

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY**

109 Market Street, Room 106, Denton, Maryland

**Minutes  
October 19, 2021**

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Daniel J. Franklin; Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.; County Attorney Stewart Barroll; County Administrator Jeremy Goldman; Executive Assistant Kaleigh Leager

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM.

Convocation and prayer by Pastor Tom Fisher.

**Economic Development Week Proclamation – Debbie Bowden, Director, Department of Economic Development:** Ms. Bowden read the proclamation designating the week of October 25<sup>th</sup> – October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as Economic Development Week in Caroline County.

**COVID-19 Response and Recovery Update - Robin Cahall, Health Officer, Caroline County Health Department:** Ms. Cahall presented the weekly updated numbers for Caroline County and the State of Maryland. Currently, there are 64 new reported cases within the County. Caroline County's 7-Day Positivity Rate is 7.11%, an increase of 74.3%. Maryland has 3.5%, a decrease of 6.2%. The case rate for Caroline County is 28.2, which is an increase of 17.8%. The case rate for Maryland is 14.7, which is a decrease of 19%. 23.4% of cases in Maryland were from children under the age of 18. 69% of the total cases in Maryland were from folks who are not fully vaccinated. Currently, Caroline County is still in a high transmission rate. In Caroline County, the vaccination rate for all eligible ages 12+ is 60.6% while the State of Maryland is 76.5%.

Ms. Cahall also mentioned that the J&J booster should be coming available soon, however the Moderna booster has still not been approved. Commissioner Levensgood asked if the Health Department was working with Choptank Health at the schools. Ms. Cahall stated that the Health Department and Choptank Health have a working partnership currently. Commissioner Porter asked if and once the Moderna booster is approved, how much is currently available in the County. Ms. Cahall stated that there is about 400+ doses available.

**White Cane Awareness Day Proclamation - Melissa Riccobono, Representative, Maryland Parents of Blind Children:** Ms. Riccobono read the proclamation designating October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as White Cane Awareness Day in Caroline County.

**Dr. Derek Simmons, Interim Superintendent of Schools, Caroline County Public Schools & Bill Mengel, Director of Operations – Presentation – Board of Education's FY23 Capital Improvement Plan & Letter of Support Request:** Dr. Simmons presented to the Commissioners the Caroline County Board of Education's FY23 Capital Improvement Plan that includes replacing the roof on Ridgely Elementary School. The replacement is estimated to cost

\$1,950,000.00. All three Commissioners agreed to provide a letter of support for the Board of Education's ask.

Commissioner Porter mentioned possibly looking into a regional career tech center. Dr. Simmons mentioned that the issue would be the programming, finding a suitable location geographically, and providing reliable transportation for students to commute to and from the facility. Dr. Simmons stated the devil is in the details on a project of this size. Conceptually, this is a great idea but there is so many moving parts that need to be finely greased. Commissioner Levengood asked Dr. Simmons if Colonel Richardson High School offered HVAC classes. Dr. Simmons mentioned that they removed the HVAC portion due to low attendance and low interest. Commissioner Franklin mentioned that it seems like the biggest issue surrounding a regional tech facility would be the logistics and location. Dr. Simmons mentioned the biggest interest is around auto-technical, cosmetology, and nursing programs.

**Margaret Roe, Director, Finance - Review of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget Report for FY22:** Ms. Roe stated that 60% of property taxes have been collected thus far. Currently, we have received \$0 from income tax as the State portion has to be paid first. The audit began around May is still being finalized and they hope to hear the results soon as it must be filed by December.

**Joe Riley, State's Attorney for Caroline County – Discussion – Salary of Caroline County State's Attorney:** Mr. Riley presented his request to the County Commissioners to raise his salary by 10%. Currently, the State's Attorney makes 80% of the District Court Judges salary. Mr. Riley is asking for the Commissioners to support his request and present it to the State Delegation to introduce legislation as it requires a change in State law. Mr. Riley stated that a 10% raise in his salary would be \$15,000 and a 5% raise would be \$7,500.00. Consequentially, a change in the State's Attorney's salary would also render an increase in the Sheriff's salary. Currently, the Sheriff receives 80% of the State's Attorney's salary.

Administrator Goldman mentioned we could request the legislation be written to make the Sheriff's salary independent from the State's Attorney's; whatever the Commissioners want to do. Commissioner Franklin mentioned doing a 5% raise with an escalator. All three commissioners stated that they needed time to think over Mr. Riley's request but did not feel comfortable doing a 10% raise as other County employees would not receive that large of a salary increase.

**Public Hearing- Legislative Bill #2021-003, Chapter 62 – Collector of Taxes, Stewart Barroll, County Attorney:** All three Commissioners voted to go into a public hearing. Mr. Barroll read the Legislative Bill for the public. No public comment was submitted and there was no public comment at the hearing. All three Commissioners voted to close the public hearing.

**Consent Agenda:** All three commissioners voted to approve the consent agenda.

- Letter of Interest - National Center for Agbiotech Manufacturing
- Parks Infrastructure Playground Grant – North County Regional Park - Correction
- P.O #2022-0119, Stryker Sales Corporation, for EMS LifePak15's to provide Medical Gear in Administration Vehicles \$73,457.90
- Contingency Expenditures for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY2022, \$11,818.18

- Resolution #2022-022, Amendment to Caroline County Personnel Rules and Regulations, Class Specification for Caroline County Department of Emergency Services-Medical Director & Training Coordinator
- Minutes – October 5, 2021 – Open & Closed Session

**County Admin Report -Jeremey Goldman, County Administrator:** The Commissioners have received a request for a joint resolution with Queen Anne’s County to support an 8-lane, singular bay bridge to connect the Western and Eastern Shores. The resolution would also support keeping the bridge between Queen Anne’s and Anne Arundel Counties.

**Commissioners Open Discussion Period:**

Commissioner Levensgood mentioned he has been in Montana visiting my grandson. Commissioner Franklin stated he has been busy going to events. He also asked Administrator Goldman where we were on the mask mandate. Administrator Goldman stated that the county is still in a high transmission rate and it needs to drop before he turns the mandate into a recommendation. Commissioner Franklin stated that for the record he is still against the mandate. Commissioner Porter Larry stated that he is not wanting to throw the planning commission people under the bus, but the decision that was made will have a long standing, dangerous effect on our county and the surrounding area. He continued by saying that he is not pleased with decision and that the discussion is not over. Commissioner Porter also mentioned his extreme concern of the proposed redistricting. The current proposed map will divide Caroline County into three legislative districts; currently we are split into two. This decision will make it increasingly difficult to have a resident Delegate. Commissioner Porter also mentioned that he doesn’t have any major quarrels with our current delegation, but I don’t know how anyone who doesn’t live here can understand the problems and represent the County. In closing, Commissioner Porter stated that before Del. Ghrist was elected, we hadn’t had a resident delegate since the 80’s. Every decision made in Annapolis, seems to be putting us at a disadvantage. It might be time for me to throw in the towel. I have fought this for 11 years and it keeps getting worse. No body cares or listens. Nothing has changed. We can attend all the conferences and phone calls, but it is not going to make a difference. We do not have any clout in the State. If I seem discouraged it is because I am. Del. Ghrist has done a very good job for us, but if these maps go the way I think, its going to be a big finger to us. Commissioner Levensgood mentioned that Montgomery County decided to remove all armed School Resources Officers (SRO) out of their public school and believes that it will be soon illegal for any SRO to be in any public school in the State of Maryland. Commissioner Franklin said he will not let that happen in Caroline County.

There was no public comment.

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

**Closed Session - To Consult with consul to obtain legal advice and Consult with Staff, Consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation, Authority: 2014 Md. Code, State Government 3-305 (b)(7)&(8):** All three commissioners voted to go into a closed session.

*Kaleigh E. Leager*

**Kaleigh Leager**  
Executive Assistant to The County Commissioners