

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY

Caroline County Board of Education
204 Franklin Street
Denton, MD 21629

Minutes January 3, 2023

Present: President J. Travis Breeding; Vice President Larry C. Porter, Commissioner N. Franklin Bartz, III.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Commissioners Meeting Convenes, Invocation by Paul Merritt – Pastor of Denton Church of the Nazarene

Commissioner Breeding asked for a moment of silence in remembrance Cpl. Lucas Nagel and Corrections Officer, Robert Wilkerson.

Commissioner Breeding read the following reporting out statement, “During the December 20th County Commissioners Meeting, the Commissioners held a closed session under Section (8) General Provisions Art . 3-305(b): “To discuss pending litigation.”. Commissioners Breeding, Porter and Bartz were in attendance in addition to Jeremy Goldman, County Administrator, Stewart Barroll, County Attorney, Mary Berneski, County Paralegal, Kaleigh Leager, Executive Assistant, Dan Schuster, Dan Saunders, Esq., Anne Ogletree, Esq., and Lisa Sparks, Esq.. No formal actions were taken.”

Debbie Bowden, Director of Economic Development – Departmental Update: Ms. Bowden provided the Commissioners with the following information: Economic Development became an administrative office under the Commissioners in 2018; tourism was brought into the office in 2022. The primary goal of the office is to increase revenue to the County by supporting private sector commercial and industrial development and job creation. The office is not directly responsible for creating capital expenditures or jobs; however, the staff is a conduit for information and resources for businesses and interests of all sizes. As outlined in the Five-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development, there are three specific goals of the office: to grow the number of establishments in the County by 5% in five years, increase the commercial tax base by 5% in five years, and increase the accommodation tax base by 25% in five years. To meet these goals, the office partners with Caroline County businesses and leaders, State service providers (such as Maryland Department of Commerce), municipal leadership, and commercial realtors and lenders. A thoughtful pathway to reach the goals includes developing a data center at the County-owned technology and business park to spur further development at the park, focusing on attracting agriculture-manufacturing businesses, supporting home-grown and community-based businesses, and giving attention to workforce issues.

The tourism work is focused much the same way as economic development by promoting established events and businesses to local and out-of-county visitors. Since coming into county government, tourism is working more on tourist/visitor development, namely additional

accommodations that will increase tax revenue and providing oversight stays for businesses and tourists. Both economic development and tourism partner with relevant state agencies and nearby counties to leverage resources. The county resources include a small business loan program, a manufacturing tax credit, and two Enterprise Zones (Federalsburg and North County). When a business needs financing or funding support, the office coordinates with appropriate state or federal agencies to offer the business the best incentives possible. However, there is a rigorous vetting process that the businesses must go through before committing public funds to a project.

The office supports small business development through ideation to funding and site selection. Again, our partnership with external agencies is extremely valuable. We refer Caroline County business and hope-to-be business owners to the Small Business Development Center, rural business support through SERCAP, and various state programs. We also facilitate conversations with the business and relevant regulatory agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Department of the Environment, Caroline County planning and codes, etc. Partnerships with the Towns and stakeholders is valuable in serving the office mission. There are standing touchpoint meetings with Towns' staff to provide and receive updates on economic development and tourism initiatives. There are two standing private sector stakeholder advisory groups that meet regularly to share business information and give guidance on development and marketing. Staff attends external organizations meetings to network and connect. To recap, the projects that the office is undertaking: supporting commercial and industrial business development, small business development support, Ridgely Tech Park development.

Consent Agenda: Commissioner Bartz inquired about the CATO purchase order. Mr. Goldman stated that this is a piggyback contract. Commissioner Breeding requested that all items like this should be done via an RFP. Commissioner Porter requested that the Resolution# 2023-01 be amended to only approve the executive office manager, Deputy Warden, and Warden. All three Commissioners voted to approve the consent Frank seconded. All three commissioners voted to approve the agenda as amended.

- [Amendment of the Memorandum of Agreement \(MOA\) Between the Maryland Department of Health and the Caroline County Commissioners - Jurisdictional Emergency Medical Services Operational Program \(JEMSOP\) Grant](#)
- [Community Development Block Grant \(CDBJ\) Semi-Annual Report – Caroline County Public Schools – Greensboro Judy Center](#)
- [Purchase Order #2023-238 – Department of Public Works Diesel Fuel & Gasoline - CATO, Inc. - \\$612,600.00](#)
- [Resolution #2023-001 – Class Specifications – Department of Corrections & Animal Control Position Updates](#)

Action Items: The Commissioners requested that Ms. Beth Brewster and Mr. Mike Thielke, as well as someone from the Town of Ridgely, attend the January 10th meeting to have a Q&A. Commissioner Breeding wanted to make sure this project would be an approved use for the tech park. Commissioner Breeding stated that the reporting requirement is only through June of 2024 but is requesting that it be extended until 2030. Mr. Goldman stated that could be completed through a sub-recipient agreement. Commissioner Bartz made a motion to table the MARBIDCO grant, Commissioners Porter seconded, all three Commissioners voted to table this item.

Ms. Beechey stated that the archeological survey is on the consent agenda with rush because the National Park Service is requiring that the County do an archeological survey prior to submittal to the State. Ms. Beechey stated that this going to take 12 weeks to complete, and the deadline is in April. Commissioner Bartz made a motion to approve purchase order, Commissioner Porter seconded. All three Commissioners voted to approve the purchase order.

- [MARBIDCO Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Agreement](#)
- [Purchase Order #2023-251 – Phase I Archaeological Survey of North County Regional Park – Applied Archaeology & History Associates - \\$103,885.90 & Professional Services Agreement](#)

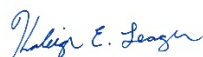
County Administrators Report – Jeremy Goldman: Mr. Goldman stated that the Worcester County Administrator, Weston Young sent an email request yesterday asking for support to change State law for hotel tax cap from 5% to 6%. All code Counties on the Shore are required to change the State law. The Commissioners wanted to discuss Airbnb taxes. Mr. Goldman stated he will look for the information and research. Mr. Goldman closed by stating that the Commissioners and high-level staff will be in Cambridge for MACo Winter Conference through Friday.

County Commissioners Open Discussion: Commissioner Bartz stated that the County was closed on December 23rd, but he heard about a low spot, on Frazier Neck Road. Commissioner Bartz stated that the road floods and the flood signs were not working. Commissioner Bartz stated that the sign was fixed after he contacted the Department of Public Works. Commissioner Porter wanted to mention that it has been a hard start to the New Year. Commissioner Porter wanted to briefly mention that as horrible as these events have been, it is important to remember the first responders in addition to the families of those lost. Commissioner Porter stated that the County has resources to provide our employees to help with these situations. Commissioner Breeding stated that he went out to Colonel Richardson yesterday and the loss of Cpl. Nagel has hit that school very hard. Commissioner Breeding stated that he hopes and prays for healing in our community.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Commissioner Porter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bartz seconded. All three Commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting.

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.



Kaleigh Leager
Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners