

Griffith steps down as Lackey head tennis coach

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County examines costs to reopen Bel Alton High School for use

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# Maryland Independent

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Retired Maryland State Police homicide investigator Ted Jones stands before the Charles County Circuit Court in La Plata, where he now works as the state's attorney's chief investigator.

## Reflections of a retired homicide investigator

Longtime Maryland State Police trooper plans to publish book

By **ANDREW RICHARDSON**  
[arichardson@somdnews.com](mailto:arichardson@somdnews.com)

Raised in an area of Baltimore City considered among the most dangerous in the country, longtime homicide investigator Ted Jones, a retired Maryland State Police trooper often tasked with covertly gathering intelligence, has a remarkable story to tell.

In fact, he wrote a book — “Protect and Serve: Reflections of a Maryland State Trooper.” Jones, now chief investigator for the Charles County State’s Attorney Office, plans to publish in the spring.

From undercover prison stints, to immersing himself into Charm City’s open-air drug markets, to posing

as a car salesman, Jones’ work required him to wear a number of different hats. Sometimes he wore his hat backwards and dressed down, discretely documenting as narcotics changed hands, his gun concealed in a folded newspaper, while an FBI surveillance team watched his back from an inconspicuous van parked across the street.

“You have no clue that I’m the police, and I don’t want you to know I’m the police, how about that?” Jones said. “Because when I really get into what I’m doing, working homicides, you can’t go into the hood doing what I do, advertising that you’re the police.”

“I don’t want you to know who I am,” he added. “Because lives depend on it, mine especially.”

See **JONES**  
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## School audit finds 15 areas of concern

Includes contractor overpayments, data access

ment practices audit was performed by the Maryland General Assembly’s Office of Legislative Audits. The audit was performed beginning October 2015 and took approximately 15 months.

Maryland requires a legislative audit to be performed every six years, unless an exemption is granted.

All told, the audit listed 15 findings, or issues that

## School board votes to name new school Billingsley Elementary

Major Mudd renovations coming soon

a committee last fall to recommend three names for the new school. From a list of 26 nominations, the committee selected three names, all deceased Charles County residents who had made an impact in education.

Last month, board Chairman Michael Lukas requested the committee provide three additional recommendations based on place names.

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## County looks at capital improvement plan

Commissioners discuss unfunded projects

By **MICHAEL SYKES II**  
[msykes@somdnews.com](mailto:msykes@somdnews.com)

Charles County has many capital improvement projects slated to begin over the next five years, but the key for the Charles County Board of Commissioners is choosing which projects they initiate first and what has to be put on a hold.

The county’s capital improvement budget request for this year is \$495.3 million with \$263.5 million of that being previously approved projects. However, \$231.8 million of those projects are unfunded.

“That’s a lot,” David Eicholtz, the county’s director of Fiscal and Administrative Services, said.

Those costs are spread over a five year period, Eicholtz said, so it all is not funded in one single year. And the good news, he said, is that 53 percent of the approved projects are projects the county can continue to fund.

However, he said, the other 47 percent of the total are projects that the county does not have funding affordability for at this point. The reason the county cannot afford to complete all of the projects at this point, he

See **BUDGET**  
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## Library hosts job fair geared to young adults

Area employers look to attract fresh talent

By **TIFFANY WATSON**  
[twatson@somdnews.com](mailto:twatson@somdnews.com)

On Wednesday, more than 200 young adults from Charles County had their resumes in hand, business attire on and smiles on their faces as they prepared to meet various Maryland employers at the Charles County Public Library’s Young Adult Job Fair.

Young adults ages 16-24 years

old flooded into the Waldorf West Library during the afternoon for an opportunity to meet employers that are hiring and explore future careers. Approximately 30-50 young adults were lined up at front door around 3 p.m. anxiously awaiting to be vetted for part-time

See **JOBS**  
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Tyrone Sharpe, recruiter from Goodwill Greater Washington, met Waldorf residents Will Dyer, 19, and Quincy Connell, 17, at the CCPL Young Adult Job Fair on March 22.

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Waldorf resident Katrice Warren, 22, discusses the application process with Danielle Mothershead, a manager at Fashion To Figure in St. Charles Towne Center, during the Young Adult Job Fair on March 22.

## JOBS

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and full-time, apprenticeship and volunteer opportunities. They were asked to bring multiple copies of their resume and dress to impress for possible on-the-spot job interviews.

“Our [CCPL] executive director Janet Salazar and young adult supervisor Bill Stea were really interested in us doing a job fair geared towards young adults,” said Ashley Teagle, Waldorf West Library branch manager. “This year we were able to recruit more businesses and show off the fact that we’ve got great young adults in Charles County who are productive and have a lot to add to our community. I’m really pleased with the turnout and I hope that they are employed locally so that we can keep them here in the area.”

Stea said it can be very difficult to get young adults engaged and utilizing the library so he was pleased with the good turnout.

“We need to find ways to consistently bring the young adults and teens

into the library,” Stea said. “Young adults are such an underserved and under-appreciated demographic. ... We have a lot of teens coming out of high school and young adults coming out of college. At this job fair we want them all to market themselves to these companies and find the right fit for them.”

The young adults met with representatives from local organizations and businesses such as Home Depot, Chick-fil-A in Waldorf and St. Charles Towne Center, McDonalds (the Welburn Organization), U.S. Navy, Army and Air Force, Chuck E. Cheese’s, Taco Bell, Fashion To Figure, Spring Dell Center, Build-A-Bear Workshop and Outback Steakhouse.

Waldorf residents Jordan Mitchell, 17, and her mom LaVerne Mitchell said it was very convenient to have multiple employers at one location, especially now that Jordan is seeking employment with her background in administrative duties.

“I like talking to someone face to face rather than filling out a job application and never know-

ing if anyone is going to see it. ... The Chuck E. Cheese managers were really exciting to talk to. The representative from Goodwill Industries said



Waldorf residents Johnelle Wallace, 16, and Aniya Sorrell, 16, hand their already filled out job applications to Kathy Levanduski, human resources director at Chick-fil-A in Waldorf, during the Young Adult Job Fair on March 22.

he would set up an interview with me the next day and Wawa said they would call me as well,” Jordan said.

Katrice Warren, 22, a

Waldorf resident, said she was looking for something new and stumbled upon Danielle Mothershead, a manager at Fashion To Figure in St.

Charles Towne Center, during the job fair.

“I’ve always worked in

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## AUDIT

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were only a few available parcels of land in the area that were the right size and grade and met the school system’s needs.

“Yes, we paid a little more for that property, but it’s an ideal site in terms of its location, not only in terms of busing and transportation, but it enables us to address overcrowding issues in that area,” Heim said.

The school system has been granted an exemption from the next audit

cycle, meaning that the next audit would be released in 2029 for the fiscal years 2023 to 2028.

Kelly requested the board be appraised of further developments.

“I have hesitation that we have applied for the waiver for the next cycle, that, if left unchecked, according to what OLA says we have to comply with, that things may not get caught until 2028,” Kelly said.

Copies of the audit can be found online at: <https://www.ola.state.md.us/Reports/Schools/CharlesS-chls17.pdf>

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**5274 RED HILL DRIVE**  
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Suggested Opening Bid: \$20,000 - Ranch home in "Red Hill Estates." Arranged for 6 rooms (2 BR) and bath. Lot: 0.46± acre. In fee simple. Deposit: \$5,000.

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Waldorf resident Jordan Mitchell, 17, fills out a Charles County Public Library job application at the Young Adult Job Fair on March 22.

JOBS

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the food industry and then I went into retail,” Warren said. “Then I ended up getting into a car accident so my whole aspect of life changed. I knew I needed to get back into the workforce so I came to this job fair. I love Fashion to Figure and I was surprised they were here looking for

new hires. This proves that there are jobs out here and this job fair was a big help.” Many of the young adults said with the current state of the job market it has been very difficult to find job opportunities, but the job fair gave them hope and a chance to be in front of potential employers. “I just graduated college at Frostburg Sate University and I need a job right



During the Young Adult Job Fair, Michael Davis, Wawa area manager for Southern Maryland, and Crissy Keys, Wawa assistant general manager, conducted on the spot interviews at Waldorf West Library on March 22.

STAFF PHOTOS BY TIFFANY WATSON

daughter Liliana Gordon, 13, to the job fair to gain more practical business experience at an early stage in life. “It’s a comfort but also more of an enriching experience because I want to be able to go to other job fairs and say I’ve done this before — I know where to go, the tone that I should strike with employers and how I should look for an interview,” Gordon said.

Many employers were shocked at the turnout and the enthusiasm of the young adults who approached them. “I am impressed with the number of applicants we have had,” said Kathy Levanduski, human resources director at Chick-fil-A in Waldorf. “We are looking for people who want to or already know how to give excellent customer service and have a

friendly attitude. One tip we shared with them is to set up their voicemails because if we can’t leave a message, then we can’t set up an interview.” Michael Davis, Wawa area manager for Southern Maryland, said he plans to put the CCPL Young Adult Job Fair on his calendar every year because of the good vibes

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BUDGET

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said, is because of an 8 percent debt ceiling the county has. “We developed a strategy very similar to a mortgage payment. When you went to a financial institution, the first thing they would say is ‘What’s your income level? How much can you afford to buy a house?’,” he said. “We es-

tablished 8 percent of our operating revenue to be dedicated to that ‘mortgage payment.’ From there we back into the amount of debt we can issue to build our house.” The county’s debt capacity today sits at just about \$30 million according to information from the department. But the county has less than \$25 million in debt absorbed this year. However, Eicholtz said, the county’s projec-

tions from year to year change. It is hard to pinpoint what the debt cap will be, he said, because it is hard to project the county’s operating budget from year to year. To project how much future debt the county can take on, he said, the county uses 3 to 4 percent operating increases from year to year. The county’s debt capacity grows over time, he said, which pushes them closer to its debt ceiling and

makes it more difficult to fund new projects. The county’s projections currently allow for \$120.9 million in debt service issued over the next five years, Eicholtz said, but the county needs \$118 million in debt to fund previously approved projects in that same timespan. That would leave the county \$2.7 million to fund any new projects, Eicholtz said. Jenifer Ellin, the county’s chief of budget, said in order to fund some of the projects that were not previously approved the county could either use the \$2.7 million available to them or begin “swapping out projects.” Robinson said the county does not want to

swap out projects that are currently in progress. It would be helpful, he said, if the commissioners could get a list of projects that are awaiting the beginning of actual construction. Commissioner Ken Robinson (D) asked if there were any refinancing options available for the county to open up more potential funding. Eicholtz said the county is always looking for refinancing opportunity, but have done “everything we can do” at this point in time. “I recall at the end of last calendar year, we were going to do that but then the bond markets just tanked,” Robinson said. The markets have re-

covered to some degree, Eicholtz said, but not to the degree the county is looking for. However, he said, they will continue to look out for future opportunities to refinance. Eicholtz said the county may want to take a look at the budget and rework new projects into it while removing others. Projects were not passed over because they were unimportant, he said, but rather the county just could not afford them at the time. There is still time to work with the capital improvement budget, he said, and there is another budget work session scheduled for next week. The process will not be complete until May, he said. **Twitter: @SykesIndyNews**

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JOB

From  
Page A12

and the good people that his staff met.

“We are looking for great personalities, friendly smiles, whether they are planning to go to college because Wawa offers \$22,000 worth of tuition reimbursement that nobody knows about. Just maintain a 2.0 GPA, be willing to grow with the company, and able to go to school and still work,” Davis said.

Lawrence Hyson, National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) assistant director, offered every applicant a five-year apprenticeship with starting pay of \$50,000 a year, working 40 hours a week. He said each applicant will receive free education and training, pay raises every 10 months, and the ability



On March 22, Chuck E. Cheese’s senior manager Alonzo Brewer and general manager April Dixon conduct a face to face interview with Nadia Corbett, 16, of Indian Head during the Young Adult Job Fair at Waldorf West Library.

to transfer job locations every 10 months to gain a diverse skill set.

“I was looking for something where I can work with kids and real- ly come out of my comfort zone,” said Aniya Sorrell, 16, a Waldorf resident. She said that Build-A-Bear Workshop and Chuck E. Cheese’s

were right up her alley.

Waldorf resident Johnelle Wallace, 16, said despite the job fair being somewhat of a nerve-wracking experience, many of the jobs allow her to interact with people which is one of her favorite things to do.

“I came in nervous and skeptical but the employers were actually really nice,” said Nadia Corbett, 16, of Indian Head. “I’m looking for my second job so I’m already coming in with work experience, and I love people so I like to interact with my customers. I’m good at multi-tasking and I want to expand my experience. It’s important to be well rounded.”

Her mom Renita Corbett said, “finding a job for teens is difficult so it’s great that these employers are here ready to give them a chance.”

Twitter: @TiffIndyNews

SCHOOL

From  
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“When we got the initial names back, and there seemed to be some hesitancy on the part of the board, we asked the committee to come back with some place names,” Lukas said in a phone interview the next day.

Board member Margaret Marshall voted for the Billingsley name.

“Personally, the three people nominated are all very close to myself or my family, and I would find it very difficult to select one of those three,” Marshall said.

Board member Virginia McGraw voted against the name.

“The committee was initially charged to come up with three names, and they did, I would have liked to choose from those three names,” McGraw said.

“I spent a lot of time thinking about it, and taking everything into consideration, I just thought that Billingsley was the best fit,” Lukas said.

The school system also received a report on contract bidding for renovations to Dr. Samuel Mudd Elementary School.

Mudd is expected to close in the fall for major renovations expected to last 18 months. During that time, students will attend a transition school located on John Hanson Drive, between J.P. Ryon Elementary School and John Hanson Middle School.

Gymnasium, adminis-

tration and media center facilities have been added to the temporary school site, said David Clements, supervisor of planning and construction.

“It’s not as roomy as a normal school, but it certainly has the same opportunities,” Clements said.

Michael Heim, assistant superintendent of supporting services, said the media center at the temporary school is smaller than Mudd’s current facility.

“So some decisions will have to be made as to what materials are displayed versus what materials are stored for later use,” Heim said.

Huntingtown-based J.A. Scheibel Construction Inc., the company

awarded the construction contract for the new school, was the lowest complete bidder for the Mudd project at \$23.7 million.

One company submitted a lower bid, but failed to submit all of its required paperwork in time, said Steven Andritz, director of planning and construction.

“We ended up having to throw their bid out and consider them nonresponsive,” Andritz said.

Clements said that if approved, the school system hopes to award the contract in May for construction to begin in September. The school is expected to open in 2019.

The board also received a report from human resources regard-

ing teacher retention and recruitment. Deputy Superintendent Amy Hollstein reported that in the recent declaration of intent forms sent to teachers, 26 teachers had indicated they planned to retire and 49 teachers indicated they planned to leave the school system.

“This data is positive for us, looking forward to next year, that if it’s close to being accurate, our teaching staff will be stable for next year,” Hollstein said.

Ninety-eight teachers did not return the declaration of intent form.

Hollstein said the school system has moved recruiting efforts earlier into the academic year.

“We’re trying to start

earlier and get out there faster because of the teacher shortage,” said Pamela Murphy, executive director of human resources. “If you don’t go out there until April or May, those candidates are already gone.”

The most important factor, Hollstein said, is improving communications with candidates.

“That’s what causes people to move here, is that personal touch, and that’s what we want to provide because it is a competitive market and we have to go above and beyond if we want to fill our positions,” Hollstein said.

In addition, the school system plans to provide substitute teacher training to seniors currently

in the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) program, which provides teaching opportunities and college credit to high school students interested in becoming teachers.

“We want our students who want to be teachers to come teach for us,” Hollstein said.

Lukas also discussed the formation of a committee of three board members to look into making improvements and modifications to the discipline matrix.

During a teacher town hall held earlier this month, difficulties in discipline was among the biggest teacher concerns.

“We’re not looking to do it fast, we’re looking to do it right,” Lukas said.

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