

**Maryland Food Center Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**7801 Oceano Avenue
Jessup, Maryland 20794
November 20, 2025**

Present:

Gail Yeiser, Chair
Susan Summers
Ryan Phillips
Stephanie Jerger
Carlton Brown
Kerry Greer
Monica Lapenta

Ben Seigel, for the Honorable Brooke Lierman, Comptroller

Wendy Scott-Scott Napier, for Atif Chaudry, Secretary, Department of General Services

Cassie Shirk, for Kevin Atticks, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

Dr. Darren Jarboe, for Dr. Dean Powers, Dean and Director, University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Myriem Seabron, Assistant Attorney General

Katie Zenk, Executive Director, MFCA
Mary Wilkerson, Director of Real Estate and Finance, MFCA
Gary Decker, Director of Market Operations, MFCA
Peggy Torre, Executive Projects Coordinator, MFCA

Meeting Convened

Ms. Gail Yeiser called the Members of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Food Center Authority (MFCA) to order at 9:00 a.m. on November 20, 2025.

I. Regular Session

A. Approval of Minutes from September 25, 2025

- A motion was made by Ms. Susan Summers to approve the Minutes of the September 25, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stephanie Jerger and unanimously approved. (Exhibit 1)

B. MFCA Updates

- Ms. Katie Zenk updated the Board that the annual tenant survey has been completed by tenants. Unfortunately, only a small number of tenants responded. The results were compiled and submitted to the State as part of the Managing for Results Report. Our goal is to increase tenant participation next year.
- In an effort to increase tenant engagement, Ms. Zenk has already met with tenants at a Tenant Advisory meeting, as well as at several one-on-one meetings with individual tenants. Staff are currently working on responses to written questions submitted by tenants and will share those communications with the Board. Among other requests, tenants have asked for more transparency regarding MFCA and the decision-making processes of the MFCA Board of Directors.
- Ms. Zenk advised that the facilities are very old and nearing the end of their productive life. As a result, she believes MFCA should develop a more formal Strategic Plan to address questions such as: How do we control our own destiny? How do we serve current tenants while preparing for future tenants? She advised that developing a strong plan will require significant engagement and buy-in from the Board. The Board advised Ms. Zenk and staff to

begin developing a framework for the Strategic Plan and to present that framework at the March meeting.

- Ms. Zenk updated the Board on the progress of the Produce Market Expansion Project. Bids are due on December 4, 2025, and a Board meeting has been scheduled for December 11, 2025 to discuss those bids. The Board had previously formally restricted \$2.5 million for the project. However, based on subsequent Board discussions referring to \$3 million, Ms. Zenk believes the restricted amount should be increased to eliminate confusion and to have it on recorded in the minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Kerry Greer and seconded by Ms. Stephanie Jerger to restrict an additional \$500,000 of our existing cash for use in the Produce Market Expansion, this is in addition to the \$2.5 million that was already restricted at the November 15, 2023, Board meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Ms. Katie Zenk updated the Board on the Maryland Market Center Renovation. She advised that the contractor is behind schedule and has submitted several change orders. There have also been other issues with the contractor, and Ms. Seabron has been immensely helpful working with staff to push the contractor forward. MFCA has already made commitments to tenants for the renovated units and plans to honor those commitments.

- Ms. Gail Yeiser announced the resignation of Mark Powell, who served for many years as a representative to the Board on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. She introduced Cassie Shirk as the current representative on behalf of the Secretary. She also congratulated Mr. Gerardo Martinez on the five-year anniversary of Wild Kid Acres Farm, located in Anne Arundel County.

- Ms. Gail Yeiser advised that the Board needs to fill the open position of Vice-Chair. Ms. Stephanie Jerger has agreed to be considered to serve in that capacity and brings a wealth of relevant experience to the position. A motion was made by Dr. Darren Jarboe and seconded by Ms. Cassie Shirk to elect Ms. Stephanie Jerger as Vice-Chair until the end of her term. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Mr. Gary Decker updated the Board on the Stream Restoration Project. The permit has been approved by the Howard County Soil Conservation District, and MFCA is waiting on the signed permit. Once received, staff can move forward with the grading permit, with the goal of completing the work before March 1, 2025. If the project does not begin before March 1, it will be delayed until June due to a fish spawning period between March 1 and June 15.
- Mr. Carlton Brown recommended that MFCA sign onto the State Treasurer's Investment Policy. Ms. Mary Wilkerson will prepare the policy and present it at a future meeting for approval.

C. Presentation of Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ending June 30, 2025

- Ms. Mary Wilkerson reviewed the Audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2025.

D. Presentation of Proposed Fiscal Year Revised 2026 Operating Budget Estimates and Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget Estimates and Fiscal Year 2026 and FY 2027 Capital Improvement Budget Estimates

Ms. Mary Wilkerson presented the following budgets in detail:

1. Revised Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Operating Budget Estimates
2. FY 2027 Operating Budget Estimates
3. FY 2026 and FY 2027 Capital Improvement Budget Estimates

Motions

1. Audited Financial Statements

- A motion to approve the FY 2025 audited financial statements was made by Ms. Stephanie Jerger and seconded by Dr. Darren Jarboe.

- The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Capital Improvement Budgets

- A motion to approve the revised FY 2026 and FY 2027 Capital Improvement Budgets in total was made by Dr. Darren Jarboe and seconded by Ms. Stephanie Jerger.
- The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Operating Budgets

- A motion to approve the revised FY 2026 and FY 2027 Operating Budgets in total was made by Ms. Kerry Greer and seconded by Mr. Ben Seigel.
- Included in these budgets:
 - A 2% merit increase and a 1% COLA in FY 2027 for all MFCA employees, excluding the Executive Director.
 - The FY 27 increase will only be given if the State of Maryland authorizes increases for all State agencies.
- The motion was unanimously approved.

E. Statement of Revenue and Expenses Affecting Private Tenants and Users

The Statement of Revenue and Expenses affecting private tenants and users of the Maryland Wholesale Produce Market and the Maryland Market Center was reviewed by the Board. These will be presented at the next Tenant Advisory Board meeting, currently scheduled for December 3, 2025.

A motion was made by Ms. Stephanie Jerger to accept the R & D's and was seconded by Mr. Carlton Brown and was unanimously approved.

F. Tentatively Scheduled Dates for Calendar Year 2026 Authority Meetings

- March 19
- June 11
- September 24
- November 19

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Darren Jarboe, seconded by Ms. Susan Summers, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned.