

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY
Health and Public Services (HAPS) Building
403 S. 7th Street, Room 111
Denton, MD 21629

Minutes
August 1, 2023

Present: President J. Travis Breeding; Vice President Larry C. Porter, Commissioner N. Franklin Bartz, III.

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

Commissioners Meeting Convenes, Invocation by Pastor Thomas Fisher – Abrams
Memorial Church of Denton

Reporting Out Statement: Commissioner Breeding read the following statement, “During the July 18th Commissioners meeting, the Commissioners held a closed session to discuss and receive a letter of resignation from an employee under Section (1) of the General Provisions Art. 3-305(b). Commissioner Breeding, Porter, and Bartz were in attendance in addition to County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman, County Attorney, Stewart Barroll, Director of Economic Development & Tourism, Debbie Bowden, Paralegal, Mary Berneski, and Executive Assistant, Kaleigh Leager.

In addition, the Commissioner’s held a closed session to discuss potential litigation under Section (8) of the General Provisions Art. 3-305(b). The Commissioners directed Mr. Barroll to sign and approve a contract for professional services. Commissioner Breeding, Porter, and Bartz were in attendance in addition to County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman, County Attorney, Stewart Barroll, Paralegal, Mary Berneski, and Executive Assistant, Kaleigh Leager.”

Public Comment: Pastor Doug Morely from the North Caroline Clergy Assoc. thanked the Commissioners for their leadership in the Community.

District 6 Little League Softball Championship Proclamation – Sponsored by

Commissioner Breeding: Commissioner Breeding read the proclamation recognizing the District 6 Little League Softball Champions and to support Caroline Softball. The Commissioners shared their well wishes and congratulations with the softball players.

Caroline County Public Schools FY2024 Budget/Approval Discussion- Dr. Derek Simmons, Superintendent & Erin Thornton, CFO: Dr. Simmons and Ms. Thornton presented the Commissioners with the FY24 Budget for Caroline County Public Schools. Commissioner Porter made a motion to approve the FY24 Budget. Commissioner Bartz seconded the motion. All three Commissioners unanimously voted to approve the FY24 Budget.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (B.E.S.S.) Safety Systems/Fire Code Discussion – Kenneth

Bush, Chief Fire Protection Engineer, Maryland Department of State Police: Mr. Bush introduced himself to the Commissioners and thanked them for the invitation to join the Commissioner's Meeting. Commissioner Porter discussed the County's concerns regarding B.E.S.S. Commissioner Porter asked Mr. Bush why the NFPA 855 standard that was supposed to be adopted this year, is no longer being considered for adoption. Mr. Bush informed the Commissioners that the Fire Marshal's Office is under the Maryland State Police (MSP), and Col. Jones (previous superintendent) with MSP revoked the approval of NFPA 855, and he is unaware of the reason. Mr. Bush shared his concerns about the lack of training and information relating to lithium ion and other types of battery fires in B.E.S.S. and electric vehicles. Commissioner Porter mentioned that the State is continuing to mandate the use of these systems but refused to pass a bill that would provide funding to our volunteer fire companies for training and equipment to respond to these events.

Mr. Bush stated that in addition to the hazards that the public would face, there is also a huge detriment to the environment as it takes thousands of gallons of water to attempt to control these fires. Thousands of gallons of polluted water (benzine) will eventually end up in our waterways, and eventually the Bay. Commissioner Porter asked Mr. Bush if the State has anyone available to come and inspect these systems for compliance. Mr. Bush stated that there are no government officials on staff that is an expert, or an inspector at the State level through the Fire Marshal's Office. In closing, Mr. Bush stated that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) told his office to let the fires burn to prevent the runoff.

Consent Agenda: Commissioner Breeding made a motion to approve the professional services agreement if Mr. Bereano subcontracts through Mr. Wise's firm for insurance purposes. Commissioner Bartz seconded. All three Commissioner voted unanimously to approve the professional services contract if Mr. Bereano joined onto Mr. Wises insurance policy. All three Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the remainder of the consent agenda.

- Minutes – July 11th, 2023 – Open & Closed
- [Purchasing Professional Services Agreement – Bruce C. Bereano & Steven J. Wise – Lobbying Services](#)
- Caroline County Elections - [Early Voting Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – HAPS Building – Voting 2024 Elections](#)
- Caroline County Department of Emergency Services - [Cooperative Purchasing Professional Services Agreement – Thompson Consulting Services, LLC. – Debris Clean-Up](#)
- Upper Shore Aging – [FY2024 Caroline Senior Care Grant Application](#)
- Caroline County Department of Public Works – [Amendatory Agreement - Maryland Environmental Service \(MES\) – 20-SW Support for Caroline County Homeowner Convenience Drop Off Centers](#)
- Caroline County Department of Recreation & Parks – [Department of Natural Resources – Waterway Improvement Fund Grant Agreement - \\$500,000 – Choptank Marina](#)
- Caroline County Department of Economic Development - Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Change Orders – [Data Center Shell Building, Chesapeake Farm to Freezer Project, Business Attraction Capacity Building, Tech Park Development Plan, & West Denton Feasibility Study](#)

- Caroline County Economic Development & Tourism – [Rural Business Development Grant Award Obligation of Funds & Letter of Intent - \\$35,000](#)
- Caroline County Department of Planning & Codes – The Benedictine School - Deed of Forest Conservation Easement & Deed of Easement - Stormwater Management Facilities Right of Entry - Inspection and Maintenance Agreement
- Deed of Forest Conservation Easement – C. Lawson
- Caroline County Human Services Council – [Community Partnership Agreement with the State of Maryland](#)

County Administrators Report – Jeremy Goldman: Mr. Goldman stated that the Town of Denton is turning the water off from 8am-11am to the Courthouse to replace a 100-year-old water pipe. The Commissioners directed staff to post a sign that says no public restroom. Mr. Goldman gave the floor to Mr. Fox to discuss the tax distribution from the State. Per Mr. Fox, the disbursements are continuing to become more accurate and predictable. Mr. Goldman stated that he will be on vacation Thursday, Friday, and Monday.

County Commissioners Open Discussion: Commissioner Bartz stated that Mr. Goldman, Ms. Leager, and Mr. Bereano met with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to discuss some of the affordable housing issues the County is facing in addition to finding resources to help maintain lower income properties. Commissioner Bartz stated that he went to Benedictine Car Show. Commissioner Porter had nothing to share. Commissioner Breeding mentioned that he went to NACo in Austin, Texas and took a tour of the Travis County Emergency Services Department. Commissioner Breeding stated that he met a Commissioner from Virginia, that has a regional detention center. Commissioner Breeding stated that he exchanged information to discuss the processes involved in creating and organizing a regional detention center.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Closed Session: “To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; Authority: Section (1) General Provisions Art. § 3 305(b)”

Commissioner Porter made a motion to convene the closed session. Commissioner Bartz seconded the motion. All three Commissioners voted unanimously to convene the closed session.

Commissioner Bartz made a motion to adjourn the closed session. Commissioner Porter seconded the motion. All three Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn the closed session.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Bartz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Porter seconded the motion. All three Commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

Valerie E. Leager

Kaleigh Leager
Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners