

News Release

Comptroller Lierman Issues Statements Following Wednesday's Board of Public Works Meeting

*Comptroller commends DHCD, remains stalwart in
meeting MBE goals while balancing Labor's emergency
request*

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (October 25, 2023) - Today, the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) considered 107 items as part of its routine agenda, authorizing more than \$376 million in state expenditures. During the meeting, **Comptroller Brooke Lierman** provided comments on the following agenda items:

The Department of Housing and Community Development had requests for Baltimore City and Frederick -- DHCD sought approval to lend \$3,330,997 in general obligation bond proceeds through the Rental Housing Works and Partnership Rental Housing Programs to ECD Irvington Mews II, LLC for the construction of a 59-unit elderly mid-rise elevator building in Baltimore City and to lend \$3,500,000 in general obligation bond proceeds through the Rental Housing Works Program to Overlook East Associates, LLC for the construction of an 85-unit general occupancy rental community in Frederick.

Comptroller Lierman commented on DHCD's commitment to using Green Building standards and reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

"I just want to highlight the work being done by the Department of Housing and Community Development to bring more affordable housing to Frederick and Baltimore.

"Not only will the Overlook East project provide 85 new units to low-income households in Frederick and 59 elderly units for the Greens at Irvington Mews, but they will be built sustainably using Green Building standards.

“I want to commend DHCD for detailing how the projects align with the state’s commitment to reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, conserving water resources, and enhancing Maryland’s environment. DHCD consistently shares on their agenda items all the sustainability features of their projects, making it known that the environmental impact of our procurements is just as important as the dollar value.

“These measures make the State’s investment sound, and I am pleased to support these projects.”

The Department of Labor emergency procurement request – The Department of Labor presented a report of an emergency procurement contract award to Submittable Holdings, Inc (Missoula, MT) to implement a software solution for a loan program to provide Marylanders impacted by the Federal Government shutdown with supplemental income. The one-year contract was awarded on September 22, 2023, at a total cost of \$635,481.

The Comptroller made the following comments, following remarks made by Maryland Treasurer Derrick Davis, who called on the state to review its policies surrounding MBE participation waivers for emergency procurement requests.

“Thank you, Mr. Treasurer. I think really those are important words and really well said. I especially love the analogy to departments fighting to meet their MBE goals in the same way that they fight for their budgets, because it’s true. This can’t just be about checking off a box, it must be about business development, and creating an economy that’s inclusive of everybody. When we strengthen our MBE goals, and we actually meet our goals, we build a stronger economy for everybody in the state of Maryland. Last year, if we would have met our MBE goals, we would have infused over a billion additional dollars into MBEs throughout the state.

“I want to talk a little bit about the federal government shutdown from the Office of the Comptroller’s perspective.

“I do want to extend my appreciation to Secretary Wu and Secretary Grady. Our agency has been at the table with them, working over the past few months. Their teams have really led, though, in creating a collaborative approach to preparing for a shutdown that we of course narrowly averted at the end of September.

“We are concerned that we won’t be as lucky come mid-November, which is just a little over three weeks away. We have been here before and we know all too well that a shutdown of the federal government will be catastrophic for Marylanders and their families, as well as our economy.

“As of Tax Year 2021, 352,000 Maryland households benefited from either wages or pension income from the federal government, representing \$31 billion or 10.5% of all income earned in Maryland. This is a staggering figure. In a federal shutdown, it would cause delayed income payments to these households, causing unnecessary

financial stress for thousands of families.

“And without income to pay bills, buy groceries, and support their families, we also experience a slowdown in State tax receipts and reduced economic activity statewide. Moreover, payments to the State to fund services supported by the federal government cease or slow considerably – potentially impacting thousands of additional Marylanders, through no fault of their own.

“While I am hopeful that our Congressional partners will once again get a deal done and keep our federal government running, I do appreciate Secretary Wu and Secretary Grady for being proactive and making sure that we have the ability to carry out state statute and set up this program. An enormous amount of work [that] we cannot do in-house, we do not have the resources or the staff and so it is essential that we make sure that we provide people with loans to live off of in case this unfortunate event happens.”

More information can be found at <https://bpw.maryland.gov/>

###

MEDIA CONTACTS: Adam Abadir: AAbadir@marylandtaxes.gov

667-408-0768 (cell)

Barbara Sauers: bsauers@marylandtaxes.gov

410-212-9414 (cell)

Stay connected with the Comptroller of Maryland:

