

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

Minutes
May 9, 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 Convenes, Invocation by Pastor Dan Gedman – St. Lukes Methodist Church Denton

Commissioner Breeding read the following reporting out statement, “During the May 2nd Commissioners Meeting, the Commissioners held a closed session “to discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct.” Under Section (12) of General Provisions Art. 3-305(b). Commissioners Breeding, Porter and Bartz were in attendance as well as Sheriff Donnie Baker, States Attorney Sloan Franklin, Captain James Henning, County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman, County Attorney, Stewart Barroll, Paralegal Mary Berneski, and Executive Assistant, Kaleigh Leager. No actions were taken.”

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month Proclamation – Sponsored by Commissioner Porter) – Kenneth Eaton, Executive Director of Mid-Shore Chapters, ABATE of Maryland, Inc.:

Commissioner Porter read the proclamation, proclaiming May as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month.

Economic Development Advisory Board Recognition (Sponsored by Commissioner Bartz) – Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development and Tourism:

Ms. Bowden introduced Mr. Yeatman and members of the Economic Development Advisory Board. Ridgley Town Commissioner, Anthony Casey stated that Mr. Yeatman has been a great asset to the Board. Mr. Fred Hubbard stated that during Mr. Yeatman’s time on the board, he was able to share important information that was helpful to all.

Economic Development Advisory Board Discussion - Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development and Tourism:

Ms. Bowden requested direction from the Board of Commissioners on how to handle the Advisory Board. Ms. Bowden stated she provided the list of current members in addition to a few options for possible appointments to the board. The Commissioners have no advice or requests for change.

Tech Park Update and Legal Review Discussion - Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development and Tourism:

Ms. Bowden stated that she has had an extremely difficult time

receiving any information from the State or from the Federal Government regarding their stake in the Tech Park. Ms. Bowden stated that she must submit a FOIA request from the Federal Economic Development Office to get a copy of our own documents, as there is no response to her formal requests. Ms. Bowden stated she is trying to get as much information as possible but is not exactly sure what it is missing. Commissioner Porter requested to discuss the Farm-to-Freezer project and the relation to the Tech Park. Commissioner Porter suggested an engineering snapshot of the tech park in partnership with the Town of Ridgley. Mr. Goldman suggested putting the farm-to-freezer project on a timeline so we can reallocate funds if the project isn't going to be in Caroline County or at the Tech Park. Commissioner Breeding suggested that if the farm-to-freezer project isn't coming to the County, that we reallocate the MRDC funding for a backup generator and rehabilitation to the park to bring it up to the current required standards.

Leave Time Chapter Proposed Edits Discussion – Sherry Bratton, Director of Human

Resources: Ms. Bratton presented the proposed leave changes identified by the Employee Advisory Board and the Department Heads. The Commissioners requested that this be brought back later for consideration of approval.

Class Specifications Update Discussion – Sherry Bratton, Director of Human Resources:

Ms. Bratton discussed the changes to the previous employee relations specialist to payroll specialist and the changes to that position to shift it's to focus to payroll related operations only. The Commissioners requested this be placed on the next meeting's Consent Agenda.

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

- Minutes – April 11, 2023, April 18, 2023 & April 25, 2023 – Open & Closed
- Caroline County Department of Public Works - [Purchase Order #2023-460](#) & [Contract – Top Notch Lawncare & Landscaping - \\$51, 470](#)
- Caroline County Department of Corrections - [FY2024 Agreement with MidShore Behavioral Health - \\$68, 740](#)
- Caroline County Department of Information Technology – [Purchase Order #2023-466](#) & Contract – SHI International Corp. - \$45,706

County Administrators Report – Jeremy Goldman:

Mr. Goldman stated that an email was sent to Queen Anne's County from Whiting & Turner regarding the cost estimates for their detention center. Mr. Goldman stated that the County must appoint a commissioner to the previously discussed Task Force to represent Caroline in addition to himself. Mr. Goldman discussed some examples of the benefits of doing a regional detention center. Commissioner Breeding was suggested to serve as the County Ex-Officio member of the Task Force by Commissioner Porter. Commissioner Bartz agreed. Commissioner Breeding will serve as the Elected Official representing Caroline County on the Regional Detention Center Task Force. In addition, Mr. Goldman stated that Maryland Environmental Service (MES) is going to rerun their numbers and have an outside agency verify their figures for the possible extension of the current regional landfill. Mr. Goldman stated he spoke to MES about the dirt from the shooting range to be used as cover at the site on Hobbs Road. Mr. Barroll stated he has been working with Mr. Rice regarding the multiple attempts made by MD7 "representing" Verizon Wireless to

renegotiate and reduce the rent on the tower located by Colonel Richardson Highschool. Per Mr. Barroll, MD7 is a 3rd party group. After several attempts, Mr. Barroll stated he cannot reach a Verizon in-house attorney. Mr. Barroll believes that MD7 receives a finder's fee for reducing rent and "negotiating" with landowners. The Commissioners are not interested in pursuing a rent reduction.

County Commissioners Open Discussion: Commissioner Breeding stated that the Commissioners received a letter from Ms. Bodner to put a blinking light at the intersection of Holly Road and Central Avenue. Ms. Bodner is a school bus driver with the County, that has been involved in a few accidents at that specific location and is requesting that the flashing stop sign be installed. Mr. White stated that the blinking stop lights are \$6,000 for instillation. The Commissioners approved the instillation of a blinking sign. Mr. White stated that it takes around 2 months for instillation. Commissioner Breeding stated that speaking of Central Avenue, there needs to be discussion regarding if the County should tar and chip or pave. Mr. White estimated that the cost is around \$350,000 for tar and chip and \$1.2M for paving (which should last 20 years). Commissioner Porter asked to see the numbers and the projected work that this is going to eliminate. Commissioner Breeding stated he was contacted by someone who was at the intersection light of 404 and River Road. Apparently, there were two tractor-trailers that ran the red lights there. The constituent is requesting red light cameras at that location to help reduce the number of potential accidents. Mr. White stated he will speak to Mr. Fender with the State Highway Administration. Commissioner Breeding stated that the Commissioners received a letter from the Talbot County Council, in support of the landfill extension in Caroline County. Commissioners received a letter from the Ridgely VFC informing them of their appointments. Commissioner Breeding stated that tomorrow night he has a Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Porter stated the Commissioners attended the Benedictine Gala which was a very nice event. Commissioner Porter stated he strongly suggests hiring a lobbyist to have better representation for the County because our current elected officials are not producing results on behalf of Caroline County. Commissioner Bartz asked if grass cutting in the County has begun Mr. White stated it has begun and is scheduled to increase.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.



Kaleigh Leager
Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners