

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

Minutes
February 8, 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 Reverend Don Reynolds.

There was no public comment.

Reporting Out Statement from the 2/1/22 Closed Session: “On February 1st, the Commissioners held a Closed Session to obtain legal advice from the County Attorney. Commissioners Porter, Franklin and Levensgood as well as County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman and County Attorney Stewart Barroll, County Paralegal Mary Berneski and Executive Assistant Kaleigh Leager were in attendance. Under Authority of the General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b): (7)”

Daniel Fox, Director of Finance – ARPA Discussion: Caroline County received just shy of \$6,500,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. The County is tasked with allocating those funds by 2024 and spending those funds by 2026. Currently, the Commissioners have agreed to allocate \$1.5 million of the ARPA funding towards the Detention Center project which is estimated to cost close to \$7 million. Economic Development Enhancement has been allocated \$500,000. The Choptank Health Federalsburg Center has been allocated to receive \$750,000. The Choptank & Comcast Broadband Assistance projects are currently allocated is \$2.2 million. The Double Hills/EOC Training Center currently has \$1 million allocated to the project. The Commissioners agreed to allocate \$500,000 to the construction of the Judy Center. Commissioner Franklin once again stressed the importance of securing total funding before groundbreaking begins. Mr. Fox states that the ARPA funding requires all the projects have the funding allocated by 2024 and the funds must be spent by 2026. From the original \$6.5 million allocated to the County, there is \$38,724.00 remaining unallocated funds. Commissioner Franklin suggested that the left-over funds go towards the new EMS building if needed, and if not, give the remaining balance towards the Detention Center.

Katheleen Freeman, Director of Planning & Codes – Code Change Discussion: Ms. Freeman stated that there is a proposed code change from the Planning Commission. Currently there is a 7-member Planning Commission Board. This amendment changes the board to 5 members, requiring the members to reside in the County but outside of an incorporated municipality. The Commissioners requested that Ms. Freeman come back with a finalized version for approval during a Commissioner’s meeting.

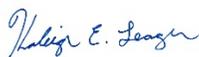
Tara Hill-Coursey, Director of Tourism – Merger Discussion: Ms. Hill-Coursey stated that the County Commissioners requested a letter from the Tourism Board requesting for the Office of Tourism to become a county entity, for the purpose of confirming the intent of the request. The letter is requesting that the Office of Tourism become a County entity under the Department of Economic Development, with the current Tourism Board transitioning into an advisory board as of July of 2022. Commissioner Levensgood stated that he didn't have any negative thoughts on the proposal. Commissioner Franklin stated he isn't against it on principle and theory, but his biggest concern is fiscal impact on the County. Ms. Bowden (Director of Economic Development) stated that her very rough estimate would be an additional \$10,000 cost to the County. Currently, the County provides \$87,842 to the Office of Tourism. Commissioner Porter requested that the Office of Finance sit down with the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Human Resources to establish an accurate fiscal impact on the County.

Beth Brewster Caroline County Public Schools and Culinary Center & Scott Warner, Mid-Shore Regional Council – Grant Discussion: The Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) has a grant available for a produce processing project. MSRC suggested applying for \$350,000. Ms. Brewster stated that Caroline County serves a lot of local food in our schools that benefits the farmers as well. This grant provides the funds with no cost to the County. This is a State funded reimbursement grant with a 10% match coming from the USDA. The County would be the entity applying for the grant as non-profits cannot apply, in addition to managing the grant and dispersing the reimbursements. If the grant is awarded, the funds must be spent in 9. The Commissioners agreed to have the County apply for the grant.

County Commissioners Open Discussion: There was no open discussion.

There was no public comment.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.



Kaleigh Leager
Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners