cannot exceed 10% – and because Ocean City's cap is also set to zero, it means an Ocean City property owner gets double the cap protection and effectively could lock in property taxes in perpetuity.

Commissioners President Ted Elder (District 4, West-ern) said "everyone should benefit from that, including sheriff's office, teachers, everyone. I totally agree with (Mitrecic) and I really like the way you made that proposal."

Because county leaders have to formally request the change with the state's Department of Assessments and Taxation, the change from 3% to 0% likely wouldn't take effect until at least next summer, meaning it won't have any impact on this year's budget, Young added.

When it takes effect, it represents

an estimated revenue hit of \$890,000 for county revenues.

Young added that, because Maryland's state income tax is going up for higher earners, wealthy Marylanders could move to Worcester County full-time and take advantage of a lower tax rate.

Designed to protect homeowners from taxes that come from increased state property assessments, the Homestead Property Tax Credit program puts a ceiling on how high your property tax bill can go.

Homeowners can only qualify for the tax credit on their primary residence, and they must apply online with the state. Worcester County has approximately 12,000 property tax accounts enrolled in the program, according to deputy county administrator Candace Savage.

Elsewhere in Worcester County, Berlin's cap is 5%, Snow Hill's is 3% and Pocomoke City's is 10%. On the Eastern Shore, Talbot County's homestead tax rate is 0%, Wicomico and Dorchester counties are 5%, and Somerset County's is 10%.

Other Maryland municipalities with 0% caps include College Park and Upper Marlboro in Prince George's County, as well as the town of St. Michaels, Trappe, and Queen Anne in Talbot County.

'Whatever your tax rate is, you will lock that in until you sell.'
Weston Young,
County Administrator

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Obituaries

JOHN JOSEPH WELLS

Ocean Pines

John Joseph Wells, passed away on May 21, 2025, at the age of 81. He spent his final days as he lived them — surrounded by friends and family and singing until the very end.

Born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut, on October 29, 1943, John was the eldest of nine children. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1961, and served 30 years between active duty and the Naval Reserves. John also had an electrical engineering degree from the University of Connecticut and worked for most of his career at Southern New England Telephone.

Music was a profound joy in John's life. It was through the New Haven Community Chorus that he met his wife Marion, to whom he was married for nearly 35 years. John and Marion retired to Ocean Pines in 2002, and John absolutely loved living here, close to the water and family, and building many new friendships. John continued to share his love of singing with the Pine Tones and the choir at Community Church of Ocean Pines. John is survived by his wife, Marion Wells; his children, Christine and Benjamin; his step-children Jessica and Michael and his wife Kim. He was also blessed with eight grandchildren.

A small graveside burial service will be held at Community Church of Ocean Pines on Friday, May 30. A larger Celebration of Life will be held later this summer, where his friends and family are invited to remember and celebrate John, enjoy some apple pie - and of course, sing.

CHARLES CARROLL WAESCHE, SR.

Ocean Pines

Charles Carroll Waesche, Sr., age 92, passed away on Thursday, May 22, 2025, surrounded by family at his home in Ocean Pines, Maryland. Born in Pimlico, Maryland, he was the son of the late Albert Waesche and Rebecca (Huber) Waesche.

Charles was a vibrant and fun-loving character, who was dedicated to his family. He loved to be loved, and to make others feel loved. Charles enjoyed golf, sports, horse racing, music and reading his bible. He loved his church of the last two years and all the parishioners who became a part of his family. He served in the Army as a young man then went on to work for McCormick Spice Co. He then bought and ran his own small business as a Pepperidge Farm Distributor. After he sold his business, he and Betty retired to Ocean Pines and fell in love with the community where he had the "best neighbors in the world". He enjoyed working as a starter for Ocean Pines Golf Club and a bus driver for Francis Scott Key Hotel.

He is survived by his son, Charles C. Waesche, Jr. (Kim), daughters, Kathy Sue Henninger (David), and DeeDee McCracken (Kevin), a brother, Robert Waesche (Merle), 10 grandchildren, Carly Johnson (Alex), Patrick McCarthy, Kelly Jones (Joshua), Annie Eaton Bautista (Carlos), Shane McCarthy (Jessica), Gary Eaton (Julia), Michele



C. Waesche, Sr.

Waesche, Scott Eaton (Robyn), Lisa Waesche, and Lori Waesche.

In addition, 12 great-grandchildren, Aiden Johnson, Isaiah Johnson, Ezra Johnson, Uriel Johnson, Onyx Johnson, Zadok Johnson, Matthew Jones, Madilyn Jones, Esme Bautista, Waylon Eaton, Juniper Eaton, and Dysten Cadogan.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his beautiful wife of 63 years Betty Jane Smith Waesche, a daughter, Karen Ann Eaton, two brothers, Albert Waesche Jr., and Billy Robertson, a sister, Doris Lessner and a beloved granddaughter, Katie McCarthy.

A funeral service was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at noon at The River Church of the Nazarene in Berlin. A visitation took place prior. Interment took place on Wednesday, May 28 at The Broad Creek Cemetery in Stevensville, Md. 21666. Letters of condolence can be sent to the family via www.burbagefuneralhome.com. Arrangements are in the care of The Burbage Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to "The River Church of the Nazarene" in Berlin, Maryland or The Walter Hoving Home in Garrison, New York, both of which were near and dear to his heart.

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Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

EXHIBITION WINNERS

The Worcester County Arts Council has announced the winners of its latest juried exhibition, “My Favorite Things,” now on display through June 29. The vibrant and heartfelt exhibit invited artists to submit works inspired by the people, places, and moments they hold most dear. A total of 26 diverse pieces were submitted by 19 emerging and established artists. Winners were Suzy Wader, first place; Kathy Gibson, second place; Jeanne Locklair, third place; and Judy Benton, Fred Johnson and Kathryn Redden, honorable mentions. Pictured, from left, are WCAC Executive Director Anna Mullis, artists Judy Benton, Redden, Johnson and Quader; and guest juror Brooke Rogers.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

LEGISLATORS THANKED

At the April 24 luncheon meeting of the Republican Women of Worcester County, the members saluted “Welcome Home” to our state legislators with certificates of appreciation. The legislators spoke of the results of the 2025 Maryland General Assembly and the impacts that its actions will have on our state and county. Pictured, from left, are Delegate Wayne Hartman, RWWC President Jean Delcher, State Senator Mary Beth Carozza, State Delegate Charles Otto and RWWC First Vice President Carol Frazier.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

ART SHOW HELD

The Training Station Preschool hosted its annual Art Show event on May 5. The school wide event showcased original works created by all students in the First Steps Classes, 3-year-old class, and PreKindergarten. Most of the children’s masterpieces on display were process art that focused on the journey of creating art rather than on a specific result. The Training Station is celebrating its 40th year in operation.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

CEDAR CHAPEL DONATION

Worcester County is fortunate to have Cedar Chapel Special School located in Snow Hill. The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City is proud to support the school with a \$2,500 donation. Kiwanis guest speaker CCSS Principal Belinda Gulyas spoke to the club about how some of the teaching was done, namely, the Expanding Expression Tool (EET) that teaches students expressive communication skills using seven colored beads. Above, Gulyas is pictured holding the beads with Kiwanis Club President Tom Southwell.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

GUEST SPEAKER

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City features guest speakers most every Wednesday morning meeting in the Ocean Pines Community Center. On May 7, Mike Healy, a former Army officer, a tourism certified Ireland specialist and YouTube partner, spoke about his journey from retirement to entrepreneurship. He shared how to start a new business, even in “retirement”, like he and his wife Victoria did with Celtic RnR Tours.



STATE ESSAY WINNER

Worcester Preparatory School fourth grade student Isla Pippin of Berlin recently earned the title of District 1 Essay Winner in the Maryland Municipal League’s (MML) “If I Were Mayor” 2025 Essay Contest Each year, fourth grade students across the state participate in the “If I Were Mayor” essay contest, and this year’s theme was “Building Community for a New Generation.” In her essay, Pippin wrote she would, “work towards a goal to make people feel welcomed and safe in the community, not only for our generation, but for the coming generations. I could do this by having new town events to make new neighbors feel welcome. We could also make new community buildings where everyone feels welcome.” Pippin is pictured at the Maryland State House with Maryland Municipal League President Michael O’Connor and Maryland Mayors Association President Travis Marion after receiving her award.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Old-Fashioned Memorial Day Parade



HOLIDAY FUN

The Flower Street community came together on Monday to celebrate an Old-Fashioned Memorial Day Parade, which began at Stephen Decatur Middle School and ended at Henry Park. Floats, bands and marching units competed for prizes as they passed by the judges' stand in front of Duncan-Showell Post 231 of the American Legion. Music, food and craft vendors were set up along the parade route.

TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE



Opinion

Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday.

Cell service for OP? Time to get on with it

“No Verizon cell tower will be erected on county property in Ocean Pines, following the Worcester County Commissioners’ rejection Tuesday of a lease agreement that fell far short of what the commissioners expected.

—Dec. 6, 2018, Bayside Gazette

Not quite six and a half years ago, the county commissioners killed a deal to allow the Maryland company, Calvert Crossland, build a cell tower on its wastewater treatment plant property in Ocean Pines.

Their reasons: the tower space the company had reserved for the county’s use was less than the commissioners thought; Ocean Pines’ commissioner representatives Chip Bertino and Jim Bunting said residents didn’t like the idea of a 160-foot-tall tower in their midst.

But whether the commissioners’ decision was right or wrong at the time, the problem that brought the county and the tower company together continues ... and will only get worse.

The spotty to nonexistent cell service in the Ocean Pines area must be dealt with. It is a matter of public safety, as Police Chief Tim Robinson has been pointing out since last fall, when he advised the board of directors that residents and visitors must be able to call 911 in emergencies.

It’s difficult to argue that a cell tower’s possible effects on property values and its jarring interruption of the wooded scenery are more important than these potential downsides when lives and property are at stake.

Besides, according to CNET, only 28% of American households have a landline telephone these days, and while those percentages might not hold for Ocean Pines, the numbers do show that world is moving on and that Ocean Pines’ opposition to a cell tower in the community is becoming less logical as time passes.

Divided vote decides police budget

Commissioners float options after sheriff reduces previous ask

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) Worcester County officials agreed to bump starting salaries for sheriff’s deputies to regionally competitive levels after the sheriff dropped his fiscal year 2026 spending request by more than \$1 million.

Tuesday’s budget review for the sheriff’s office also escalated into a nearly 90-minute discussion, at times heated, with several commissioners launching into monologues about how they feel taxpayers dollars should be spent on raises and cost-of-living adjustments.

After their circuitous dais debate, the County Commissioners ultimately voted 4-3 to approve the sheriff’s budget amendments as presented, with Commissioners Joe Mitrecic, Eric Fiori, and Diana Purnell dissenting.

Sheriff Matt Crisafulli told commissioners Tuesday that he hoped the changes were “something palatable that we can all work together on” to remain competitive among Delmarva-area law enforcement agencies.

“It’s a start, to help not only bring in attractive applicants, but to also – you’ve heard that, ‘institutional knowledge’ – keep valuable men and women from walking out the back door because of a few thousand. I think we’re moving in the right direction, and this helps, but the other agencies are moving fast,” he said.

Starting July 1, a rookie deputy salary in Worcester County would rise from \$55,037 to \$62,632. The sheriff’s original request was for \$64,632.

Overall reductions in the sheriff’s amended budget will see a \$900,603 decrease in salaries and benefits, putting his total budget request at \$19.3 million.

Departmental salaries would fall by \$512,811 – including deleting \$224,000 in budgeted overtime pay – and benefits by \$163,792. Lieutenant-grade pay drops by about \$3,000, and one part-time deputy position would

be held open until next summer.

Additional payroll moves would be postponed until January, including raising pay grades for the ranks of deputy through sergeant, as well as the hiring a new forensic technician.

Given that overtime pay would be stripped from this budget, Commissioner Chip Bertino (District 5, Ocean Pines) asked the sheriff what his plans were to keep overtime costs low.

Crisafulli said crime is unpredictable and overtime is inevitable given his staffing shortages.

“Our long-term goal would be to get those employees back when we can and hire additional employees to fill those spots,” he said.

Notably, several of the County Commissioners told Crisafulli they didn’t agree with his choice to decrease the budget, telling him they’d have been happy to approve the earlier request.

Commissioner Joe Mitrecic (District 7, Ocean City) said deputies’ salaries and overtime should not have been touched, stressing how deputies are “the first line of defense” for keeping 911 response times low in rural swaths of the county.

“I think that you’re cutting yourself short,” Mitrecic told him, adding, “we can’t have a revolving door in our sheriff’s department. It’s too important to the county. I support you guys 100 percent and I support the amount of money you’re asking for.”

Commissioner Diana Purnell (District 2, Central) agreed, telling the sheriff she didn’t have a problem with his original uncut budget.

“Our law enforcement is coming up against counties that are paying more,” she said. “If we’re in a position to meet that budget you first put out there, then we need to do that. All your officers are very important to you because you protect us. I can’t vote for you to take a reduction in your budget. I want to make sure you got what you need.”

The sheriff replied that he didn’t want to cut \$1 million, but it was presented in the spirit of collaboration.

Mitrecic then pitched that

the sheriff’s original, untouched budget should be reinstated – minus about \$100,000 in line-items for supplies and consulting service – which had support from several other commissioners.

The discussion drifted, however, when the topic of cost-of-living (COLA) increases came up.

Last week, the commissioners in a 4-3 vote, opted to cap all county staff COLAs at \$2,000, even for teachers who had negotiated a \$4,000 pay increase in their union contract.

On Tuesday, while talking about starting deputy salaries, the question arose of whether the sheriff had calculated a COLA into that amount – opening the door for some elected officials to express honestly their feelings about the COLA changes.

“My understanding was, that was already off the table,” noted Commissioner Bertino noted, “because we already made that decision.”

Commissioner Eric Fiori (District 3, Sinepuxent) said he was supportive of giving sworn deputies the \$4,000 COLA – and, if that didn’t fly, that the commissioners should consider budgeting for something akin to hazard pay to get salaries up.


But giving \$4,000 to deputies would mean reintroducing the COLA not only for all public safety employees, but “everybody in the system” asserted Commission President Ted Elder (District 4, Western).

“And there’s no way we can afford that,” Elder said, adding, “I can’t support giving them the money to cut the support staff while they’re giving it to everyone else. No way I’m going to support giving two different costs of living to the haves and the have-nots.”

Offering the full \$4,000 COLA to all county employees, including Board of Education staff, would cost about \$3.3 million, according to budget officer Kim Reynolds.

(The commissioners briefly considered another solution to paying deputies more but without the COLA: an across-the-board pay grade increase

See GET Page 19

BAYSIDEGAZETTE

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‘Get this over with, because it’s gone crazy’

Continued from Page 18
for all sheriff’s employees, of about 5%. If implemented, it would have bumped starting deputy pay to approximately \$65,730. However, this line of discussion didn’t go anywhere.)
Commissioner Mitrecic then weighed in, stating his strong opposition to the board’s decision to cap cost-of-living increases for all county employees. He said the county’s expected \$6.3 million surplus was enough to offer everyone the COLA.

“I don’t know why we keep saying we don’t have the money,” he said.
Commissioner Fiori said the pay disparity between Board of Education support staff and certified teachers was a negotiated agreement, one approved by both the school board and the unions. “Why we’re meddling in that, I don’t understand,” he said.
Fiori continued to hold the floor.
“Why are we not investing in this county?” he said. “It’s absolutely ridiculous we’re even having this debate. We have an additional \$3 million in surplus. I’m conservative as they come, but there’s a time and a place to invest in the people that protect us, that educate our children, that make this county go around.”
Elder replied that the county is obligated to thread the needle between unexpected expenses, including unfunded

state mandates or natural disasters, and giving some money back to taxpayers.
“It’s always good to have a little bit of reserve,” he told Fiori. “You state that you’re conservative, but it sounds opposite. We need to conserve what we’re spending. If we got extra this year, you need to give everybody a break. The taxpayers, they deserve a break. We’re all up here scrambling for who gets the most money. We gotta remember, this isn’t our money, this is the taxpayers’ money.”

Commissioner Jim Bunting, visibly frustrated, brought the conversation back to earth.
“I’ve never seen anything go so far off the tracks,” he said of the exchange. “Get this over with, because it’s gone crazy. You’re looking at everybody getting \$4,000? It’s enough, if we give everybody \$2,000.”
Added Bunting: “We did not cut their budget. All we did was reduce what they asked for, which is plenty. And frankly,

the Board of Education, if we had \$50 million, they’d want \$49 million of it.”
Ultimately, Bertino moved to adopt the sheriff’s budget as presented. He, Bunting, Elder, and Commissioner Caryn Abbott voted to approve. No votes came from Fiori, Mitrecic, and Purnell.
The commissioners will hold another budget hearing Wednesday at noon at the county’s government headquarters in Snow Hill. A final binding budget vote is scheduled for June 3.

Church to recognize anniversary

(May 29, 2025) What began as a “temporary gig” one Memorial Day weekend in 1975 has become a treasure, decades-long legacy of music, ministry, and community. This year, St. Paul’s by-the-Sea Episcopal Church is thrilled to honor Shirley Hailey on her 50th anniversary as organist and music director.
A household name in Ocean City, Shirley Hailey, who lives in Berlin, has been delighting audiences with her piano playing since the spring of 1973. From beachside sing-alongs to the soaring hymns heard in the sanctuary each Sunday, her music has become the heartbeat of both the church and the

broader community.
To celebrate this incredible milestone, St. Paul’s by-the-Sea invites friends, former choir members, parishioners, and music lovers to a special celebration in Shirley’s honor. The event will be held on Sunday, June 1 with a special 10am mass at the church, followed by a reception at the Atlantic Hotel in Berlin at 1 pm.
For more information about ticket price and reservations, please call the church office at 410-289-3453. Space is limited, so early reservations are encouraged.
If you are unable to attend but would like to share in the celebration, the

church welcomes letters and emails (office@stpaulsbythesea.org) recounting your favorite memory of Shirley—whether it’s from a piano sing-along at a local venue, singing under her direction in the choir, or simply being moved by her music during mass.
“Come be part of this joyful moment in our church and city’s history as we honor a woman who has never stopped inspiring,” a press release from the church says. “We are also requesting monetary gifts that will be given to Shirley at the reception. You can send checks to the church or on our website by clicking the GIVE button at the top right corner of the homepage.”

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Piet Oudolf Meadow Tour
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Piet Oudolf Meadow Tour
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Puzzles

HALVING THE LAST WORD

BY GARRETT CHALFIN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Garrett Chalfin is a second-year student at the University of Chicago, studying philosophy and economics. He says he has made many friends in college through crosswords — including, most notably, his girlfriend. “Before the first day of college, she contacted me because she wanted to hear more about my puzzle-making. We’ve been together ever since.” — W.S.

ACROSS
1 Verso's counterpart
6 Alternative to an onion bagel
11 Jai ____
15 Where the Pilgrims first landed in the New World
19 Skating gold medalist Oksana
20 Host
21 Quick look
22 Has a tab open, say
23 Hip-hop's "Puba" and "Daddy I.U."?
25 Station near Madison Square Garden, for short
26 Fleet
27 Hung around
28 Remove from the Champagne bucket?
30 "Just kidding!"
31 Feeling rash?
34 Hip-hop artist with the 2019 hit "My Type"
35 Crisis involving cartels
39 Goes "Vroom!"
41 Royal title
42 Casting a total brat in the school play?
45 Some govt. securities
49 ____-tempered
50 "Super cool!"
51 Get ready to take a shot
53 Ship propeller

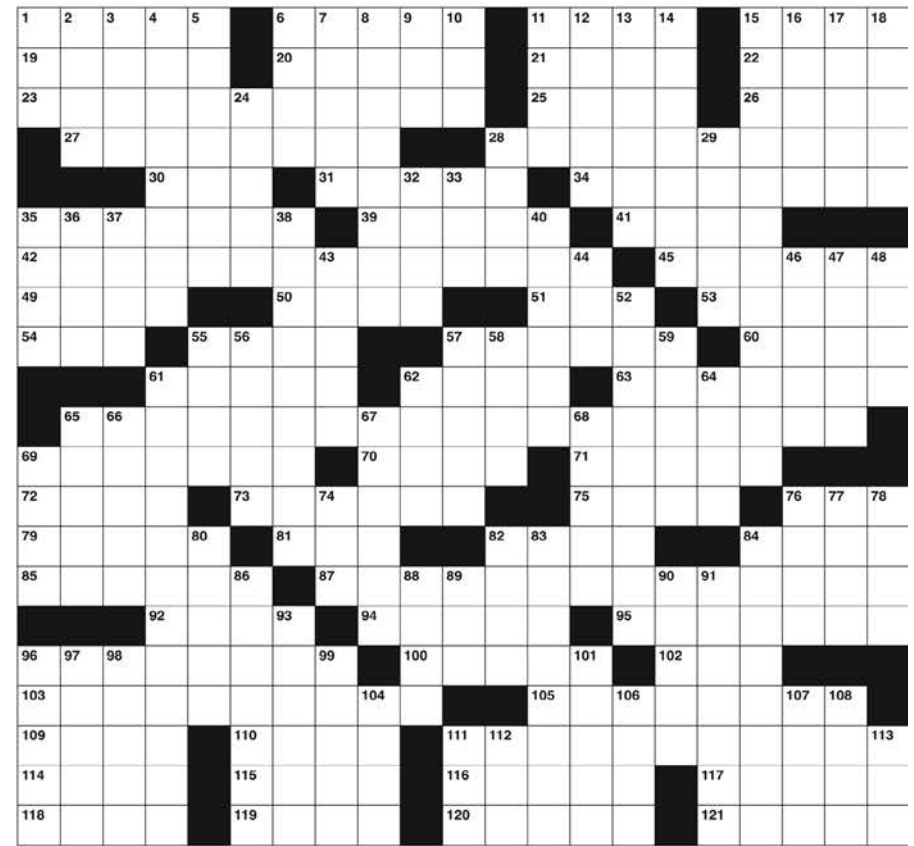
DOWN
1 Subject of the 2018 biopic "On the Basis of Sex," familiarly
2 Noble title
3 "Ci vediamo in giro!"
4 Getting ready to listen
5 Historic district of a city
6 Gnarly problem, so to speak
7 Architect of Hong Kong's Bank of China Tower
8 Certain hallucinatory experience
9 Directed
10 Last word of James Joyce's "Ulysses"
11 Dad, in Korean

ACROSS
54 French for "from"
55 Release
57 Dante's guide in the "Inferno"
60 Singer Del Rey
61 "The score upon which reality is written," per Henry Miller
62 Apps might be seen on one
63 Sediment, e.g.
65 "The co-star of 'Duck Soup' has to be sore after that!"
69 Anonymous guy
70 Pauperism, so to speak
71 Author of the 2020 memoir "Cubed"
72 Lots
73 "Because I'm the boss!"
75 Pinged online
76 Condition for which Luvox may be prescribed, in brief
79 "Wonder Woman" star
81 Mountain ____
82 Late singer Payne of One Direction
84 Modern home of where cuneiform writing originated
85 Way up or way down
87 "How long have beavers blocked this river?"
92 "As ____..."
94 Earthenware pots
95 Was comparable to
96 Apparel feature that a bandeau lacks

DOWN
100 Function in the role of
102 Monk's title
103 Be crazy about Chicago trains with broken A.C.s?
105 Much in quantity
109 Baseball family name
110 Actor Jared
111 Metric in a competitive family business?
114 Prince, e.g.
115 In ____ parentis
116 Blow
117 Designer Hilfiger
118 Lays turf on
119 Little twerp
120 Trunk
121 Head of Slytherin House in the Harry Potter books

ACROSS
12 Ingredients in some potato soups
13 Son of Aphrodite
14 "You don't have to tell me"
15 Time for a pick-me-up, humorously
16 Lie ahead
17 Joe of "Home Alone"
18 First name in perfumes
24 Label anew
28 Banks from Los Angeles
29 Maidenhair and others
32 Common dog command
33 Chance
35 Hit up on Instagram, informally
36 Overnight party with light shows and "cuddle puddles"
37 Luau strings
38 Rock group with the 1992 hit "Creep"
40 Harum-____ (reckless)
43 Untrue
44 Notaro of comedy
46 Drag-and-drop disposal icon
47 Start of a counting rhyme
48 Hit with a smack
52 Time in a Shakespeare title
55 Former Israeli P.M. Olmert
56 Platform for Safari and FaceTime
57 Borderline
58 "Need You Tonight" band, 1987

Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles, [nytimes.com/crosswords](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords) (\$39.95 a year).



- 59 Leave alone

61 Arbiters of taste

62 Polite term of address

64 Stamp on an invoice

65 Implied

66 Valerie Harper title role

67 One of three immortal elders in "A Wrinkle in Time"

68 Dickens's ____ Heep

69 Bouts
- 74 Tree whose name sounds like a pronoun

76 Word with history or hygiene

77 Shut up

78 Threw out of a contest, informally

80 Philosopher's pursuit

82 Exam with an argumentative writing section, in brief

83 "You know, I can't quite remember"
- 84 "Oh geez, the answer was staring me in the face!"

86 Goes through screen after screen

88 "Sadly..."

89 Special attention, for short

90 Made nice

91 Wading birds

93 Publicly bash

96 Doldrums

97 Lumberjacks' competition
- 98 Walk around, maybe

99 Where one might pick up litter

101 Oozes

104 Burgle

106 About

107 West Point inst.

108 Fanfare

111 Like a diamond in a ring

112 Queer identity, in brief

113 12/31

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HARD - 84

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.

	7			8				
5	1					2		
	3	2				9		
9				1	6			
8			2	9				7
		1	8					9
		6				8	9	
		7					3	6
			5				1	

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

A	T	A	R	I	G	A	M	E	I	R	I	S	H	S	W	E	E	T						
M	O	T	O	R	P	L	E	X	M	O	T	H	E	R	E	A	R	T	H					
P	R	O	M	I	S	E	M	E	M	U	S	I	C	A	L	N	O	T	E					
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S	T	P	A	U	L	I	S		T	A	N	G		F	A	R	I	D	O					
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R	A	T	S				P	R	I	O	R	I	T	Y		P	O	L	E	N	T	A		
O	W	E					E	O	N		D	I	N	E		M	E	D	I	A	T	E		
L	A	R	Y	N	X		W	O	N	G		R	E	D	A	C	T							
L	Y	S	O	L			W	I	N	E		W	E	A	R	I	T		G	U	S			
							L	A	P	E	L	S		S	H	A	L	O	M		M	A	S	H
T	A	R	A	R	O	A	D		S	M	O	L	T											
O	R	A	N	G	E	V	O	D	K	A		M	I	S	T	E	R	B	I	G				
M	I	S	D	E	M	E	A	N	O	R		A	M	O	U	N	T	I	N	G				
B	E	H	A	R			S	T	A	R	T		N	E	D	B	E	A	T	T				

School board signs off on policy revisions

New guideline adopted to provide secondary students access to tele-health space

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) The Worcester County Board of Education approved a series of policy revisions, including the addition of required emergency rescue medications, providing spaces for telehealth appointments and firmly defining eligibility for enrollment in Worcester County Public Schools.

According to WCPS Coordinator of School Health Services Lauren Williams, legislation passed last year now requires schools to provide access to bronchodilators in an asthma emergency. The regulation addressing the school system’s first aid standards was updated to include the new medication measure.

The guideline adds new requirements for seizure, asthma, and other medical situations. Per the policy, principals will ensure that school nurses facilitate emergency medication and first aid training for all staff at the start of each school year.

This training will include “the assessment and the administration of the auto-injectable epinephrine pen,

the assessment and administration of bronchodilators, and the assessment and first aid for seizures,” the policy reads.

The policy stipulates that emergency medications be available at school, as well as on field trips and off-site activities.

“The emergency rescue medication and state policy are updated to ensure all WCPS are equipped and prepared to respond promptly and effectively to medical emergencies in alignment with Maryland laws and best practices for student health and safety,” Williams said.

The board of education unanimously approved the policy revision.

The board also adopted a new health-related standard this week. The policy will require WCPS to provide secondary students with access to a private, internet accessible space during the school day to attend telehealth appointments. If the student is under 18, a parent must accompany their child during these consultations.

The new guideline adds that families are responsible for scheduling and attending appointments, providing their own internet-capable device, and reserving the space through the school’s outlined procedures. The school system’s only role is to ensure

that students and their parents can access a private area with internet, seating, electric, and a flat surface to conduct their appointments. A principal or designee will also help families reserve the designated space.

In addition to health-related policy modifications, the board green-lit language alterations to the system’s policy that defines WCPS enrollment eligibility. According to Nicole Selby, the school system’s student, family, and community connections coordinator, the previous standard indicated that children could attend WCPS if their primary physical residence were in Worcester County. The updated policy outlines specifically what a bona fide residence is in the county.

Per the revision, a bona fide residence in Worcester County is “the place in which an individual has a settled connection for legal purposes and where a person has a true, fixed, permanent home without any present intention of leaving,” the new policy reads. “It is a child’s physical place of residence, maintained in good faith, and does not include a temporary residence or superficial residence established for the convenience or the purpose of free school attendance or specific school district attendance.”

Selby adds that the burden for providing residency information is the responsibility of families.

“We are unique in that we border two counties and two states, so it’s very difficult for my office of six to do complete residency investigations with 7,000 kids,” the coordinator said. “This is our first step in really defining what our resident policy is. There will be additions to this policy along with procedures. It also allows my office to do investigations and have the families provide sufficient residency documentation.”

The policy also notes that “students who are under current suspension or expulsion by another school district by COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations) may not be enrolled until the terms and conditions of the suspension or expulsion are satisfied.”

Jon Andes, Worcester County Board of Education member, asked Selby if the “may” in the stipulation prohibiting enrollment for those suspended or expelled could be changed to “shall” to eliminate any potential leeway.

The board of education passed the policy revision with the requirement that staff determine at a future date whether the language should be adjusted from “may” to “shall.”



OPEN HOUSES

May 29 - June 5



DAY/TIME	ADDRESS	BR/BA	STYLE	PRICE	AGENT/AGENCY
Fri-Mon 11am-4pm	Heron Harbour, 120th St., Bayside	1BR/2BR/3BR/4BR+	Condos, Towns & SF	-	Nanette Pavier/Holiday Real Estate
Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd., West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Friday 1-4pm	73 King Richard Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	1404 N. Chase Street, Ocean Pines	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$689,990	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 10am-4pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Saturday 11am-1pm	12428 Sea Oaks Lane #4, Berlin	5BR/4.5BA	Townhome	\$584,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	73 King Richard Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 1:30-3:30pm	18 79th Street #403, Ocean City	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$634,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2-4pm	12505 Assawoman Drive #1N Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$275,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2-4pm	199 Windjammer Rd., Ocean Pines	3BR/2.5 BA	Single Family	\$499,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 2-5pm	73 King Richard Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sat & Sun 11am-4pm	111 70th St Unit A Ocean City	4BR/3.5BA	Townhome	\$839,900	Terry Riley/ReMax Advantage Realty
Sunday 10am-Noon	12140 Pimlico Ln. Glen Riddle, Berlin	4BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$1,100,000	Kim Heaney/ BHHS PenFed Realty
Sunday 10am-Noon	11000 Coastal Hwy #1211, Capri, Ocean City	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$749,900	Debbie Hileman/ Hileman Real Estate
Sunday 10am-3pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Sunday 10:30am-12:30pm	18 79th Street #403, Ocean City	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$634,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 11am-1pm	12505 Assawoman Drive #1N, Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$275,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 1-3pm	10103 War Admiral Ln Glen Riddle, Berlin	4BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$775,000	Kim Heaney/ BHHS PenFed Realty
Sunday 1-3pm	73 King Richard Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 2-4pm	35202 Dogwood Drive #38, Selbyville	3BR/2.5BA	Townhome	\$550,000	Debbie Hileman/ Hileman Real Estate

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Calendar

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

Thurs., May 29

OCEAN CITY JEEP WEEK

Ocean City Inlet Beach, 6:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Jeep parade daily, Jeep obstacle course on the beach, beach parking and automotive vendors at the Inlet Parking Lot. Free admission for spectators. Event schedule: <https://ocmdjeepweek.com>. 443-614-0141

3RD ANNUAL BATTLE FOR THE BUCKLE TOURNAMENT

Sunset Marina, 12933 Sunset Ave., Ocean City, 4-8 p.m. Ocean City's first and only exclusive Saltwater Cowboy fishing tournament. Weigh-ins held from 4-8 p.m. Benefiting Believe in Tomorrow Children's Foundation. <https://battleforthebuckle.com>

STORY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. It's a special story with Sherman the Shorebird. There will be songs, dancing and crafts. For ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Join in for a variety of activities and toys. Play and socialize with other families. For ages 2-5 years. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FIRESIDE CHAT

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3 p.m. Book discussion featuring books you have read and want to share. Come find your next great read. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

OCTOPUS' GARDEN PAINT NIGHT

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Enjoy Beatles trivia and music while painting a glowing "Octopus Garden." Adult and teens only. Registration required: 410-632-3495. www.worcesterlibrary.org

Fri., May 30

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OC MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in for a morning of playing tile Mahjong. Feel free to bring your own tile set. All adults are welcome. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY CELEBRATION

John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 12-3 p.m. Celebrate survivors, inspire those recently diagnosed and provide support to families. Raffle prizes and lunch provided. RSVP: 410-629-6888.

SURVIVAL SPANISH: PRESENT TENSE PART 2

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Learn how to say some basic phrases in Spanish. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

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., May 31

OCEAN CITY JEEP WEEK

Ocean City Inlet Beach, 6:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Jeep parade daily, Jeep obstacle course on the beach, beach parking and automotive vendors at the Inlet Parking Lot. Free admission for spectators. Event schedule: <https://ocmdjeepweek.com>. 443-614-0141

3RD ANNUAL BATTLE FOR THE BUCKLE TOURNAMENT

Sunset Marina, 12933 Sunset Ave., Ocean City. Weigh-ins held from 4-7 p.m. Awards begin at 8 p.m. followed by the Cowboy After Party. Benefiting Believe in Tomorrow Children's Foundation. <https://battleforthebuckle.com>

ALL-YOUR-CAN-EAT BREAKFAST BUFFET

Whaleville United Methodist, 11716 Sheppards Crossing Road, Whaleville, 7-10 a.m. Pancakes, bacon, sausage, scrapple, scrambled eggs, chipped beef, hash brown potatoes, toast, fruit and assorted beverages. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

First Presbyterian Church of Ocean City, 1301 Philadelphia Ave., 7 a.m.-1 p.m.

Church rummage sale.

BAY COLONY COMMUNITY YARD SALE

13 Duck Cove Circle, Ocean Pines, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Bay Colony Community Yard Sale.

OCEAN PINES FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Also featuring family-friendly activities, music and unique shopping experiences. Open to the public, year round. 410-641-7052, <https://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/farmers-artisans-market>

Sun., June 1

OCEAN CITY JEEP WEEK

Ocean City Inlet Beach, 6:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Jeep parade daily, Jeep obstacle course on the beach, beach parking and automotive vendors at the Inlet Parking Lot. Free admission for spectators. Event schedule: <https://ocmdjeepweek.com>. 443-614-0141

BERLIN FARMERS MARKET

Sundays - Pitts Street, Commerce Street and Main Street, Berlin, May through October, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine. Producers only market featuring more than 50 farmers, food cultivators, bakers, distillers, seafood, meat and more. Also featuring a petting farm (9-11 a.m.), free kids art station and live music. TheBerlinFarmersMarket.com

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

Mon., June 2

'SUN AND SAND: 100 YEARS OF BATHING SUITS' EXHIBIT GRAND OPENING

Ocean City Life-Saving Museum, 813 S. Atlantic Ave., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Showcasing a hundred years of bathing suits. Get an upclose look at both men and women's swimwear from the late 1800s to the 1990s. Exhibit included with paid admission. www.ocmuseum.org, 410-289-4991

STORY TIME: COLOR OUR WORLD

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

ESL CONVERSATION CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Come join other non-native English speakers for casual conversational practice and a short lesson prepared by an ESL instructor. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4 p.m. Safe place for families, partners and caregivers who share similar challenges and rewards of providing care for adults who have any type of serious illness. Nicole.Fry@TidalHealth.org, 410-641-2626

WARHAMMER

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. 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, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FIBER CRAFT MEET-UP

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 4 p.m. Bring your work in progress for community and shared knowledge. Held in the meeting room or in the garden, weather permitting. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

POP ART DONUTS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Celebrate National Donut Day. Join in for donuts and creative Andy Warhol-style art using donuts. For ages 6-18 years. 410-208-4014, 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 Campion, 410-641-0157

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

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

Continued from Page 22

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., June 3

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

STORY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. A story time geared for ages 0-5 years featuring seasonal themes designed to support early literacy skills with stories, songs and fingerplays. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: COLOR OUR WORLD

Worcester County Library - Pocumoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and crafts. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, 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

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

CODE SONGS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Code and spiritual songs were used as means of communication by those traveling the Underground Railroad. Join in for a live performance of some of the songs that led to freedom. 410-641-0650

TEEN PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB: COMPOSITION

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4 p.m. Bring your phone, tablet or any type of camera for a photography lesson on composition. A camera will be available to borrow for those without one. For teens ages 12-18 years. 410-524-1818

SAFE BOATING COURSE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 6-9 p.m. State mandated Recreational Safe Boating Course, June 3-5. The third night will be used to take the test online at

your residence. Cost is \$20. Register: Barry Cohen, 410-935-4807, CGAUXOC@gmail.com

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

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.

ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS

Tuesdays - Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. 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.

Wed., June 4

MOVIES ON THE BEACH

Carousel Oceanfront Hotel & Condos, 11700 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 8:30 p.m. Featuring “Moana.” Free event. Bring blankets, chairs, snack, drinks and warm clothing. Weather permitting. www.ococean.com/things-to-do/free-family-fun/

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

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

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Join in for imaginative play and social interaction. For ages 0-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CARD GAMES

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in for some fun card games including Blitz, Cheat, Texas Hold ‘Em, Palace, Gin Rummy and more. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PUZZLE SWAP

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1 p.m. Bring your gently uses puzzles to swap for a new-to-you puzzle. Don’t have a puzzle but still want one? That’s OK too. Puzzles must be in their original boxes. All ages welcome. 410-641-0650

CRAFT WITH PRIDE

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 3 p.m. Stop by any Wednesday in June to show your support by making a flag, button or sticker. All ages welcome. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 5-6 p.m. The group provides discussion and education on the topic of diabetes. Patti Yocubik, 410-208-9761, Patti.Yocubik@TidalHealth.org

CLAY-A-PALOOZA

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St. Celebrate the art of clay all month long in June at the Art League of Ocean City during Clay-a-palooza, a vibrant series of events showcasing pottery and ceramic arts. www.artleagueofoceancity.org, 410-524-9433

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.

ONGOING EVENTS

CLAY-A-PALOOZA

Celebrate the art of clay, June 4 through July 6, at the Art League of Ocean City during Clay-a-palooza, a vibrant series of events showcasing pottery and ceramic arts. www.artleagueofoceancity.org

TINY ART CONTEST

Kits are available from June 2-13 at all Worcester County library branches. Submit your creation by the end of the day June 13 for voting. For ages 6-11 years and 12-18 years. 410-631-5622

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN'S 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS IN JULY RAFFLE

Women Supporting Women, 1320 Belmont Ave., Salisbury, June 1-July 25. Tickets \$10. Daily raffle to win prizes for the 12 days of Christmas in July. 410-548-7880

Monthly meeting schedule for Bd. of Ed. approved

Three evening meetings again planned in Newark

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(May 29, 2025) The Worcester County Board of Education adopted its 2025-2026 monthly meeting schedule last week, beginning this July and extending to June next summer.

The regularly held meetings, which occur each month on the third Tuesday, are planned for July 15, 2025, Aug. 19, 2025, Sept. 16, 2025, Oct. 21, 2025, Nov. 18, 2025, and Dec. 16, 2025. A public budget input meeting will be held on Dec. 2, 2025.

The 2026 meetings include Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, and June 16. A budget work session will occur on Feb. 3.

The board mixes in nighttime meetings each year to allow for greater public participation. Typically, the board gathers in open session during each assembly at 12:30 p.m. However, when scheduled for after regular work hours, the board of education invites community members to the open portion at 6 p.m.

The upcoming academic year’s nighttime meetings are scheduled for July 15, 2025, Nov. 18, 2025, and March 17, 2026. The public budget input session on Dec. 2, 2025, will also occur in the evening.

The board unanimously approved the meeting schedule at its last gathering on May 20. Also of note is that a new superintendent will step into the role when the upcoming academic year begins, starting with a July board of education meeting. Annette Wallace, current safety and academic officer for grades nine to 12, was selected to replace current position-holder Lou Taylor, who announced his retirement in January of this year.

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