

**NOTICE OF AND AGENDA FOR:**  
**HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING**  
**HOWARD COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER**  
**220 NORTH MAIN STREET, ROOM 338 (3RD FLOOR)**  
**MONDAY, JULY 21, 2025, AT 4:00 P.M.**

- I. Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer
- II. Special Announcements / Recognitions
- III. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes
- IV. Departmental Business & Reports
  - A. *Health Department – James Vest/Kelly Carpenter*
    - i. County Employee Flu Shots
  - B. *EMA – Janice Hart*
    - i. Grant Award Letter
- V. New Business
- VI. Claims & Reports
  - A. Salary Claims
  - B. Payroll Expense
  - C. Operating Claims
  - D. Ratify Claims
  - E. Monthly Reports
    - i. County Treasurer's Monthly Report for May 31, 2025
  - F. Grants
- VII. County Attorney Issues
- VIII. Commissioner Issues
- IX. Public Comments
- X. Adjourn

JACK W. DODD, PRESIDENT  
R. BRAD BRAY, VICE PRESIDENT  
JEFF S. LIPINSKI, MEMBER

## **HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING: JULY 7, 2025**

The Howard County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, July 7, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in Hearing Room 338 of the Howard County Administration Center. Those in attendance included Commissioner President Jack Dodd, Commissioner Vice President Brad Bray, Commissioner Member Jeff Lipinski, County Attorney Alan Wilson, and County Auditor Jessica Secrease.

The meeting was called to order by Sheriff Jerry Asher and conducted by President Dodd. Commissioner President Dodd led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Lipinski offered a word of prayer.

### **IN THE MATTER OF SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS & RECOGNITION:**

#### ***Employee of the Month***

Commissioner Bray awarded Drew Cornell of the Howard County Health Department Employee of the Month. Drew has shown outstanding dedication and work to the Health Department and has helped tremendously with the Taylor Regional Sewer Districts enforcement efforts. His high standards and contributions are invaluable.

### **IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes of the June 16, 2025, regular meeting, having been previously submitted and reviewed, were approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **IN THE MATTER OF DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS & REPORTS:**

#### **MAINTENANCE**

##### ***Parking Lot Sealing for 2025***

Maintenance Supervisor Bill Stonestreet requested permission to seal the parking lots of Howard Haven, Jeff Stout Building, and Work Release. Commissioner Bray made a motion to approve the project. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

#### **HOWARD HAVEN**

##### ***New Admission***

Howard Haven Administrator Jennifer Brower presented a new admission contract for an emergency admit that was approved by Commissioner Dodd previously. Commissioner Lipinski approved the new admission for Howard Haven. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion and the motion carried.

#### **RECORDER**

##### ***Laredo Agreement***

Recorder Torie Kelley presented a new Laredo agreement to be signed and approved by the Commissioners. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **IN THE MATTER OF CLAIMS AND REPORTS:**

Howard County Auditor Jessica Secrease submitted the following claims and reports for the Commissioners' information and approval:

1. **Salary Claims:** The Commissioners' Salary, Hourly, and Overtime Claims for payment on June 27, 2025, in the amounts of \$1,203,727.01 were submitted and approved on a motion made by Commissioner Bray. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
2. **Payroll Expenses:** The Commissioners' Payroll Expenses for payment on June 27, 2025, in the amounts of \$1,203,727.01 were submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
3. **Operating Claims:** The Commissioners' Operating Claims to be paid, July 7, 2025, in the amount of \$1,950,073.05 was submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Bray. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lipinski, and the motion carried.
4. **Monthly Reports:** Auditor Jessica Secrease presented the following reports to be received into the record:
  - a. **Weights & Measures Monthly Report** for May 16, 2025 thru June 15, 2025

### **IN THE MATTER OF ATTORNEY ISSUES:**

#### ***Unsafe Property***

County Attorney Alan Wilson requested a resolution for the Bledsoe Property in West Middleton. They have tried to reach out to the property owners attorney and the property owner to get an inspector inside to see what needs to be done to make it a safe property. They have had no success in receiving any communication back from them. The hearing to deem the property unsafe will be held at the August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Commissioner meeting. The resolution number to confirm the property is unsafe is Resolution No. 2025-BCCR-16. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve the Resolution of the unsafe property. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

#### ***Declaration of Local Emergency***

County Attorney Alan Wilson asked for signatures to Declare a Local Emergency due to the flood in June.

Commissioner Dodd stated they have also asked the state to help pay for the damage from the sink hole on Alto Road.

Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approved the Declaration of Local Emergency. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

#### ***Solar Project***

County Attorney Alan Wilson asked the Commissioner's to resign the amended Road and Drainage Agreement with Emerald Green Solar. The new amended agreement includes the added Bond Agreement.

Commissioner Lipinski asked what the bond amounts are.

Commissioner Dodd stated it's a \$3 million bond amount for the drains and \$5 million for the roads.

Commissioner Bray made a motion to approve the new agreements. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

#### ***Compliance Officer Proposals***

Project Pam Isaac open proposals for who will be the compliance officer for the Solar Project. She recommended these be taken under advisement and reviewed. The proposals came from GS Engineering, EGIS, Northpoint Engineering & Surveying, and Butler & Fairman. The decision will be made at the August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 meeting. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to take the proposals under advisement. Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### ***Economic Development Agreement***

County Attorney Alan Wilson presented an Economic Development Agreement with Emerald Green Solar LLC.

Greentown resident Brad Semone addressed the Commissioners, presenting documents and expressing concerns about Engie (Emerald Green Solar LLC). He explained that Engie received a special use permit in February 2023 but failed to apply for a building permit within the required four-month window, as mandated by Howard County Ordinance 2009-BCCO-21. Although Engie later requested an extension, Semone argued they are not in compliance with the ordinance and urged the Commissioners to delay signing the Economic Development Agreement (EDA) until Engie meets zoning requirements.

Commissioner Dodd thanked Mr. Semone for his efforts he put forward on this. He doesn't think this issue effects the EDA they are discussing today. He thinks this may have been better presented at the Planning Commissioner meeting.

Commissioner Lipinski states that Mr. Semone's point is once the EDA is in place Engie can move forward with construction. He also stated that this was brought up at the Planning Commission meeting.

County Attorney Alan Wilson did not have any comment. He cannot address the issue because Mr. Semone brought an attorney to the Planning Commission and stated she represented Brad Semone so legally he cannot discuss anything with him knowing that he has council.

Commissioner Bray asked County Attorney Alan Wilson if this information effects what they are signing tonight.

County Attorney Alan Wilson stated it does not have anything to do with the EDA.

Planning Commissioner Greg Sheline stated that the county ordinance for special exception was made, it was put together for developments that can be put together in a timely fashion. He states there is no way that this could be done in a four-month time frame. I would give an extension for that and they do it for major subdivisions in the county and the city. The process of this entire project has taken weeks and months to get everything squared away. They have given extensions on projects that take this long.

Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve the EDA.

Commissioner Bray wanted confirmation that the EDA has nothing to do with the building permit.

County Attorney Alan Wilson stated that that is correct.

Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **IN THE MATTER OF COMMISSIONER ISSUES:**

Commissioner Bray extended his condolences to the Murdock family.

Commissioner Dodd stated this past weekend was a tragic weekend for Howard County. Condolences for everyone effected.

### **IN THE MATTER OF PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Greentown resident Brad Semone expressed disappointment with the outcome of the EDA, stating it was not what he expected. He criticized the Commissioners' decision, arguing it sends a message to Howard County residents that large businesses can ignore local ordinances. He warned this could lead to lawsuits, particularly from residents in Eastern Howard County. Semone pointed out that in a previous appeal, Judge Murray emphasized the importance of following

county ordinances, yet Engie failed to do so, and the Commissioners still approved a development agreement for a project that currently lacks a permit.

Melanie Vess, a Howard County resident, expressed concern that the Commissioners are pushing the project forward despite missed deadlines and community opposition. She urged them to pause the process until Engie obtains a building permit and follows all proper procedures.

David Vess, a Howard County resident, called the situation in the county disgraceful. He criticized the Commissioners for not reviewing ordinance-related information that was available a month ago and questioned whether they had received all the necessary information in advance.

Commissioner Dodd stated that he was given a multitude of information in advance.

Mr. Vess stated when the notebook of information was given to the Commissioners and Attorney at the last meeting, it was skimmed over in ten minutes and then voted on. You don't even follow your own procedures. If you have to adjust those procedures for certain circumstances then there needs to be waivers of some kind.

Josh Cauthern, a Howard County resident, shared concerns about worsening flooding on his property since moving in in 2016. He described how drainage issues have intensified, especially after a new 24-inch pipe was installed to address long-standing farmland flooding. This change redirected water into a pond near his property, which functions more like a drainage ditch and overflows into an old, undersized county drain. He fears damage to his foundation but cannot file an insurance claim since he's not in a floodplain. After being told by a county official to get an attorney, he asked the Commissioners for help.

Commissioner Dodd stated he has been out there when there has been a lot of water. There are problems along 26 as well. He would like to have this brought up at the next Drainage Board meeting.

Josh Cauthern stated that when he has talked to Mr. Lake about this problem he just tells him to get an attorney.

Commissioner Dodd doesn't think that Mr. Cathern is the only resident having a problem. The swell runs quickly with millions of gallons of water. Its not safe when kids come out and want to play it in. It's dangerous.

Commissioner Lipinski asked Mr. Cauthern if he can come to the Drainage Board meeting, two weeks from today?

Mr. Cauthern said he would be able to make it to the next Drainage Board meeting at 5pm in the same room.

Shelly Langlon, a Howard County resident and HOA president, spoke on behalf of her neighborhood, which has experienced serious flooding and erosion issues since a 24-inch drain was installed. She noted that there were no problems in the past 30 years, even during heavy rain, until this new drain was added. The flooding now affects roads and poses a safety risk in emergencies. The drainage ditch has severe erosion and dangerous sinkholes, and residents constantly warn children to stay away. Despite being aware for two years, Mr. Lake has only said the county can "monitor" the situation. She plans to attend the upcoming meeting to push for a solution.

Dave Crebes, Howard County resident, asked about the bonds, equaling \$8 million?

Commissioner Lipinski states yes, 5 million on the road and 3 million on the drainage.

Dave Crebes stated that 550 solar panels at \$20 apiece, if it gets damaged out there, that's \$11 million dollars, the bond won't even cover to fix it. We had hail come through a year ago and damaged \$80,000 on his property.

Commissioner Dodd stated the \$8 million is for road and drainage, not decommissioning.

Dave Crebes questioned whether a flood permit was ever applied for, as required by the ordinance. He noted that this issue has not been addressed and said he would like to see the permit.

Retired Commissioner Brad Bagwell stated that he can appreciate what Mr. Sheline said that some things don't happen in the time frame that is listed. However, an ordinance is an ordinance and you have to follow it or change it.

*There being no further business to come before the Board of Commissioners at this time  
the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski.  
The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bray, and the motion carried.*

**HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

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JACK W. DODD, PRESIDENT

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R. BRAD BRAY, VICE PRESIDENT

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JEFF S. LIPINSKI, MEMBER

**ATTEST:**

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JESSICA SECREASE, AUDITOR

Howard County Commissioners' Meeting: July 21st, 2025