

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY
109 Market Street, Room 106, Denton, Maryland

WORK SESSION

October 2, 2018

Present: President, Larry C. Porter; Vice President, Wilbur Levengood; Commissioner, Daniel J. Franklin; Heather Price, County Attorney; Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff; and Jennifer Farina, Administrative Coordinator

Topic one: University of Maryland Shore Regional Health Update

Ken Kozel, CEO, Shore Regional Health, updated the Commissioners on the upcoming projects for Shore Regional Health. Mr. Kozel stated that the Certificate of Need application for the new hospital located in Easton had officially been submitted to the State. He stated that this project could not have been finalized without the support from all the local counties including Caroline. He stated that the application approval process takes about 18 to 24 months, however, the timeframe for the hospital completion remains at the summer of 2024. He stated that the new facility would house 135 beds and six operating rooms.

Patti Willis, Vice President, Shore Regional Health, stated that the new Shore Regional Health Medical Pavilion located on Deep Shore Road in Denton will be opening in early 2019. She stated that in addition to primary care and rehab, this space will allow for the regular rotation of specialty care, including cardiology, neurology, pulmonology, women's health, and the diabetes clinic. The pavilion will also feature a bridge program for behavioral health, to ensure those with a mental health or substance use disorders who are released from any inpatient treatment have the ability to maintain their medication and therapy until they can get settled with a regular outpatient treatment provider.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Willis and Mr. Kozel for their time and stated that they are proud to have such a strong partnership with Shore Regional Health, which has allowed Caroline County to provide such great medical services to their residents.

Topic Two: Food Hub Project Update

Beth Brewster, Supervisor of Food Services, Caroline County Public Schools, gave the Commissioners an overview of the new and improved services currently provided to the youth of Caroline County through the school system. Hunger is a critical issue on the Eastern Shore. In Caroline County alone, one in four children is food insecure. Through backyard philanthropy, maximum collaboration and utilization of local organizations, and efficient distribution and processing of area products, her team can help increase the economics of local producers and workers.

Ms. Brewster stated that good nutrition helps reduce health care visits, enables children in their formative years to have the “brain power” to become more productive, and lessens the behavioral issues that can result in illegal outcomes.

Ms. Brewster stated that she and her staff have worked hard to ensure that the children in rolled in Caroline County Public Schools are eating local grown and raised food. She stated that through many partnerships and grants she is able to provide local vegetables and grass fed beef to the schools. Caroline County has a 56 % rate of free or reduced lunches. The need for our students is great during school and outside of school. We have made it our mission to provide “happy kitchens, and well-fed kids!” She went on to state that her program provides the following services:

- Universal breakfast in the all 9 schools which includes fruit option

- 70% participation in the school lunch program: providing students with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables with unlimited salad
- After school meals served 45, 000 2017-18
- Summer meals served 17,500 summer 2018
- Department has one various awards for highest percent of local food served, Turnip the Beet award from USDA for use of local foods, third highest percent participation of breakfast in Maryland
- Conduct farm to school week but also serve local year round
- Our produce bid requires purchases be made locally first
- Recipient of the Chef Ann Foundation grant, only 4 districts in the US chosen, to put more scratch cooking on the lines
- Educational components in partnership with teachers and with University of Maryland Extension

As of today, all public schools in Caroline County have either weekly backpack programs for younger students in need or food pantries available for the families of older students in need. Ms. Brewster explained that the goal is to run these programs more efficiently by locating the packaging process in one area and distributing the product from there out to the schools. This will minimize the logistics issues volunteers face in having to store and package at the schools, and also create consistency throughout the county. In addition, with one location we increase our buying power, maximize our storage capability, and better coordinate our volunteers. Ms. Brewster stated that in addition to feeding the food insecure, they want to give them the tools needed to feed themselves. With several programs, we are providing cooking skills to the general public, so they may prepare nutritiously balanced meals in their homes. She explained that her staff provide classes for kids, and adults.

Ms. Brewster stated that she would also like to start the conversation with the Commissioners on the future of Caroline County and the project of Farming 4 Hunger. She explained that Farming 4 Hunger (F4H) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 2012 to serve those in need of fresh food in Southern Maryland. The organization grows and distributes over a million pounds of locally grown, fresh food each year. Bernie Fowler Jr., founder, had a vision through his own personal struggles to help people in his hometown gain better access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Bernie was tired of only seeing nutrient-poor foods (canned and boxed goods) going to food banks, aiding in Americas ongoing struggle with childhood obesity and diabetes. He also realized local farmers were struggling to make ends meet. F4H accomplishes its mission through unique partnerships with 27 local farms, 20+ churches, local businesses and schools, the Maryland Food Bank, the Department of Corrections, and a great network of community volunteers. Ms. Brewster stated that she is seeking grant funding for the project, however she would like to work with the Commissioners on finding land where this could thrive.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Brewster for her thorough update and stated that they would be in touch to go over a more in-depth plan for the Farming 4 Hunger Project.

Topic Three: County Boat Ramp Permit Fees

Sue Simmons, Director, Caroline County Recreation and Parks and Mark Lasocha, Parks Facility Manager, explained to the Commissioners that the County currently has an opportunity for a grant funded project. Ms. Simmons stated that the County currently charges a higher fee for out of State use of the County boat ramps. She stated that a change in the County law regarding boat ramp permit fees to eliminate the price difference between in-state and out-of-state users would allow the use of grant funding to fix the boat ramp. In the law, the out-of-state cost must be at least 50% higher than the in-state cost. However, because the County charges different amounts, they are not eligible for Federal Sport Fish

Restoration Boating Access Program money. She explained that if the County could access this money, it could be used to cover the entire \$350,000 cost to repair the Choptank Marina ramp, which has cracked. The loss of revenue from the price difference in the two kinds of permits is minimal, compared to the opportunity to receive these funds. She stated that the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board recommend changing the law.

The Commissioners stated that they would like staff to move forward and eliminate the fee change for those out of state. Staff stated that this change would need to be made in the form of a Legislative Bill. The Commissioners gave staff the direction to draft a bill that would be introduced during their October 9, 2018 County Commissioners Meeting.

Topic Four: Draft Ordinance Planning Commission Membership

Katheleen Freeman, Director, Caroline County Planning and Codes, stated that the Commissioners had requested that the Planning Commission review a change to the section of the Code regarding their membership to permit one of the other Commissioners to serve as an alternate on the Planning Commission if the designated ex-officio member is unable to attend (or has a conflict that would prevent them from participating on a particular issue). She explained that additionally, the Planning Commission had initially wanted to revisit the term limit issue the Board previously adopted in order to allow a member to continue serving. Rather than undoing your previous policy position, Ms. Freeman suggested that the County simply clarify in the law that a Planning Commission member serves until a successor is appointed. She stated this change would need to be drafted and presented as an ordinance. The Commissioners directed staff to draft the ordinance for a first reading and introduction on October 9, 2018.

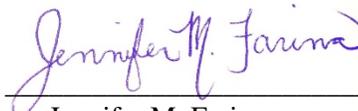
Topic Five Commissioners Open Discussion Period:

Commissioner Porter asked for an update on a court case, regarding the County. Ms. Price stated that a Judge that understood land use would be ruling on the case in the next 45 days. Commissioner Porter also asked staff to look into the idea of starting a firefighter scholarship fund for those who have lost a parent while on active duty.

Ms. Visintainer stated that the YMCA of the Chesapeake met with the Town of Denton to gather feedback on the upcoming project. She stated that they have not settled on any official agreement with the Town and YMCA.

Commissioner Levengood stated that he participated in a phone conference with a coalition of western shore officials regarding the Kirwan Commission, however he was not interested in sitting on the committee at this time.

There being no further discussion the meeting ended at 11:22 p.m.



Jennifer M. Farina
Administrative Coordinator