

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY**

Preston Volunteer Fire Company

3680 Choptank Road

PRESTON, MD 21629

**Minutes**

**March 15, 2022**

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Daniel J. Franklin, Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Convocation by Reverend Ellery Adams.

There was no public comment.

**Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Hearing:**

Commission President Larry Porter introduced himself and the fellow Commissioners, as well as the County Attorney, Stewart Barroll and the Executive Assistant, Kaleigh Leager.

Commissioner Porter stated that the purpose of this hearing is receive public testimony and comment on the proposed FY23 Caroline County Capitol Budget. This meeting/hearing was advertised in the Star Democrat newspaper as well as on the Caroline County website.

The following testimony was received:

**Lindsey McCormick – Caroline County Public Schools:** Ms. McCormick thanked the Commissioners for their interest in funding their part of the maintenance of effort and requested that the Commissioners keep their commitment to the school system.

**Carol Blue Donohue – Upper Shore Aging:** Ms. Donohue stated that their funding requests are mainly to bring employee salaries to \$15 as the minimum wage requirement will soon reach that amount. In addition, USA is trying to stay competitive with other similar businesses. Ms. Donohue closed by thanking the Commissioners for the meals on wheels program.

**Debby Bennett – Caroline County Public Library:** Ms. Bennett thanked the Commissioners for the years of support they have given. Like Upper Shore Aging, staff salaries need to be increased to stay competitive. Ms. Bennett then thanked the Commissioners for their support and continued funding of the imagination library in the amount of \$6,000.

**Tara Coursey – Caroline County Office of Tourism:** Ms. Coursey thanked the Commissioners for their support of the Office of Tourism and requested their continued support.

**Sara Dahl – Caroline County Public Library Board of Trustees:** Ms. Dahl requested the

Commissioners for the support of their budgetary requests for funding salaries to competitive level. Ms. Dahl pointed out that the library provides a lot of services to the community.

**Nicholas Tindal – Caroline County Council of Arts:** Mr. Tindal stated that he was grateful for the continued support of the arts in Caroline County. Mr. Tindal stated that the Community needs positive ways to express their creativity. Mr. Tindal was joined by Debbie Sewel, Sue Simmons, and Debbie Bennett.

**Ross Harper – Caroline County Recreation & Parks:** Mr. Harper mentioned that he was joined by Lisa Basin and Jeff Porter. Mr. Harper stated that preservation and continuation of parks is important now and for generations to come. Mr. Harper requested that the Commissioners provide Rec & Parks with at least one additional employee to assist with their increased workload.

**Susan Runnells – Human Services Council:** Ms. Runnells stated that HSC is asking for \$5,000 more than last year to cover fringe costs. Ms. Runnells stated that she is trying to keep the administrative budget low and focus on putting their funding into their programs. Commissioner Franklin asked what transportation HSC is providing. Ms. Runnells stated that they are doing a feasibility study. HCS provides items such as voucher programs and funding to help people purchase new tires, repair their cars, things of that nature.

Commissioner Levensgood stated adjustments still need to be made to the budget. Commissioner Franklin stated that work needs to be done and this is only the beginning of the process. Commissioner Porter stated that Caroline County did a good job for COVID-19 response, as he has not heard any negativity thus far. Commissioner Porter stated that Choptank Community Health, nurses, school nurses, etc. did an excellent job during this entire pandemic. In addition, Commissioner Porter stated that the mandates coming from Annapolis make it very hard for the County to fund all the requests and the Commissioners will try not to raise property taxes as a result. The Commissioners closed the public hearing on the FY23 Budget.

**Municipal Tax Differential Hearing**

Mr. Daniel Fox, Director of Finance, read the municipal property tax rates.

Caroline County FY 2023 Differential by Formula			
Towns	Assessable Base <sup>1</sup>	Differential Rate	Taxpayer Differential
Denton	\$ 407,114,760	0.060	244,268.86
Federalsburg	\$ 154,206,070	0.080	123,364.86
Greensboro	\$ 109,087,039	0.060	65,452.22
Hillsboro	\$ 10,299,269	0.000	0.00
Marydel	\$ 6,994,957	0.000	0.00
Preston	\$ 69,735,751	0.010	6,973.58
Ridgely	\$ 125,546,416	0.050	62,773.21
Goldsboro	\$ 13,138,748	0.000	0.00
Henderson	\$ 4,777,352	0.000	0.00
Templeville	\$ 1,400,300	0.000	0.00
	\$ 902,300,662		502,832.72

Mr. Fox stated that the tax differential is the municipal tax rate minus the rate the Commissioners grant the incorporated municipalities. Example: Denton is \$.98 and the rate is \$.06. Therefore, you pay \$.92.

**Kim Abner – Mayor of Federalsburg:** Mayor Abner asked the Commissioners to keep the same differential as the year prior.

**Anthony Casey – Commissioner of Ridgely:** Commissioner Casey thanked the County Commissioners for their support to the Town of Ridgely but stated that the tax differential is really saving money for the County; the municipalities are saving the County money.

Commissioner Levensgood and Franklin stated that again, there is a lot to work on. Commissioner Porter stated that the County has an incredible staff and team.

The Commissioners closed the public hearing on the municipal tax differential rates.

**Regular County Commissioners Meeting:**

**Stewart Barroll, County Attorney**

**First Reading & Introduction – Legislative Bill #2022-002 – Chapter 175, Section 163 – Planning Commission, Creation; Membership and Terms; Vacancy and Removal:** Mr. Barroll gave a fair summary of the legislative bill and its intent. “AN Act to repeal and reenact with amendments Chapter 175 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County, Maryland; FOR the purpose of revising the Zoning chapter to reduce the membership of the Planning Commission from seven to five members. BY repealing and replacing Chapter 175-163 and Chapter 175-166 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County, Maryland.”

**Consent Agenda:** (Commissioner Franklin made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Levensgood seconded. All three Commissioners voted to approve the Consent Agenda)

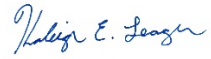
- Minutes Open & Closed – February 22, 2022, December 7, 2021, March 1, 2022 Budget Roundtable
- [Rural Legacy Area Prioritization Letter](#)
- [Memorandum of Agreement – Town of Ridgely – LETPP RPD](#)
- [CDBG Statutory and Other Requirements Checklist – Benedictine School Transforming a Campus to Transforming Lives](#)
- Top Notch Lawn Care Mowing Bid Approval – Contract
- [Choptank Marina Bid Approval](#) and [Contract](#)
- [Emergency Rental Assistance Program \(ERAP\) II Agreement](#)
- Agricultural Land Lease Agreements – 4-H Park & Double Hills Road
- [Caroline County and State Highway Administration Weed Control Board Agreement](#)

**Commissioners Open Discussion:** Commissioner Levensgood stated that he ran a lot of fire calls in addition to moving straw bales. Commissioner Franklin mentioned that he attended some banquets and played bingo this past weekend. Commissioner Porter stated that he attended a ribbon cutting for the Sho-Go bus at Greensboro Elementary with Commissioners Franklin and Levensgood this past week.

Commissioner Levensgood made a motion adjourn. Commissioner Franklin seconded. All three

Commissioner voted to adjourn the meeting.

With no more discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kaleigh E. Leager". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kaleigh Leager  
Executive Assistant to the County Commissioners