

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY
109 Market Street, Room 106
DENTON, MD 21629

Minutes
January 18, 2022

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Daniel J. Franklin, Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Convocation by Pastor Doug Morley.

There was no public comment.

Reporting Out Statement from the 1/11/22 Closed Session: “During the January 11th meeting, we had a closed session under Authority: General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) (1) to discuss employment details of a current County employee. The Commissioners directed the Director of Human Resources to have a new employment contract drafted, and to change this employee from the merit system to contractual. This contract is to be added to the January 18th Commissioners Meeting for possible approval. Commissioners Porter, Franklin and Levensgood, the Director of Human Resources, Sherry Bratton, County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman, as well as the County Attorney, Stewart Barroll and Public Information Officer, Jenn Farina were in attendance.”

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Eastern Shore – Caroline County Mentoring Month – Proclamation: Ms. Ashley Shephard was presented the proclamation after Commissioner Porter read that the month of January in the year 2022 is to be recognized as Mentoring Month in Caroline County; calling for all adults to step up to the need of the community regarding mentoring our youth.

Erin Thornton Comptroller, Caroline County Public Schools: Ms. Thornton presented to the Commissioners that the Caroline County Board of Education is requesting a budget adjustment of \$1,253,048 (excess of revenues for over expenditures). Commissioner Franklin asked if the extra funds run into the fund balance? Ms. Thornton stated that it does. Commissioner Levensgood, motioned to approve adjustment request. Commissioner Franklin seconded. All three Commissioners voted to approve the budget adjustment.

COVID-19 Response & Recovery Update - Robin Cahall, Health Officer, Caroline County Health Department: Ms. Cahall stated that the positivity rate has slightly decreased to 28.13%. There is an indication that we are peaking. Ms. Cahall also stated that the new cases rate from 1/7/22-1/14/22 is 398 cases. There has been an increase of deaths by 2; cumulatively totaling 59. Currently, 38.4% of 12–17-year-olds are fully vaccinated. 63.4% of 12+ year-olds are fully vaccinated. Ages 65+; 88.9% are also fully vaccinated.

Legislative Bill #2022-01 – Composting Facilities Definition - Third Reading & Potential

Enactment: Wilbur, Dan, Larry. Commissioner Franklin made a motion to enter legislative session. Commissioner Levensgood seconded. All three Commissioners voted to enter legislative session. Mr. Bob Chapel wrote an email opposing the bill, requested spot zoning which is against the code. Mr. Barroll stated that this bill, is an act to repeal and reenact with amendments the definition of Composting Facilities in Chapter 175 Zoning, Article II, Section 175-8B, of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County, to repeal and reenact with amendments Section 175-28 of Chapter 175 Zoning, and to amend the Table of Use Regulations of Chapter 175.

“FOR the purposes of: (1) changing the definition of Composting Facility to require that such a facility biologically decompose organic solid matter into solid compost; (2) requiring that compost feedstock not contain more than 25% animal processing by-products or carcass materials; (3) requiring that the entrance onto any public road of an access road to a Composting Facility be constructed in accordance with the standards set forth in an entrance permit obtained from the Department of Public Works or other approving authority, such as the State Highway Administration; and (4) providing that a Composting Facility is a permitted use subject to special use exception in the R-Rural Zoning District.”

Commissioner Franklin moved to end the legislative session. Commissioner Levensgood seconded. All three Commissioners voted to close the legislative session. Commissioner Franklin made a motion to enact and adopt the legislative bill. Commissioner Levensgood seconded the motion. All three Commissioners voted to enact and adopt the legislative bill.

Consent Agenda: (The following items were unanimously approved by the Commissioners):

- Gateway Construction, INC. Contract – Marydel Community Park Phase II

Commissioner Porter asked Ms. Jamie Beechy if this is to build an additional field in Marydel and to do additional work there? Ms. Beechy stated that this was Phase II, so Commissioner Porter was correct. Commissioner Porter stated that we (the County) continue to build fields where we have them, however we need them at North County Park. Commissioner Porter asked where is the money coming from to do this? Ms. Beechy stated that this is program open space funds with a 10% County match which has already been budgeted. Commissioner Franklin asked if this portion of the project was initiated a while back? Ms. Beechy stated that yes, there is a lot of funding already allocated from other avenues. This was “frozen” due to COVID, but it has been “unfrozen”.

Kaleigh Leager, Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners – Legislative Session

Update/Discussion: Ms. Leager stated that there is a bill that Caroline can be added to so we can remove anyone from the State Board of Education without the Governors approval, for appointed positions not elected positions. Commissioners Levensgood stated that he would like to move forward to join and Commissioner Franklin agreed that his would be beneficial to the County. This would only be the local board of education which would then be forwarded to the state board of education, so when they go to terminate someone, they would need the approval from the state and the Governor, however under this we would not need the Governor. Ms. Leager stated she will speak with the Board of Education about this during tonight’s evening meeting.

Introduced Bills that will have significant impact is first Senate Bill 56, this bill is regarding program open space, I spoke with Sue Simmons, that this bill will require the general assembly to enact and submit an expenditures plan for program open space funds and another step of approval. If this would be enacted, we would have to wait for the general assembly's approval it and would significantly increase the timeline on projects and taking the local power away. Jeremy Goldman stated the county submit a letter of opposition regarding this bill. Ms. Simmons mentioned that this is unlikely to gain traction.

In addition, there is a disabled veteran's tax incentive bill. Under the current law, veterans are exempt from state and local property taxes, and they would want the County to grant an equal credit locally. Commissioner Porter stated if we keep exempting people, we put the burden of services on everyone else. Commissioner Levengood stated that the County opposes those two bills.

Ms. Leager stated that there is a bill for an interagency commission on school construction finance fund. The bottom line is that this bill will require the commission will require improvement projects, no matter the cost or the finances of the County. This would require submission to this commission, and they would approve and fund it.

There is a bill that would allow COVID-19 related absences to fall under workers compensation. Kaleigh stated in the senate first reading finance nothing has been schedule as of yet.

Ms. Leager mentioned there is a bill from Del. Lisanti for Municipal incorporation. Allowing areas with a certain population, under petition to become a municipality.

Commissioner Levengood stated that he has issues with transportation regarding EMS that there is compensation from those who refuse treatment and then we can't bill by the care we have provided. This would give the ambulance the ability to bill medical insurance for care provided.

Ms. Leager stated that she will move forward with request and keep checking the bills daily to bring detailed reports back to the board.

Commissioner Franklin asked for an update on the Sunday hunting bill, and Ms. Leager stated that Senator Hershey's office respond, but has submitted our edits to them regarding the bill.

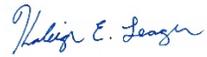
County Administrators Report – Jeremy Goldman: Mr. Goldman stated that the ARPA budget needs to be discussed in a February meeting. Commissioner Porter requested to see the calendar.

County Commissioners Open Discussion: Commissioner Levengood was contacted by a retiree about making a COLA for retirees. Mr. Goldman stated it is on the schedule to be discussed. Commissioner Franklin stated that he plans on attending this Friday night's dinner and Sunday morning's breakfast at the American Legion. Commissioner Porter stated that he attended the MLK Day walk and speech. Ms. Janet Fountain and Mr. Wanda Molock do a great job. Commissioner Porter stated he is not going to file for re-election. I try to keep my word, and in

2018 I said this was my last time running. Commissioner Porte stated that it is time to turn this over to people who obviously have better plans and ideas than himself.

There was no public comment.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kaleigh E. Leager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kaleigh Leager
Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners