

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY
Preston Volunteer Fire Company Hall, 3860 Choptank Road, Preston, Maryland

MINUTES
March 12, 2019

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

Invocation by Reverend Buddy Dunn; **Pledge of Allegiance.** The agenda was accepted as presented.

FY2020 Budget Hearing:

The first Fiscal Year 2019-2020 public hearing to receive testimony regarding the Caroline County Government budget requests **convened** at 6:00 p.m.

President Larry Porter introduced the Commissioners and staff and stated that the purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony related to budget requests received for Fiscal Year 2020. He stated that the notice of public hearing was published in the Star Democrat newspaper and on the County website.

The following is a summary of testimony received:

Dr. Cliff Coppersmith, Chesapeake College: Dr. Coppersmith thanked the Commissioners for working with him and the staff of Chesapeake College on his first budget hearing at the President. He stated that Chesapeake College values the support from Caroline County.

Cody Rzucidlo, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 118: Mr. Rzucidlo stated that he hopes the Caroline County Commissioners will support the pay proposal that has been presented to them by the Caroline County Sheriff. He stated that retention is a serious issue in the CCSO and in the last 14 months the office has lost 5 deputies. Mr. Rzucidlo thanked the Commissioners for their time and support.

Don Reed, Chair of Caroline County Employee Advisory Board: Mr. Reed stated that the Employee Advisory Board would like to thank the Commissioners for considering an across the board pay increase, as well as supporting the retirees of the County.

Linda Fletcher, Preston Resident: Ms. Fletcher thanked the Caroline County Commissioner's for all they do to support the towns and County as a whole.

Kevin Rieckart, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board: Mr. Rieckart stated that as a member of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board he would like to thank the Commissioners for support the North County Park walking trail, as well as upcoming projects around the county. Mr. Rieckart stated that Recreation and Parks is a valuable asset to the community as it helps support the growth and safety of children in Caroline County.

Sue Simmons, Recreation and Parks: Ms. Simmons stated that she is representing as the Director of Recreation and Parks, to explain the important of her departments proposed increase. She stated that due to a loss and possible decrease of grants funds, Recreation and Parks may not be able to fund important and extremely valuable programs such as the Summer Learning programs in three elementary schools. Ms. Simmons stated that she hopes grant funding will shift in upcoming years, however if not, the Department will adjust their service delivery model.

Milton Nagel, Caroline County Public Schools: Mr. Nagel stated that he would like to thank the Commissioners on behalf of the Board of Education, for their support on construction of the new elementary school in Greensboro. He also stated that he believes funding for the Department of Recreation and Parks should be crucial to the Commissioners, due to its importance in the community and the children of Caroline County.

Marina Dowdall, Caroline County Council of the Arts: Ms. Dowdall thanked the Commissioners for their long-standing support of the Arts Council. She stated that the Commissioners annual \$5,000 leverages over \$100,000 the Council is able to receive from the State of Maryland. Ms. Dowdall thanked the Commissioners again, and announced that after 15 years, she would be retiring. Ms. Dowdall stated that Jennifer Hodge would be taking her place, and that she looks forward to the future of the Caroline County Arts Council.

Susan Runnels, Local Management Board: Ms. Runnels stated that she is testifying on behalf of the Caroline County Local Management Board. She stated that a majority of the LMB's funds are given by the State of Maryland through grant programs, however each year the amount is decreased due to State cuts. Ms. Runnels stated that she has requested a budget increase to allow for additional staff in her office to work on grant writing.

Debby Bennet, Caroline County Public Library: Ms. Bennet stated that she has requested an increase in her budget to allow for an across the board pay increase to retain her amazing staff. She also stated that she thanks the Commissioners for their contained support of the library and all the programs they fund especially Imagination Library which allows for every child under the age of five in Caroline County to receive a book to read each month.

Randy Bounds, Caroline County Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Bounds, thanked the Commissioners for their continued support each year of the CCSO. Sheriff Bounds stated that he hopes the Commissioners consider the payscale that the CCSO prepared for them. He stated that public safety has always been his top priority, however retention has become a major issue within his Department. Sheriff Bounds also thanked the Commissioners for adding more School Resources Officers in the County budget, as well as allow the new Caroline County Sheriff's Office project to be fully finalized.

President Porter asked if there was anyone else from the audience that would like to speak. He then stated that he would allow this time to seek comments from his fellow commissioners

Commissioner Levensgood thanked everyone who attended and testified to support the needs of the community. He stated that although the Commissioners can not give increase to every department in need, he feels the importance of public safety and the children of Caroline County remain the top priority of the budget.

Commissioner Franklin stated it is unfortunate the County does not have unlimited revenues in order to support all internal and external requests. He went on to state how much he appreciates how each department can work together to collaborate on the budget and is grateful for the strong working relationship the County has with its outside and internal departments. Mr. Franklin stated that this year would mark his 5th budget to balance, with revenues continuing to increase a little each year.

Commissioner Porter stated that this was his 9th budget. He stated that he would like to acknowledge the amazing relationship the County has continued to have with agencies such as the Board of Education and the Caroline County Sheriff's Office. Mr. Porter explained that each requested is looked over by the Board and all are considered important.

The Commissioners took a brief recess.

ANNUAL MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX DIFFERENTIAL MEETING

At 7:50 p.m. the Commissioners convened the annual Municipal Property Tax Differential meeting with representatives from Preston, Ridgely, Denton, Greensboro, and Federalsburg present

Cathie Moore, Comptroller, opened the discussion and stated that in the State of Maryland, counties are either required to or may grant tax differential rates on property taxes. She stated Caroline is a “may” county and that the County had provided a differential for many years, with the current formula based on police protection. The five smallest towns Hillsboro, Goldsboro, Henderson, Templeville, and Marydel do not receive a differential because it is based on police protection, and they do not provide that service. Ms. Moore also noted that under the formula, as the Commissioners increase the number of deputies, it raises the County’s level of service, which results in a greater differential, or tax break, for town residents. She stated that this current fiscal year the Commissioner voted to keep the differential the same as FY19, which would allow the tax payers to receive the same funds as the year prior.

| Town | Property Tax Rate Discount |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| Denton | \$0.08 |
| Federalsburg | \$0.12 |
| Greensboro | \$0.07 |
| Preston | \$0.01 |

Commissioner Porter stated that the Commissioner have been considering utilizing funds from the differential to fund School Resources Officers (SRO’s) in the elementary schools. He asked each of the town representatives to comment. The consensus was in support of more SROs, but the Town officials also believe the differential is necessary and justified, and asked the Commissioners not to fund the expansion entirely from the differential.

The Commissioners took a brief recess.

REGULAR COMMISSIONERS MEETING

On motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levengood, the Commissioners unanimously adjourned into **Legislative Session for the Public Hearing and Possible Enactment of Legislative Bill #2019-1, General Obligation Debt Authorization for Detention Center Pump Station Improvements**: Ms. Visintainer stated that Legislative Bill #2019-1 is a bill authorizing general obligations indebtedness to finance, reimburse or refinance costs of the project referred to as the Detention Center Pump Station Improvements and related costs.

Commissioner Porter stated that no testimony was received, and no one signed up for the public hearing. On motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levengood, the Commissioners voted to enact Legislative Bill #2019-1, General Obligation Debt Authorization for Detention Center Pump Station Improvements. The bill will take effect 45 days after enactment.

Consent Agenda: all items were approved by unanimous consent

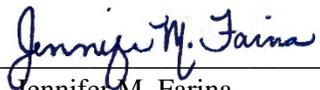
- Minutes of the February 12, 2019 Commissioners Meeting and February 5, 2019 and February 19, 2019 Work Session

- Resolution #2019-006 Amendment to Caroline County Personnel Rules and Regulations, Class Specifications for Caroline County Department of Recreation and Parks, Public Works, Corrections and the Office of Human Resources
- P.O #2019-407 and Accompanying Contract to Fresh Air Concepts, LLC for the Department of Corrections heating a cooling system, total Amount \$50,221.00
- Professional Service Agreement to Provident State Bank for Caroline County Banking Services
- Appointment to the Board of Social Services (Jackson, Spiering)

County Administrator's Report:

- Mr. Goldman stated that the survey would be finalized for Tuckahoe Road next week with a solution to follow on the drainage issue.
- He stated that they are looking into inspection contracts for the Sheriff's Office which would be completed soon.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



Jennifer M. Farina
Administrative Coordinator