

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

Minutes
February 11, 2020

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Daniel J. Franklin; Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.; Jeremy Goldman, County Administrator; Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff; and Jennifer Farina, Administrative Coordinator

Following the invocation President Porter called for **Public Comment** and Mr. Gorleski approached the podium: Mr. Richard Gorleski, Log Cabin Road, Denton, stated that he would like to bring to attention that he has been in contact with the Maryland Department of Transportation since 2017 when the special use exception application for a mining operation near his home began. He stated that the State never did a study the safety of the road, however, they have said they will now look at hiring someone to potentially conduct such a study. Mr. Gorleski also brought up an article about poultry industry and waste management and slurry holding tanks. He suggested the County consider regulations on the issue. Staff stated that they would direct that concern to the Planning and Codes Department to follow up further.

Discussion of Small Business Loan Application & County Loan Review Committee

Recommendation: Debbie Bowden, Director, Caroline County Economic Development, presented the Commissioners with a memo regarding a request for a small business loan to Choptank Cleaning Services & Property Maintenance LLC. She stated that the request is for a total of \$17,320.00 for a 36-month period to allow for them to purchase and make repairs to the property they are currently using as their headquarters.

Ms. Bowden explained that the Caroline County Economic Development Advisory Board has recommended the loan as well as the Caroline County Office of Tax. She stated that if the Commissioners are on board to move forward the next step would be to draft a legally sufficient loan agreement for their approval. The Commissioners directed staff to prepare the documents.

Workshop of Draft Early Return to Work Policy: Sherry Bratton, Director, Office of Human Resources, presented the Commissioners with the most current draft of the County's Early Return to Work Policy. She stated the Employee Advisory Board is in favor of this policy and that staff have made the modifications requested by the Commissioners previously. She stated that Human Resources will work with the department head and employee to see what the best opportunity for that employee will be as they come back to work. She stated that employees could end up working in a different department but that would only be a last resort if an assignment in their home department cannot be found.

The Commissioner's asked if employees could object to their placement and she stated that the employee can document on the form their concerns and staff would then make sure the work assignment and department assigned was deemed suitable. Ms. Bratton stated that staff will always work with employees to put take their needs into account when it comes to placement.

The Commissioners directed staff to put the policy into final form and schedule it for approval at an upcoming meeting.

2020 Legislative Update: Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff, stated that this week the Kirwan Bill was officially dropped. She stated that the Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore bill was filled for Choptank Electric Cooperative. She explained that there is draft written testimony for the Senate hearing next week on support of that bill, which the Commissioners reviewed and approved. Ms. Visintainer stated that she would submit the testimony and see what the plan is on the actual bill hearing date to see if anyone needs to be there to testify in person. She explained that this is a heavy ask because it changes the way in which the electric cooperative is regulated. The Maryland Association of Counties also voted to support the bill and will be submitting testimony. The bill is sponsored by the Eastern Shore Delegation with Senator Hershey as lead sponsor in the Senate and Delegate Sample-Hughes as lead sponsor in the House. Ms. Visintainer provided copies of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan) bill and stated that everyone is still processing the lengthy bill and the hearing is next Monday. She emphasized the complexity of the bill and how every county is effected differently financially. Ms. Visintainer stated she would continue to communicate with the Commissioners over the coming days to craft the County's testimony.

Consent Agenda: the following items were approved by unanimous consent

- Minutes: January 28, 2020 Open Session and Closed Session
- Resolution #2020-003, Acceptance of Spiering Drive, North Quail Court and South Quail Court into Caroline County Road System
- Third Quarter Contingency Expenditures, \$3,121.75
- P.O #2020-0324 and Accompanying Contract, Tri Gas & Oil, Propane Gas, \$58,549.34
- Transfer from Capital Improvement Fund – Bond Proceeds to General Fund, Expenses for Greensboro Elementary School Project, \$2,137,380.39
- P.O #2020-0335 Annual Food Service Agreement with Trinity Food Services and Caroline County Detention Center

County Administrators Report:

- Mr. Goldman stated that Ann Sierra has been appointed by the Governor to be on the 911 Board for the State. He stated that this is a big deal for Caroline County because it keeps us a part of all major decisions that come from the State. Bryan Ebling, the former director, was on this board for about 30 years.
- He stated that he will be out of the office for a period, however he will be answering emails.

County Commissioners Open Discussion Period:

Commissioner Levensgood stated that he has been attending several meetings including the Tobacco Enforcement Meeting as well as the Rural Maryland Council meetings. He stated that he has enjoyed attending several of the volunteer fire company banquets over the past couple of weeks.

Commissioner Franklin stated that he and Commissioner Porter attended the 20th Anniversary of the Federalsburg Judy Center. He stated that at the Queen Anne-Hillsboro VFC Banquet it was announced that a portion of Route 404 would be dedicated in memory of Daniel Lister, a member who died on a call last year.

Commissioner Porter called for **public comment** and Jesses Ferguson approached the podium: Mr. Ferguson stated that he is a member of the Marshy Hope Rod and Gun Club. He stated that he has attended several meetings in Annapolis to stay informed on what the State of Maryland is doing regarding 2nd Amendment rights. He stated that he would like to know what stance Caroline County has on the legislation passing regarding that issue.

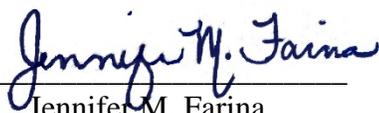
Commissioner Porter explained that the 2013 Board of Commissioners passed a resolution stating that Caroline County did not support laws that would infringe on the resident's constitutional right to keep and bear arms. He stated that currently, the Board has not looked at updating or modifying the existing resolution but will communicate with the County's state delegation regarding bills currently before the General Assembly.

At 6:45 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Levensgood, seconded by Commissioner Franklin, the Commissioners unanimously voted to convene in **Closed Session** for the Discussion of legal Advice Regarding a County Loan. Authority: 2014 Md. Code, State Government §3-305(b)(7).

At 7:24 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioners Levensgood, the Commissioners unanimously voted to adjourned Closed Session and reconvene in Open Session.

President's Report: President Porter stated that the Commissioners received legal advice from the County attorney regarding a small business loan that is significantly behind on payments. The Commissioners provided direction regarding how to proceed.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



Jennifer M. Farina
Administrative Coordinator