

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

Minutes
August 4, 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.

Closure of Public Hearing, Emergency Legislative Bill #2020-1, Chapter 21 – Law Enforcement – Mutual Aid Agreements – Reorganization: Ms. Visintainer stated that the hearing for the bill had been advertised as required by law and held on July 21, 2020 at the Commissioners’ previous meeting. Because the hearing was closed to public attendance due to COVID-19 safety precautions and only written testimony was accepted, the Commissioners held the hearing open until August 4, 2020 to allow additional time for public input. Ms. Visintainer reported that no written comment had been received since the public hearing. Commissioner Franklin made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood. The motion passed unanimously.

Closure of Public Hearing, Emergency Legislative Bill #2020-2, Chapter 21 – Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreements – Town of Easton: Ms. Visintainer stated that the hearing for the bill had been advertised as required by law and held on July 21, 2020 at the Commissioners’ previous meeting. Because the hearing was closed to public attendance due to COVID-19 safety precautions and only written testimony was accepted, the Commissioners held the hearing open until August 4, 2020 to allow additional time for public input. Ms. Visintainer reported that no written comment had been received since the public hearing. Commissioner Franklin made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood. The motion passed unanimously.

At 9:07 a.m., on a motion by Commissioner Franklin, and seconded by Commissioner Levensgood, the Commissioners unanimously voted to convene in **Legislative Session** for the following purpose:

Enactment, Emergency Legislative Bill #2020-1, Chapter 21 – Law Enforcement – Mutual Aid Agreements – Reorganization: Ms. Visintainer read the summary of the Bill and briefly reviewed its purpose. Commissioner Franklin made a motion to enact Emergency Legislative Bill #2020-1, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood. The motion was passed unanimously. The bill takes effect immediately (August 4, 2020).

Enactment, Emergency Legislative Bill #2020-2, Chapter 21 – Law Enforcement – Mutual Aid Agreements – Town of Easton: Ms. Visintainer read the summary of the Bill and briefly reviewed its purpose. Commissioner Franklin made a motion to Emergency Legislative Bill #2020-2, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood. The motion was passed unanimously. The bill takes effect immediately (August 4, 2020).

First Reading and Introduction: Ordinance #2020-1, Chapter 175 – Zoning - Special Event

Venues: Ms. Visintainer advised that the Planning Commission recommended the proposed text amendments to Chapter 175 regarding Special Event Venues at their meeting on July 8, 2020. There have been several citizen requests for such language in the Code. The proposed language defines special event venues and establishes regulations and an approval process for such venues. On a motion by Commissioner Levengood, and seconded by Commissioner Franklin, the Commissioners unanimously introduced Ordinance #2020-1 and set the public hearing date for September 1, 2020.

On a motion by Commissioner Levengood, and seconded by Commissioner Franklin, the Commissioners voted unanimously to reconvene in **regular session** at 9:16 a.m.

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Update:

- **Roger Harrell, Interim Acting Health Officer:** Mr. Harrell advised that Caroline County has tested 145 individuals since last reported on July 21, 2020. He advised that approximately 16.5% of the population of Caroline County has been tested for COVID-19, with a 7-day positivity rate of 2.5%. He advised that the Health Department is enforcing face mask requirements as well as social distancing requirements in local businesses on a complaint basis only.
- **Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development:** Ms. Bowden advised that round two of the Small Business Recovery Grant program is closed. During this round, we received 62 applications. We received a total of 134 applications during both rounds and provided \$967,000.00 in funding to local small businesses. The Economic Development team has reached out to local businesses to gather information regarding their operations during the pandemic. The Economic Development will continue to gather information to determine the need for a third round of loans.

Sue Simmons, Director of Recreation and Parks. Ms. Simmons addressed the Commissioners requesting the release of budgeted FY21 capital funds for civil engineering work. The Department would like to spend \$12,350 for civil engineering services at the North County Regional Park. The full amount will be reimbursed by State funds. The Commissioners provided direction to Ms. Simmons to move forward with the projects and she stated she would prepare the necessary addendum to the existing Professional Services Agreement for action at their next meeting.

Proclamation for a Full and Accurate Census Count: Katheleen Freeman, Director, Department of Planning and Codes, provided an update on the effort to achieve a full and accurate Census count in Caroline County. The County is ahead of its 2010 response rate, which is an achievement, but she noted additional work remains to be done to ensure all residents are counted, particularly those in hard to reach populations. Ms. Freeman emphasized the importance of an accurate Census count for receiving federal funding and eligibility for certain programs. She read into the record a proclamation for a full and accurate 2020 Census and the Commissioners unanimously issued the proclamation.

Discussion of Circuit Rider Town Planner Position: Ms. Freeman also updated the Commissioners on their discussion from the previous meeting regarding funding options for the position, since the State eliminated the grant funds that pay for it. She provided feedback received from the towns that the position serves that four have agreed to use their Planning Grants from the County to fund the position. Ms. Freeman advised that the position could be sustained for a few months using this funding if the Commissioners authorize that. Ms. Freeman stated that she is also looking into funding for the position to be part time and will update the Commissioners in the very near future. Ms. Freeman read into the record a letter of support from Ross Benincasa, President, Town of Hillsboro. The Commissioners provided direction to staff to see how long the position could be sustained using the Planning Grants, but that the County would not provide general fund money to sustain the grant position beyond that period.

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

- Open Session minutes of July 21, 2020
- Caroline County Health Department, CARES Act Subrecipient Agreement
- Maryland Rural Development Corporation, CARES Act Subrecipient Agreement
- Application for Grant, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for Body Worn Cameras for Sheriff's Office
- Grant Agreement, Maryland Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Waterway Improvement Grant for Choptank Marina Dredging
- Letter of Agreement between the Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration and the County Commissioners for the Control of Noxious Weeds for FY2021
- Employment Agreement, Lynn Davis, Program Specialist II – Afterschool Programs
- Tourism Board Appointment, Betty Jo Tarr

County Administrators Report: Mr. Goldman reported on the tropical storm that was moving through the area today and advised that the County is prepared to handle emergencies as they arise.

Open Discussion Period: Commissioner Porter requested that staff prepare a message to the citizens of Caroline County commending them on being proactive in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also stated the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) Committee continues to meet and will be considering suggestions to waive certain requirements related to LOSAP points this year, due to impacts to volunteer fire company operations and fundraising caused by COVID-19.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Mary Berneski
Paralegal

