

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

**WORK SESSION**  
**October 26, 2021**

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

The meeting began at 9:00AM

**Topic One: Economic Development Strategic Plan Introduction:**

Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development formally introduced the Strategic Plan to the County Commissioners for the next 5 years. She stated that when she took over in 2018 there was already a strategic plan in place which was helpful as to establish the strategies to focus Economic Development in the County. In 2019 she stated that she started to reevaluate the strategies to refocusing the efforts for the next 5 years. She explained that the plan is a clear outline of the work the county and partners will do over the next 5 years, to improve growth in Caroline County. Ms. Bowden stated that all the Towns as well as the Economic Development Advisory Board, had a chance to include valuable input into the plan before it was finalized.

Ms. Bowden went on to explain that her team started to focus on the COVID-19 Recovery in early 2020, however they were quickly able to move forward from that due to the strong recovery locally. The plan is a work guide that helps show what Caroline County needs to be focusing on for further development. The main goals are to grow the number of establishments by 5% in 5 years. The next goal is to raise the tax base by having projects established which will benefit the county by commercial taxes. The third goal is to increase the accommodation tax because currently there are only two locations that pay the accommodations tax.

Commissioner Porter stated that there is an area off Route 404 coming into the Town of Denton where Mulholland Harper used to be, and the area looks terrible, however he believe it's worth looking into for further development. This could be a great location for some establishment due to the high traffic volume. Ms. Bowden stated that the property is owned by a business that is located outside of Canada. Ms. Bowden continued to review the highlights of the Strategic Plan. She stated that they are working hard with the communities to promote local business and continue support where it is needed the most.

The Commissioners expressed thanks to Ms. Bowden for presenting the Strategic Plan. Commissioner Levensgood stated that he approves of the plan, but he would like to look into the restrictions of zoning that Caroline County has which at times has turned businesses away from locating in the County. Commissioner Franklin stated that overall, he likes the vision, however he stated that Board Members need to be updated.

**Topic Two: Health Department Update:** Robin Cahall, Health Officer, stated that Caroline County is up 144 cases since last week, making the case rate 33.78% which is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in

the State of Maryland. She explained that her staff are continuing with testing and the vaccination rates are still climbing slowly. Boosters for Moderna have been approved and Caroline County began administering them last Saturday. She informed the Commissioners that 60 boosters' vaccinations were administered during the Fall Fest event in Goldsboro. Booster clinics are established at the vaccine center which are scheduled throughout the week. She stated that the CDC has published medical information regarding booster shots being interchangeable so if you received the J&J vaccine, you could still get a Moderna or Pfizer booster and be safe.

Ms. Cahall went on to discuss vaccines would be available for ages 5-11 years old starting next week. She stated that the Health Department in continuing to work with local pediatricians as well as the Caroline County Public School Board to administer as many of those does as possible.

Ms. Cahall stated that the spike in children getting COVID-19 is up 25% nationwide.

### **Topic Two: Status of the Departments: Office of Finance**

Margaret Roe, Director, Office of Finance. Ms. Roe stated that the Office of Finance has three full time staff who handle all billing and financial documents to keep Caroline County running smoothly. Ms. Roe stated that with the help from her team she will be able to produce the FY2022 Audit by the end of December.

Ms. Roe stated that in the new year the Finance Office and the Tax Office will be transitioning into one office where there will be some additional positions being added. She stated that they are currently hiring for the following positions: Account Clerk I, Account Clerk II, Account Clerk III, Deputy Director of Finance, and Grant Coordinator. To apply you can visit [www.carolinemd.org](http://www.carolinemd.org).

Ms. Roe took the time to thank the Commissioners, Danny Fox and Mindy Nashold for being a great team, however she stated that she would be retiring at the end of the year. Ms. Roe has been the Director of Finance for the past 11 years and been with the County for 21 years total.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Roe for her time and stated that she would be deeply missed. All three Commissioners commended Ms. Roe and her staff for running smooth budget processes each year and for keeping the County financially stable.

### **Topic Three: Discussion -Class Specifications-**

#### **Account Clerk I, Account Clerk II, Account Clerk III, Grant Assistant, Grant Coordinator, Finance Specialist, Deputy Director of Finance & Director of Finance.**

The Commissioners took time with staff to look over the drafts for upcoming class specifications. Once reviewed, the Commissioners asked for each class specifications to be formally drafted for their upcoming Commissioners meeting on November 2, 2021.

### **Commissioners Open Discussion Period**

County Administrator, Jeremy Goldman stated the Office of Broadband has announced the

opportunity for a 10-million-dollar grant if the County parterres with Choptank Broadband Cooperative. Mr. Goldman stated that he has worked with Chris Rice the Director of IT, to discuss the County moving forward with this project and he feels this would be highly beneficial to Caroline County.

Commissioner Franklin stated that he has received several negative comments regarding the tar and chipping of Auction Road. He stated that he feels he is not being 100 percent honest with the public when he tells them the County does not have funds to pave the road, when in fact there is several million dollars of money sitting in the FUND Balance of the County's current budget.

Ryan White, Director of Public Works, stated that the County took ownership of Auction road last year and it was discussed in detail during several meeting that tar and chipping was the best option for Auction Road. He stated that the contractor took ownership of the issues this past week and they were able to spray the areas of the road with a sealant that fixed a majority of t he complaints. He stated that he would get the cost back to the Commissioners later regarding the price for finishing the entire road with that product. He stated that product gives the road an appearance that looks like it's been blacktopped, when really its still tar and chip. Mr. White also stated that if the Commissioners were to decide to use funds and blacktop roads in the County, he has a long list of roads that are in worst shape than Auction Road, and roads that have higher traffic volume.

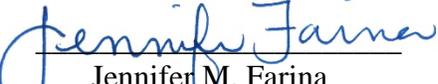
The Commissioners stated that they would like to have further discussions regarding roads in Carline County at a later date.

Commissioner Franklin stated that Caroline County lost a very devoted citizen, Bobby Balderston, and he stated that his thoughts and prayers go out to his friends and family.

Commissioner Porter stated that he has been on several calls regarding the redistricting issues that is coming to Caroline County. He went on to explain that Caroline County will be cut into three different districts which will ultimately end with Caroline getting less representation in the State of Maryland. He also stated it will be nearly impossible to have a resident delegate like current Delegate Jeff Ghrist who resides in Caroline County and listens and fights for local issues. Commissioner Porter stated that this proposed redistricting causes major impacts as well as confusing regarding the upcoming local election year. Mr. Porter stated that during his testimony on this issues some member realized the issues it would cause Caroline County, however they felt that if it wasn't done it could have negative effects on other more important counties like Talbot.

At 11:08 AM the Commissioners convened into closed session

At 12:04 the meeting ended

  
Jennifer M. Farina  
Public Information Officer

