

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

**Minutes**  
**May 19, 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.

**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 1058 people, with 148 of those being from Caroline County. There are approximately 200 positive test results in Caroline County. 113 of those have recovered, 67 of those are at their homes recovering and a 5 have been hospitalized. There are positive cases in North county that are tracing back to a worksite in Kent County. He advised that they are working with local businesses to provide information about reopening.

**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 EOC is transitioning to a recovery phase. They are assessing needs for PPE. EMS call volumes continue to be low. The local Fire Departments have requested CARES funds to purchase turnout gear washers and dryers. That request will be cycled through the Finance team to determine eligibility under the CARES Act.

**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. They are also working on plan to get students all of their belongings that were left at the schools. She noted that they have been developing a recovery plan for beginning school in the fall. She also stated that they are keeping an eye on the budget.

**Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff:** Ms. Visintainer reported on the status of the Public Information Group. She advised that they are creating and executing a communication plan for future testing sites. They are developing a policy and procedure manual for distribution of public information. They are sending out messaging regarding new symptoms in children. They are also sending out messaging regarding resources for families that are experiencing food insecurity. They have met with members of the community to determine the best way to get information to target audiences. They will be posting messaging honoring EMS week as well.

**Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development:** Ms. Bowden advised that it has been a smooth transition to reopening and all businesses are abiding by recommended guidelines.

### **Closure of Proposed FY2021 Operating and Capital Budgets**

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

- Debby Bennett, Executive Director, Caroline County Public Library: Thanked the Commissioners on behalf of her staff and the Library Board of Trustees for their continued support of the library system in the operating and capital budgets. She also thanked them for their support of the Imagination Library program and for their recent letter of support for their State Library Capital Grant application.
- Bob Chapel, Ridgely area resident: Provided lengthy written testimony expressing concern that the County is overestimating several areas of revenue in light of potential impacts from COVID-19. He also expressed concern that the State government would not honor requirements for local aid in light of its own projected revenue shortfalls. Mr. Chapel expressed an opinion that serious budget cuts will be needed in the coming year and suggested the Commissioners start by cutting all departments and agencies by 10%. Finally, he advised against considering tax increases.

There being no further testimony to consider, the Commissioners closed the hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Operating and Capital Budgets. He acknowledged the citizens that submitted public comments and advised that they will become part of the hearing record.

### **Closure of Constant Yield Property Tax Rate Hearing**

Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff, advised that there has been no public comment received to date.

There being no further testimony to consider, the Commissioners closed the hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Constant Yield Property Tax Rates.

### **Closure of Municipal Real Property Tax Differential Rates**

Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff, advised that there has been no public comment received to date.

There being no further testimony to consider, the Commissioners closed the hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Municipal Real Property Tax Differential Rates.

### **Closure of Proposed Local 911 Fee Increase**

Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff, advised that there has been no public comment received to date.

There being no further testimony to consider, the Commissioners closed the hearing on the Proposed Local 911 Fee Increase.

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

**Margaret Roe, Director of Finance:** Ms. Roe gave a brief presentation on the overall Operating and Capital FY2021 proposed budgets and process. Ms. Roe explained that both internal and external agencies play a role in finalizing the budget. She 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. There were no increases in property taxes. The town Tax Differential remained at 75%. New debt is up \$800,000.00 due to the construction of Greensboro Elementary School. The County met the funding obligation to Chesapeake College. There is an increase to our contingency fund to \$500,000.00.

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

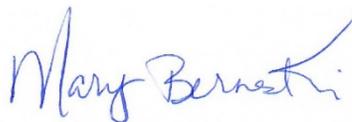
- Open Session minutes of the May 12, 2020 County Commissioners Meeting.
- P.O. #2020-448 to Talbot County Government for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment.
- Reimbursement and transfer of Bond to the Board of Education in the amount of \$ 268,262.18 for Greensboro Elementary School from the 2019 Bond.
- TGM Group LLC. Audit Firm Engagement Letter.
- Transfer of Local Housing Bond Allocation to Department of Housing and Community Development.
- CARES Act Subrecipient Funding Agreements.
  - Maryland Department of Health Standard Grant Agreement
  - Maryland Department of Budget Management Federal Funding Agreement
- Professional Services Agreement, Wright Engineering LLC.
- Professional Services Agreement, Lane Engineering.

**County Administrators Report:** Mr. Goldman stated that if the request from the Fire Departments for turnout gear washers and dryers is not eligible for CARES funding, that he would like to find a funding source for that request. He advised that Upper Shore Aging has received their CARES funding and it will support the amount that has been spent on senior feeding. An update to the cost of continued hazard pay will be completed and presented to the Commissioners soon.

**Open Discussion Period:**

Commissioner Porter stated that he was pleased about the transition to opening and that businesses are being responsible.

Meeting Adjourned 9:43 AM.



Mary Berneski  
Paralegal