

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND

LEGISLATIVE BILL #2025-009 [REVISED SEPTEMBER 3, 2025]

INTRODUCED BY: COMMISSIONERS BREEDING, PORTER, AND BARTZ

INTRODUCED ON: SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

ATTEST: _____
J. TRAVIS BREEDING, PRESIDENT

PUBLIC HEARING: SEPTEMBER __, 2025, BEGINNING AT 9:15 A.M.
COURTHOUSE, 109 MARKET STREET,
ROOM 106
DENTON, MARYLAND 21629

THIRD READING: SEPTEMBER ____, 2025

ENACTED: SEPTEMBER ____, 2025

EFFECTIVE: NOVEMBER ____, 2025

CHAPTER 18 COMMISSIONERS

AN ACT TO CREATE THE CAROLINE COUNTY COMPENSATION REVIEW COMMISSION

AN ACT to repeal and reenact with amendments §18-5 “Compensation” of Chapter 18 “Commissioners” for the purpose of confirming the current rates of compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners of Caroline County and establishing a Compensation Review Commission to undertake a comprehensive study of the rate of current compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners and make recommendations regarding the amount of compensation and allowances in accordance with State and local laws; providing for the staffing, powers, duties and appointment of members of the Compensation Review Commission, and generally relating to Commissioner compensation and the Compensation Review Commission; and providing that this title be deemed a fair summary of this public local law for all purposes.

WHEREAS, the County Commissioners of Caroline County, Maryland (the "County Commissioners") are authorized under Article XI-F of the Maryland Constitution and §9-308 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Local Government Article") to adopt public local laws in general; and

WHEREAS, §10-302 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland provides that by ordinance, a county may establish a commission to recommend compensation and allowances for members of the county legislative body; and

WHEREAS, §18-5 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County contains the current provisions for the compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners which, despite inflation and increases in the cost of living, have been unchanged since 2009; and

WHEREAS, this Bill may also be known by its short title "Creation of the Caroline County Compensation Review Commission".

NOW, THEREFORE, IN AN EXERCISE OF THE COUNTY'S POLICE POWER AS A CODE HOME RULE COUNTY, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND, IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION, THAT:

SECTION 1. SECTION 18-5 "COMPENSATION" OF CHAPTER 18 "COMMISSIONERS" OF THE CODE OF PUBLIC LOCAL LAWS OF CAROLINE COUNTY is hereby REPEALED.

SECTION 2. NEW SECTION 18-5 "COMPENSATION AND COMPENSATION REVIEW COMMISSION" is hereby enacted in lieu thereof, to read as follows:

A. Compensation of the County Commissioners.

(1) The annual salary of the President of the County Commissioners is \$16,000. The annual salary of the other members is \$15,000.

(2) Each County Commissioner shall receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of official duties as provided by state standard travel regulations.

(3) Each County Commissioner shall be entitled to receive or participate in insurance, pension, and other fringe benefits generally made available to County employees in the classified service, on the same terms and conditions applicable

thereto, and as heretofore have been provided to County Commissioners; provided, however, that County Commissioners shall not be entitled to personal leave, sick leave, vacation leave, or provisions regarding work hours.

(4) The inclusion in this subsection A of §18-5 of salary and benefit provisions is intended to reflect the current practice of the County in place prior to the general election of 2006 and does not reflect an increase in salary or benefits to County Commissioners.

B. Establishment of Compensation Review Commission.

(1) Pursuant to § 10-302 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, there is hereby established a Caroline County Compensation Review Commission to study the rate of current compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners and to make recommendations regarding the amount of compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners.

(2) Not later than December 15 of the fourth year of each term, the Compensation Review Commission, by resolution, shall submit to the County Commissioners its recommendation for the compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners. The Commission may recommend an increase or decrease in the compensation and allowances for the County Commissioners.

(3) Within sixty (60) days of receipt of the Compensation Review Commission's recommendation, the County Commissioners may reduce or reject the Commission's recommendation, otherwise the recommendation shall stand approved. The County Commissioners may not increase any item in the recommendation.

(4) Any change in the compensation and allowances of the County Commissioners shall be enacted by ordinance before the election for the next succeeding board of County Commissioners and take effect only for the members of the next succeeding board of County Commissioners.

C. Appointment of Members.

(1) The Compensation Review Commission shall consist of five (5) citizens appointed by the County Commissioners, including a Chair, who shall be selected by the County Commissioners.

(2) All members of the Commission shall have been residents of Caroline County for at least three (3) years prior to appointment; shall possess an outstanding reputation for civic pride, integrity, responsibility and business or professional ability; and shall have no financial interest, direct or indirect, in the compensation and allowances of a County Commissioner.

(3) Members may not include any officer, official, candidate (as defined in the Code of Ethics) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the County, or employee of the County or any of his or her immediate family members. For the purposes of this Section, “immediate family member” means parent, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, child, or dependent relative of an officer, official, or employee of the County, whether or not living in the same household.

(4) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

D. Membership.

(1) Members shall serve terms of four (4) years and are eligible for re-appointment for consecutive or subsequent terms by the County Commissioners.

(2) Members shall continue to serve until resignation or the appointment of their successors.

(3) The County Commissioners may designate one (1) alternate member to sit on the Commission in the absence of any member of the Commission.

(4) In the event of a vacancy on the Commission, the County Commissioners shall appoint a person to serve the unexpired portion of the term of the vacated position.

E. Resignation and Removal.

(1) Any member of the Commission may resign at any time by providing written notice to the County Commissioners.

(2) In addition to the grounds set forth above, a member of the Commission may be removed in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) The County Commissioners retain the authority to remove any member at any time: when the member no longer meets any of the criteria set forth in subsection C of §18-5; when the member violates the Caroline County Code of Ethics; for repeated violations of the Open Meetings Act; for failure to complete the Maryland Open Meetings Act online training; upon the recommendation of a majority vote of the Commission, when, in its discretion, the best interest of the Commission or the community would not be served by the member’s continued membership; or for other just cause.

(b) Complaints against members shall be referred to the County Commissioners to determine the means of investigating the complaint.

(c) Commission members are expected to attend all meetings in person. A Commission member who is unable to attend a meeting shall notify the Commission administrator and the Chair of the intended absence. All Commission meeting minutes shall record attendance and reported absences. A member's record of attendance shall be considered by the County Commissioners with respect to re-appointment of a Commission member. Failure of a Commission member to attend at least 75% of the meetings in any 12-month period is equivalent to resignation from the Commission without further action being necessary to effectuate the resignation. The Chair shall notify the County Commissioners and County Administrator that the ex-member has resigned through absenteeism so that a replacement may be appointed.

G. Meetings.

(1) The Commission may promulgate rules consistent with this Section for the conduct of its meetings and the discharge of its responsibilities.

(2) The Commission shall meet as often as necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Commission.

(3) The Commission shall commence its work of producing its recommendation every four (4) years at the discretion of the Chair.

(4) Notice of all meetings of the Commission shall be in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

(5) All meetings are open to the public, except that the Commission may meet in closed session or adjourn an open session to meet in a closed session in accordance with §3-305 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

H. Ethics, Rules, Record Keeping, and Support.

(1) Ethics.

(a) Members of the Commission are subject to and shall fully comply with the Caroline County Code of Ethics, Chapter 33 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County, Maryland, as amended from time to time.

(b) No member of the Commission shall cast a vote on any matter where a conflict of interest exists.

(c) In any instance where the determination of a conflict of interest is uncertain, the Commission may request a determination of conflict of interest from the Caroline County Ethics Commission, which shall not be unreasonably delayed.

(2) Rules.

(a) A quorum shall exist when at least three (3) voting members are present at a meeting.

(b) Notwithstanding any rules of procedure and conduct for meetings adopted by the Commission, all meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*, unless they are inconsistent with the approved Rules or this Section.

(c) Each member of the Commission shall have only one (1) vote. The Chair is entitled to vote on any item unless precluded by operation of the Caroline County Code of Ethics.

(d) A tie vote on a motion means that the motion fails.

(3) Record Keeping.

(a) The custodian of all records, of any form, including, without limitation, paper, media, and electronic, of the Commission shall be the County Attorney of Caroline County.

(b) Retention. The Commission shall formulate a retention schedule for its records that is consistent with State and County Law.

(c) Production. Records and other information shall be produced as permitted and required by the Maryland Public Information Act.

(4) Support. The County Commissioners shall provide such staff support to the Compensation Review Commission as may be necessary to accomplish its purpose. The Commission shall be provided meeting facilities and pre-approved expense reimbursement as the County Commissioners or the County Administrator may deem necessary to accomplish the Commission's purposes.

SECTION 3. The Recitals to this Bill are incorporated herein and deemed to be a substantive part of this Bill.

SECTION 4. The provisions of this Bill are declared to be severable. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Bill is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, the same shall be deemed separate, distinct, and independent from, and such holding shall not affect the validity of, the remaining portions of this Bill, it being the intent of the County

that this Bill shall stand, notwithstanding the invalidity of any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion hereof.

SECTION 5. The Publishers of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County, Maryland (the “Code”), the Caroline County Office of Law, or the Caroline County Department of Planning and Codes, in consultation with and subject to the approval of the County Administrator, shall be authorized to make non-substantive corrections to codification, style, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, spelling, organization, and any internal or external reference or citations to the County Code or the State Code that is incorrect or obsolete, with no further action required by the County Commissioners. All such corrections shall be adequately referenced and described in the editor's note following the section affected.

SECTION 6. The title and summary of this Bill shall be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation in Caroline County three times, at weekly intervals, and within the 4-week period after passage of the Bill, in accordance with §9-311 (i) of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The title of this Bill, or a condensed version thereof, shall be deemed to be, and is, a fair summary of this Bill for publication and all other purposes. The title is not a substantive part of this Bill for publication and all other purposes. If the Bill is amended, the title may be administratively revised to conform to the content of the Bill as finally enacted.

SECTION 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that when this ordinance takes effect, it shall be retroactive and applicable, to the maximum extent permitted by law and subject to the severability clause above.

ENACTED THIS ____ DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2025.

[Signatures on next page]

ATTEST:

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Jennifer F. Reibly
Public Information Officer

J. Travis Breeding, President

(SEAL)

Larry C. Porter, Vice-President

N. Franklin Bartz III, Member

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Stewart Barroll
County Attorney