

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

**Minutes**  
**January 24, 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 Convened, Invocation by Rev. Doug Morley – Greater Impact Church Greensboro

*Commissioner Breeding read the following reporting out statement, “On January 17<sup>th</sup>, the County Commissioners held a closed session under Section 9, General Provisions Art . 3-305(b): To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to negotiations. The Commissioners instructed the County Administrator to schedule a meeting with the solar company to discuss their projects details. Commissioners Breeding, Porter and Bartz were in attendance as well as the County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman, County Attorney, Stewart Barroll, Director of Finance, Daniel Fox, and the Executive Assistant, Kaleigh Leager.”*

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development and Tourism, Beth Brewster, Supervisor of Food Services, Caroline County Public Schools and Mike Thielke, Executive Director of Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center - Local Food Aggregation Grant & Project Discussion:** Ms. Bowden introduced Ms. Beth Brewster, Mr. Mike Thielke, and Mr. Scott Warner. The Commissioners, Ms. Bowden, Ms. Brewster, Mr. Thielke and Mr. Warner discussed the intricate details of this proposed project and its multiple funding sources. Mr. Thielke stated he has raised \$2.3M out of the \$2.7M needed for the food aggregation project. Mr. Thielke explained the need for a local food to be consumed and utilized locally and around the Mid Atlantic area. There is a need for food in our schools, hospitals, prisons, etc. Mr. Thielke then explained to the Commissioners that he is looking for a donation of land at the Ridgley Tech Park from the County for this project. The Commissioners requested more information from Ms. Brewster and Mr. Thielke.

**Tara Hill-Coursey, Tourism & Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development Introduction Tourism and Economic Development - Data USDA Grant Discussion:** Ms. Hill-Coursey introduced the grant to the Commissioners about retaining information from businesses within the County. Commissioner Porter made a motion to apply for the grant. Commissioner Bartz seconded the motion. All three Commissioners unanimously voted to apply for the grant.

**Jamie Beechey, Director of Recreation and Parks & Ms. KJ Marvel, EMS Chief -**

**Automated External Defibrillator in County Parks Discussion:** Ms. Beechey and Ms. Marvel introduced the information to the Commissioners about the SaveStations. This will be funded by ADA's donations through the American Legion via a grant and memorandum of understanding. Commissioner Porter and Bartz agreed that this money very well spent to save lives. Commissioner Porter made a motion to allocate \$65,000 from the County's Capital Contingency to get this project up and running. Commissioner Bartz seconded the motion. All three Commissioners voted unanimously to allocate \$65,000 from the Capital Contingency to this project.

**Sherry Bratton, Director of Human Resources - Departmental Update:** Ms. Bratton provided the Commissioners with an update of the Department of Human Resources. Ms. Bratton's presentation included the responsibilities of the department and the employees. Commissioner Porter asked about Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS). Ms. Bratton and the Commissioners discussed the specifics of the program. Commissioner Porter asked about how they go about provided raises for the Commissioners. Ms. Leager stated that it requires State Legislation to do so, and it will not go into effect until the next board (not during this term). The Commissioners continued asking Ms. Bratton workforce related questions.

**Ryan White, Director of Public Works - Departmental Update:** Mr. White presented an update to the Commissioners on the Department of Public Works. Mr. White stated he hopes that the new Board will continue to support the department in funding to continue to make better and "longer lasting fixes". Mr. White provided the Commissioners with the statistics of each department within the Department of Public Works. The Commissioners asked Mr. White about pending projects within the County and their status.

**Kaleigh Leager, Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners - 2023 Maryland State Legislative Session Update:** Ms. Leager stated that herself, Mr. Goldman, Ms. Bowden, Warden Scott, Ms. Freeman, and Mr. Sheridan are involved in a County Legislative Review Committee where Ms. Leager identifies legislation that has the potential to impact the County. Once the legislation is identified, the committee reviews the bills and collectively decides if the legislation should be brought to the Commissioners for their comment and/or feedback. Ms. Leager then presented an update on the legislation that the committee identified as needing commissioner feedback.

**Consent Agenda: All three Commissioners unanimously voted to approve the consent agenda.**

- Minutes – December 20, 2022 - Open & January 10, 2023 – Closed
- [Purchase Order #2023-256 & Contract – Caroline County Circuit Courthouse Carpentry and Woodwork Renovation – Bloomes Contracting, Inc. - \\$43,110.00](#)
- [Purchase Order #2023-259 & Contract – Caroline County Propane Gas Vendor – Aero Energy - \\$73,458.45](#)
- [Caroline County Investment Management Agreement](#)

**Action Items: Ms. Freeman explained what this is. County has annual line item of \$20,000**

**since 2019. Prior the County counted on ag excise tax. In 2018, legislation changed Caroline to an impact fee county. Commissioner Bartz made a motion to approve, Commissioner Porter seconded the motion. All three Commissioners unanimously voted to approve the consent agenda.**

- [Department of Planning & Codes – Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund \(MALPF\) FY 24/23 Local Matching Funds Program Commitment of Funds - \\$210,536.85](#)

**County Administrators Report – Jeremy Goldman:** Mr. Goldman stated that he and Mr. White met with the contractor yesterday to discuss the Detention Center’s rehabilitation project. Mr. Goldman stated that the Courthouse rehabilitation has been delayed due to the lack of HVAC supplies. The Commissioners gave Mr. Goldman approval to order a dais for the hearing room in the Courthouse.

Mr. Goldman mentioned that the State will not be funding their piece (MTA) of funding to Delmarva Community Transit (DCT). Mr. Goldman suggested writing a letter to Sec. Ports asking why MTA is not funding DCT. Mr. Goldman mentioned the possible rehabilitation of the DCT building. For clarification, Mr. Goldman stated that DCT does not have rights to the building. In addition, the State cannot find the attachments from the original grant agreement between the US Department of Transportation, the Maryland State Department of Transportation and Caroline County.


Mr. Goldman discussed a conversation he had with the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) and Commissioner Porter regarding the landfill during Winter MACo. MES is going to build a formal proposal and present options to the Commissioners. Mr. Goldman stated that this does not negate Queen Anne’s County’s responsibility, but this would extend life of our landfill here in Caroline. Commissioner Porter stated he wants to hear from the property owners around the landfill before this proceeds.

**County Commissioners Open Discussion:** Commissioner Bartz stated that Mr. Hignutt wanted to de-annex his land back into the County. Mr. Goldman suggested a letter of support from the County to accept the land back into the County. Commissioner Porter made a motion to have write a letter of support. Commissioner Bartz seconded the motion. All three Commissioners unanimously voted to send a letter of support. Commissioner Bartz stated that he had a conversation with Upper Shore Aging (USA). USA stated that Caroline has been left out in the previous years and they want to make better strides towards better service for Caroline County. Commissioner Breeding stated that he had a great time at Ridgley VFC event. Commissioner Breeding also stated the Commissioners received an email from Worcester County requesting a letter of support to increase the possible taxing amount for hotels from 5% to 6%. This is a MAY not a SHALL. Ms. Leager stated Worcester County was looking for us to request to be including on this legislation as it requires all Home Code Rule Counties on the Eastern Shore to be in favor of this change. The Commissioners were okay with Caroline County being added to this legislation.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

Commissioner Bartz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Porter seconded. All three Commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 2:28 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