

# July 1 marks Kent County's new fiscal year

Happy New Year!

Fiscal Year 2019 started July 1, 2018, which means the new Kent County budget is in effect. The new financial plan adopted by Levy Court in early May looks quite a bit like 2018, with no new major expenditures, fewer positions, or a no major capital projects.

All full-time County employees received a 2% cost of living adjustment this fiscal year and most employees with an effective or better performance appraisal also received a one-half step (1%) increase. Full-time employees hired during the previous fiscal year and working more than 3 months received the 1% step, while those hired in April, May & June 2018 received no step. Former employees receiving a County pension received a 1% cost of living adjustment effective July 1.

Due to payroll's one week lag, the full benefit of the wage increase will not be reflected on the electronic pay stub until July 27, since the July 13 pay advice also includes June 24-30, which is paid at the FY2018 rate. Be advised that individual hourly and salary rates extend for several digits past the decimal point for tax reporting purposes, the figures shared with employees reflect rounding and the application of percentages by the New World payroll software program.

The County budget includes 301 County positions in FY2019 including the addition of a new a Database Administrator position in the Information Technology office, transfer of Facilities Management responsibilities from Public Works to the Administration Department, realignment of 3 divisions with individual assistant directors under a single assistant in the Planning Services Department, and the defunding the Economic Development Office Director position and two vacant GIS positions.

Other budget adjustments are attributed to an increase of the pension contribution by \$281,472 due to a prudent Levy Court decision to incrementally reduce the rate of return on investments by one-quarter percent over three years from 8% to 7.25% for the \$42M fund. Commissioners also funded an increase for the tuition reimbursement program by raising the annual maximum from \$750 to \$1,000 for undergraduate degrees and \$1,000 to \$1,300 for graduate degrees.

In addition, numerous ongoing and future capital projects were funded or partially funded through an installment allocation including exterior lighting upgrades and audio/visual system replacement at the County Complex, pole building and generator replacement at Emergency Services, window tinting at the County Library, various County parks improvements, a comprehensive I.T. enterprise solution, among others.

After the budget's adoption in May, the Commissioners praised County employees for continuing to maintain cost controls and the Finance Department staff for helping craft a balanced budget without the need for tax or fee increases.

*(posted 07/06/18)*