

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

WORK SESSION
February 5, 2019

Present: President, Larry C. Porter; Vice President, Daniel J. Franklin, Commissioner, Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.; Jeremy Goldman, County Administrator; Heather Price, County Attorney; Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff; and Jennifer Farina, Administrative Coordinator

Topic One: Introduction of New Planning and Code Employees Katheleen Freeman, Director, formally introduced two new employees who officially have joined the Planning and Codes team. Kendra Blake has been hired as the new Permit Technician and Bill Swarm has been hired as the New Code Enforcement Officer. Ms. Freeman stated that both have been great hires for the Department and she has enjoyed working with them. The Commissioners welcomed Ms. Blake and Mr. Swarm to the Department.

Topic Two: Detention Center Pump Station Leslie Grunden, Assistant Director for Planning, stated that in 2017, the County applied to MDE for \$571,000 in loan/loan forgiveness ('grant') funding to replace or upgrade the County Detention Center sewer pump station. The existing pumps at the pump station have required a great deal of maintenance to keep in operation due to a very aggressive waste stream consisting of sheets, rags, etc. Larger pumps and grinders are needed to prevent repeated breakdowns and failures of the pumping system. The project did not rank high enough to receive MDE funding in 2017. In 2018, the County re-applied and was awarded a package of 50% loan and 50% loan forgiveness ('grant') funding for the project. MDE retained the original project estimate of \$571,000 as the maximum total funding limit. To reduce costs, at the direction of the Commissioners and County Administrator, the project engineer (GMB) designed upgrades to the pump station rather than an all-new pump station. The design included replacing specific parts of the pump station – pumps, and control and alarm systems – as well as the addition of a new comminutor to grind debris coming through the sewer system. The engineer's estimated cost was \$245,000. An RFP was issued for the work in December 2018. The bid opening was held on January 7, 2019. Ms. Grunden explained that only one bid was submitted within the bid deadline, for \$497,062.00. A second, higher bid was sent to the wrong location and thus was disqualified; it was for \$662,000. The County is responsible for supplying the pumps, valves and hatch for the project, and the bidder recommends coating of the wetwell concrete, which brings the total construction costs now to a potential \$566,062.00.

The original estimate was prepared in early 2017, the bidding climate today is drastically different than it was at that time. GMB evidenced on many of its current projects recently bid (e.g., within the last 6 months), both a reduced number of contractors who respond to the RFPs and bid costs greatly higher than construction estimates of one year ago. The common refrain from contractors is that they cannot hire staff to keep up with the recent increase in workload and this is the reason that they are choosing not to participate in the bidding of projects. On January 15th, Ms. Grunden and GMB met with the bidder to discuss "value engineering" of the design to reduce the cost of the project while maintaining the project objectives. Because of unlikelihood of receiving significantly lower bids with a rebid in this bidding climate, GMB recommends that the contract be awarded to the lone bidder, Schummer, Inc. Subsequent to the award, a change order can be negotiated with Schummer for the value engineering items presented at the January 15 meeting. GMB has had discussions with MDE regarding the value engineering and they are receptive to the concept but will need to review and approve the specific items. While GMB cannot completely predict MDE's view on the changes, GMB does not feel that any of the changes impact the focus and objectives of the original design.

The funding through MDE is through a program that is a loan, with 50% of the cost of the loan forgiven over ten years, and the remaining part to be repaid by the County. Because it is a loan, it is considered the

issuance of debt by the County, and therefore requires authorizing legislation. Ms. Grunden stated that upon direction from the Board to move forward, staff will work with bond counsel to prepare the necessary legislation for introduction by the Commissioners and accompanying documents. Due to the length of the legislative process, the bidder will need to extend the price beyond the initial 90 days.

The Board asked for staff to draft a bill for their upcoming February 12, 2019 meeting which will allow them to introduce the new bond through legislative process, to move forward with the pump station project.

Topic Three: Sheriff Office Bid Results and Recommendation Crosby and Associates, project architects, presented the Commissioners with a summary of all the bids submitted for the project and stated which company they recommend. Mr. Crosby stated that based on the review of all bids and verifications that Harper & Sons submitted a bid in compliance with the bid requirements and demonstrated relevant experience constructing project of this type, scope and budget. Cosby and Associates recommends the Board award the construction contract for the Caroline County Sheriff's Office New Public Safety Building to Harper & Sons, Inc. of Easton, Md.

The Commissioners reviewed each of the add-alternates that were included in addition to the base bid. The Commissioners asked the Sheriff and architect if the copulas were functional on the design and asked if that was an expense that could be cut from the budget. All agreed that since they were only a decorative detail, this add-alternate would not be part of the contract. The Commissioners stated that staff should draft a letter of intent to be added to their upcoming meeting on the 12th to officially award Harper & Sons with the bid.

Ms. Visintainer stated that after the Office of Finance reviewed the project with the County's bond counsel it was suggested that the County cash flow this project rather than bond it. The Commissioners reviewed a detailed project budget sheet, which included revenue projections. Ms. Visintainer stated the cash flow would come from the income tax money and be supplemented with fund balance and be reimbursed by future income tax revenue. All three Commissioners agreed it would benefit the County not to bond the project.

Topic Four: Update on Health Department Scott LeRoy, stated that the Caroline County Health Department is looking into purchasing a mobile treatment unit that will be able to travel for doctor visits. He stated that the RV would be funded through a grant that goes towards mental and behavioral health needs in the community. He stated that patients would be seen by a physician via telehealth, however no medication would be given from the RV. He stated that the RV can also be used for public health education and have it mobile throughout the community in different locations due to the need. Mr. LeRoy stated that once the RV has been purchased a kick off will be scheduled with an official press release.

Topic Five: Budget Discussion Ms. Visintainer stated that the Office of Finance will have the budget books finalized by February 15th which will have all of the requests included. She stated that budget discussions have been added to work session and meeting agendas. The Commissioners stated that budgeting to allow Student Resources Officers (SROs) in all County schools was a priority for this budget cycle. Sheriff Bounds and Captain Henning stated that they have been working with the Office of Finance as well as the Board of Education to budget the options for six additional officers to be SROs full time in all the public schools including elementary schools, which do not currently have a full time SRO. Captain Henning stated that he has a rough estimate of it costing \$387,000 for the full coverage of six officers which would include their vehicles, equipment and fully salary with benefits.

Milton Nagel stated that the Board of Education has received grants from the State that allow for additional training for staff on public safety and de-escalation, however those funds are not allowed to be used for

salaries for the SROs He stated that the Board of Education is willing to work with the County through the budget process to see how they can work on funding these positions.

Topic Six: Commissioners Open Discussion Commissioner Porter stated that he would like to discuss workman's compensation coverage for the local volunteer fire companies. He asked staff to follow up with the local chiefs in the area to have a discussion openly with the companies on how to help them with this coverage.

Jeremy Goldman stated that Dorchester County is moving forward with their railroad project which would come into Caroline County in a section near the Town of Preston. He asked if the Commissioners were interested in working with Dorchester on the project. The Commissioners stated that they were not interested in following up nor did they want to form an agreement for the railroad project.

Closed Session:

- Discussion of Pending Litigation and Legal Advice Regarding Same and Discussion of the Appointment of a Specific Individual to a County Board or Commission
- Authority: Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(7) & (8) and 3-305 (b) (1)
- Convened in closed session at 11:48 a.m., motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood, unanimous.
- Adjourned closed session at 12:50 p.m.; motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood; unanimous.
- President's Report: The Commissioners met with staff to discuss the appointment of individuals to the Board of Zoning Appeals and Liquor Board. The Commissioners also met to discuss the retirement of an at-will employee and the hiring of the replacement employee.

There being no more discussion the meeting ended at 12: 10 p.m.



Jennifer M. Farina
Administrative Coordinator