

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

Minutes
May 12, 2020

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Daniel J. Franklin; Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.; via conference call.

The meeting began at 9:00 AM via conference call.

Commissioner Porter introduced himself as well as staff. He gave an overview of how the Budget hearing would occur via conference call.

Hearing # 1 – Proposed FY2021 Operating and Capital Budgets

Budget Overview, Daniel Fox, Office of Finance: Mr. Fox gave a brief presentation on the overall Operating and Capital FY2021 proposed budgets and process. Mr. Fox explained that both internal and external agencies play a role in finalizing the budget. He noted that Employees will be receiving a pay raise of 3% or \$2000, whichever is higher, while maintaining benefits at no additional cost to the employee.

Chief of Staff, Sara Visintainer read into the record a summary of written comments that have been received to date:

- Susan Runnels, Caroline Human Services Council: Thanked the County Commissioners for the funding provided for the Human Services Council in the proposed budget. She stated she appreciated their support for the Local Management Board as it faces uncertainty related to its State funding.
- John Welzel, Laurel Grove Road, Preston: Requested that the Commissioners consider converting Laurel Grove Road from dirt to tar and chip. He stated there are approximately 10 houses on a mile-long section and noted the amount of maintenance a dirt road requires.

Commissioner Porter suspended the hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Operating and Capital Budgets. He advised that the hearing will be held open for 7 days to allow for public comment which will become part of the hearing record.

Hearing #2 – Constant Yield Property Tax Rate Hearing

Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff, read into record the proposed tax rates for FY2021. She stated that there is no proposed increase in the property tax rate this year for Caroline County residents. She advised that there has been no public comment received to date. Motion was made by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood, to set the FY2021 tax rates on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. during the Virtual Commissioners Meeting.

Commissioner Porter suspended the hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Constant Yield Property Tax Rates. He advised that the hearing will be held open for 7 days to allow for public comment which will become part of the hearing record.

Hearing #3 – Municipal Real Property Tax Differential Rates

Chief of Staff, Sara Visintainer, read into record the proposed tax differential for each municipality. She advised that there has been no public comment received to date.

Commissioner Porter suspended the hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Municipal Real Property Tax Differential Rates. He advised that the hearing will be held open for 7 days to allow for public comment which will become part of the hearing record.

Hearing #4 – Proposed Local 911 Fee Increase

Anna Sierra, Director, Department of Emergency Services presented the Commissioners with an overview of changes to State Law regarding 911 fees and the proposed local rate increase. Chief of Staff, Sara Visintainer, advised that no public comment has been received to date.

Commissioner Porter suspended the hearing on the Proposed Local 911 Fee Increase. He advised that the hearing will be held open for 7 days to allow for public comment which will become part of the hearing record.

The Commissioners commended Staff on their ability to complete the budget during the current circumstances.

Situation Report and EOC Response Update Regarding COVID-19:

Caroline County Health Department Update: Scott LeRoy, Health Officer, briefed the Commissioners on updates regarding COVID-19. He stated that the Regional Testing Site has tested a total of 916 people, with 126 of those being from Caroline County. There are approximately 150 positive test results in Caroline County. 70 of those have recovered, 73 of those are at their homes recovering and a 4 have been hospitalized. He stated that everyone that participated in the Point of Testing site in Federalsburg has been notified of their results and the nursing staff is working on contact tracing for those that were positive. The Health Department is continuing to reach out to the Business Community to answer questions and ensure compliance with the State orders.

Department of Emergency Services & Emergency Operations Center: Anna Sierra, Director of Emergency Services, gave a brief update on the operations of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Unified Command. She advised that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) was on-site for a few days to assist with contact tracing and helping to better understand the data that we have been receiving. The EOC is focusing on North County and coming up with a plan to how to address the needs of the residents. They are continuing to develop a recovery and demobilization plan for the EOC.

Caroline County Public Schools Update: Dr. Patty Saelens, Superintendent of Schools, advised that they are working on a plan to close out the classrooms and buildings for the school year. She stated that the Maryland State Department of Education has posted a very comprehensive recovery plan on their website that include several different models for a fall school opening. The Food program is continuing. They will switch over to the Summer Food Program on 7/1/2020. They will continue to feed the senior citizens and if that program ceases to exist, they will notify all of the participants well in advance.

Consent Agenda: The following items were approved by unanimous consent:

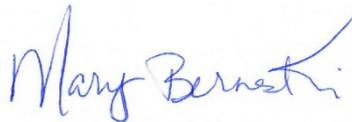
- Open and Closed Session minutes of the May 5, 2020 County Commissioners Meeting.
- Letter of Support, Federal Highway Administration, All American Road
- Employment Agreement, Bradley Killian, Department of Emergency Services

County Administrators Report: Mr. Goldman advised that Sheriff's Department project continues to run on-time and on budget. The grinder pump project at the Department of Corrections is complete and operational.

Open Discussion Period:

Commissioner Franklin requested clarification on the status of hazard pay when the County moves to Level II Operations. Mr. Goldman confirmed that Hazard pay would cease at Level II.

Meeting Adjourned 10:18 AM.



Mary Berneski
Paralegal