

April Program: Water Infrastructure | We will explore the current state of our water and sewer systems

Elrich Proposes FY27 Budget | A brief summary of the County Executive's major funding requests | **P. 3**

Questions to the Potomac Conservancy About the Potomac River Interceptor Break | Bailey Condrey (Kensington) did not get a chance to ask these questions at the hearing in late February | **P. 4**

Purple Line Update | Transportation Chair Jerry Garson fills us in on the progress being made | **P. 6**

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #973

Monday, April 13, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
online via Zoom. Topic: "Our Water Infrastructure."

■ [Join the Zoom Meeting Here](#)
[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]

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March Meeting Minutes

General Meeting #972 **P. 7**
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Membership Application

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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

Federation Meeting #973

Monday, April 13, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: March General Meeting **P.7**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. April Program: Our Water Infrastructure
7. Committee Reports
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

All monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public. They are held on the second Monday of each month, September through June.

The April meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 3 for program) at 7:00 p.m.:

■ To be part of the video conference, first [visit the Zoom website](#) to download the program for your phone or computer.

■ Date and Time: Monday, April 13, 2026, 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

■ To [join the Zoom meeting from your browser, use this link.](#)

■ To participate by phone (audio only), call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is **860 0296 5507**. No password is required.

We hope you will join us! ■

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.**, is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public (agenda and details at left).

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except August. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. **Recipients are encouraged to forward the Civic Federation News to all association members, friends, and neighbors.** Permission is granted to reproduce any article, provided that proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County (Md.) Civic Federation."

Civic Federation News

civicednews AT montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 9

County Executive Marc Elrich Proposes FY27 Budget

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich has released his recommended Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Operating Budget, a proposal that balances significant investments in community services with a call for targeted tax adjustments to maintain fiscal stability.

PRIORITIZING PUBLIC ED.

The cornerstone of the FY27 budget is a **\$3.8 billion** investment in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). This fulfills the Board of Education’s full request—an increase of **\$189.9 million** over the previous year. To fund this, Elrich proposes a **6.3-cent property tax increase** dedicated specifically to the school system, alongside a **0.1% income tax adjustment** (from 3.2% to 3.3%).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HEALTH

Beyond education, the budget allocates **\$152.7 million** toward affordable housing. This includes:

- **\$52.3 million** for the Housing Initiative Fund.
- **\$28.4 million** in rental assistance.
- Increased funding for the **Working Families Income Supplement**, raising the match from 56% to 60% to support lower-income households.

Health and Human Services also see a boost, with over **\$68 million** dedicated to preventing homelessness and nearly **\$20 million** combined for the Latino, African American, and Asian American health initiatives.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CLIMATE ACTION

The proposal maintains a strong focus on infrastructure and safety, funding nearly **3,250 full-time positions** across fire and police departments. Significant climate investments include **\$19.4 million** for the Montgomery County Green Bank and a transition toward zero-emission “Ride On” buses.

NEXT STEPS FOR MCCF

The County Council will now review the proposal, with a final vote expected in **May**. As these adjustments move through the legislative process, the Federation will continue to monitor how these tax shifts and service investments impact our local civic associations.

[The Montgomery County press release about the FY27 Recommended Operating Budget is here.](#) ■

Questions to the Potomac Conservancy About the Potomac River Interceptor Break

[The following letter was sent on March 6, 2026, to Alyssa Murray, Director of Community and Media Relations at Potomac Conservancy, regarding the collapse of the Potomac River Interceptor (PRI) sewer pipe and repair and mitigation efforts to come, by Bailey Condrey of Kensington, who gave us permission to reprint it here. Potomac Conservancy is a land trust and clean water leader in the Potomac River region committed to restoring the Potomac water quality through land conservation initiatives to stop pollution from entering our streams and tributaries.]

Alyssa,

I’ve read the recent update from Potomac Conservancy (PC) on DC Water’s [District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority] lack of re-

sponse to PC’s request for information.

I attended the meeting at Walt Whitman [High School] on 02/26. I was unimpressed; they wasted a lot of time on process, introductions, and word salad. I think Congressman Raskin’s office did a great job pulling it all together, but the talking heads were woefully short on data.

I never got to ask my questions, but I think you will be interested to see them. I’ve been an environmental advocate for most of my life and grew up on the marine/aquatic interface in Virginia Beach.

■ What is the biological time frame for mollusks, fish, and crabs to completely flush *E. coli* from their bodies?

■ What effect will the sewage contamination have on reptiles,

birds, and mammals throughout the Potomac and Bay watersheds?

■ Contaminants will remain in river sediments for much longer. What effects will small aquatic life forms suffer?

■ Can coelenterates, fungi, and bacteria break down *E. coli* and other pollutants quickly? Small fish kills have already been documented.

■ How badly will those living off the land be affected and what economic costs will impact commercial fisheries?

■ What data will be shared with regional residents to help them determine whether/when fisheries products can be safely consumed?

■ Why wasn’t this section, or a much longer section of the Interceptor upgraded, renovated, or replaced

Potomac Interceptor, cont.

years earlier, as many groups had requested?

■ The invasive blue catfish harvest from the Potomac/Bay watershed has been a tremendous success, with many participating area chefs exciting diners with their creations. The 2025 harvest was nearly 4 million pounds. In the short term, this all ends. What funds will be set aside to compensate fishermen for lost revenue? What communications outreach will be developed to inform those living off the water that harvesting is safe?

■ DC Water should be required to hire biological/hydrological specialists to assess how twice-daily high-tide incursions into the Bay remix the 240 MM gallons of sewage back into the many tidal tributaries that are “downstream” of the Potomac;

how do prevailing Bay currents keep these pollutants in play? The Maryland Department of Environmental Protection had mentioned at the meeting that the mollusk fishery would reopen March 10, but I find this ridiculous. I’ve eaten oysters from the Wicomico River and St. Mary’s County for years—not now.

■ What testing will be done for the other pollutants from the American Legion Bridge containment area that were washed into the river with the pipeline collapse? Tire dust is a witches brew of toxicants and compounds.

■ What testing will be done for PFAS and medications in the flesh of fishery products to determine levels? Are there safe levels for consumption?

I will not be eating anything from the Bay watershed for an extended period of time without seeing real

data about fishery contamination, which includes testing of specimen flesh for many types of pollutants. DC Water cannot be allowed to walk away from this using a cynical debate about who’s responsible. We need to determine what/who is going to pay and make it happen in the very near term. Making the Potomac watershed and the vast ecosystem it supports whole cannot be shoved to the backburner while responsible parties debate who pays.

This may require a multiyear commitment.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and being engaged with PC. Feel free to call me anytime to discuss.

Kind Regards,
Bailey Condrey
Kensington, Md. ■

Purple Line Update

By Jerry Garson, Transportation Committee Chair

Construction on the Purple Line Light Rail or Street Car will still be in full swing this spring, but every day it progresses closer to solely focusing on vehicle testing and systems integration, which will be the focus throughout the remainder of 2026 and 2027.

Track installation is complete on the entire Wayne Avenue section of the alignment, and crews are now working on the asphalt between the track. After years of planning and construction, the Purple Line will begin testing in College Park in March.

During the first phase of testing, light rail vehicles will be tested overnight Tuesday through Friday from the College Park Metro station to the Adelphi Road University of

Maryland Global Campus station.

The Purple Line Construction started in 2018 and is now scheduled to be completed by the end of 2027. The project is 16 miles long. The project has resulted in numerous streets being closed and it has impacted businesses along the right of way

Most of the areas around the 21 stations have light amounts of dense housing compared to the light rail systems in Europe that often have 10,000 or more residents living within 500 feet of the stations. In Europe, the system refers to its vehicles as Trams.

Of the original fleet of 26 light rail vehicles (LRVs), two additional LRVs were ordered and both are ready to ship.

The D.C. Streetcar served Dis-

trict residents for a decade, but the last run was on Tuesday, March 21, 2026. It’s hitting the brakes for good. However, the last day it will operate on its route along H Street and Benning Road in Northeast. The D.C. Streetcar was launched in 2016 as a single line that runs 2.2 miles between Union Station and the edge of the old RFK Stadium campus

But it never reached the ridership that was expected and officials with the District Department of Transportation said it was too expensive to maintain. It also had its funding cut by the D.C. Council in its 2026 budget. The closure comes a year earlier than initially planned—March 2027.

We do not know what will happen to these Street cars. ■

MCCF General Meeting March 9, 2026, Minutes

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/ZJvZDM9hW78>

1. Call to Order. President Cheryl Gannon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Routine business was postponed to allow for the guest speaker's presentation.

2. Guest Speaker: County Executive Marc Elrich. The primary focus of the meeting was a presentation by County Executive Marc Elrich, followed by a Q&A session.

a. County Budget Challenges: Elrich described the current budget as the most difficult of his tenure. He noted a significant revenue write-down by the

state and the disappearance of federal pandemic-era funds.

b. Taxation & Infrastructure: Elrich advocated for a diversified tax base similar to Northern Virginia or D.C. to reduce the burden on residents. He expressed frustration with the County Council for relying on reserves rather than adjusting tax rates to support schools and infrastructure.

c. Public Schools (MCPS): Elrich highlighted a \$2 billion hole in the capital budget for school repairs. He noted that special education needs now affect nearly 20% of the student population, necessitating additional staff to meet legal dead-

lines.

d. Housing & Zoning: Extensive discussion occurred regarding the Governor's housing bill and local zoning. Elrich expressed strong opposition to "attacking existing residential neighborhoods" for density when the county is already zoned for over 100,000 units. He argued that current proposals lack meaningful affordability requirements for low-income residents.

e. Environment & Utilities:
i. Data Centers: Elrich discussed the potential for data centers and the need for strict regulations regarding power

MORE

March Mtg. Minutes, cont.

sources (e.g., small nuclear reactors or natural gas turbines) and water temperature impacts.

ii. Dickerson Incinerator: He outlined plans to close the failing incinerator, move toward food waste composting, and implement "long-hauling" of trash as a temporary measure while developing a new recovery facility.

iii. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Residents raised concerns about the US 29 BRT Phase 2 design, specifically dedicated median lanes and property easements. Elrich agreed to review specific details provided by the community.

3. Minutes and Agenda.

The February meeting minutes and current agenda were approved as amended.

4. Treasurer's Report. Jerry Garson reported a net income of \$582 for the period July 1, 2025, to March 9, 2026, with a current bank balance of \$6,270.

5. Nominations Committee. President Gannon announced the formation of a nominations committee for upcoming elections.

6. Announcements
A County Executive forum focusing on environmental issues was announced for March 16th at the Silver Spring Civic Building.

7. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. ■

MCCF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, March 19, 2026, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

1. Members Present: Cheryl Gannon, Jacquie Bokow, Jerry Garson, Joe Harkins, Joyce Gwatz, Elizabeth Joyce, and Alan Bowser.

2. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Cheryl Gannon.

3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of \$6,316.00.

4. MCCF Awards Program. President Gannon said that the annual MCCF Awards program would

MORE

March ExCom Min., cont.

take place on Sunday, June 7, 2026, at a location to be determined.

5. Nominations Committee.

President Gannon announced the members of the 2026 Nominations Committee: Elizabeth Joyce, Ken Markinson, Jay Elvove, Joe Harkins, and Sherri Weiss. Members need to be confirmed at the April General Meeting. Nominations for Federation officers are requested.

6. Awards Committee.

Members discussed possible nominations for the 2026 annual MCCF Awards: the Legacy of Leadership Award, the Star Cup, the Sentinel Award, and the Wayne Goldstein Award.

7. April Program. Members discussed possible speakers for the April General meeting and expressed interest in infrastructure as a program topic.

8. Newsletter. The newsletter deadline is March 31, 2026.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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