

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

April 20, 2021

Joseph M. Mitrecic, President
Theodore J. Elder, Vice President
Anthony W. Bertino, Jr.
Madison J. Bunting, Jr.
James C. Church
Joshua C. Nordstrom
Diana Purnell

Following a motion by Commissioner Elder, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room to discuss legal and personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions (GP) Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions, permitted under the provisions of Section GP 3-104. Also present at the closed session were Chief Administrative Officer Harold L. Higgins, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, and Human Resources Director Stacey Norton. Topics discussed and actions taken included hiring Robert Wigglesworth as a Roads Worker II and Jeremy Brandow as a Grounds Utility Mechanic in Public Works, and certain personnel matters; acknowledging the hiring of Richard Speake and Jonathan Adams as part-time Deputies within the Sheriff's Office and the promotion of Alicia Blake from Library Assistant II to Assistant Manager within the Ocean Pines Branch Library; receiving legal advice from counsel; and performing administrative functions, including discussing potential board appointments.

Following a motion by Commissioner Bertino, seconded by Commissioner Nordstrom, the Commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 9:12 a.m.

After the closed session, the Commissioners reconvened in open session. Commissioner Mitrecic called the meeting to order, and following a morning prayer by Pastor Tonya McClain of Salem and Bethany United Methodist Churches of Pocomoke and pledge of allegiance, announced the topics discussed during the morning closed session.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the open and closed session minutes of their April 6, 2021 meeting as presented and their April 13, 2021 budget work session as amended.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously approved as a consent agenda the agenda item numbers 1-8 as follows: agreed to schedule a public hearing on May 18, 2021 to receive public comments on an amendment to the U.S. Rt. 50 Transportation Corridor Plan to eliminate the requirement to construct a service road on the parcel identified on Tax Map 26 as Parcel 298 and located on the south side of the highway; accepted the low bids of OC Floor Gallery of \$8,000 for building one floor replacement and Home Depot of \$6,286.25 for the purchase of 25 lockers, with an additional installation fee of \$710.40 for the Diakonia shelter renovation project; accepted the low bid from Jimmy Landon, Jr. Excavating, Inc. of \$14,200 for

the rehabilitation of a single-family home in the Stockton area, contingent upon receipt of a State waiver to the three-bid minimum requirement; accepted the low-bid from Poseidon Plumbing of \$82,393 for the rehabilitation of a single-family home in Snow Hill, contingent upon State approval of a loan to the homeowner for the balance of funding and a waiver to the three-bid minimum requirement; scheduled a second public hearing on May 4, 2021 regarding the progress of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awarded to the County Commissioners and sub-awarded to Diakonia for emergency rental assistance to County residents negatively impacted by the COVID-19 crisis; scheduled a public hearing on Rezoning Case No. 429 for May 19 to consider an application submitted by Attorney Hugh Cropper, on behalf of Daniel Strickland Hope to rezone approximately 192.28 acres of land identified on Tax Map 70 as Parcels 18 and A from RP - Resource Protection District to A-1 Agricultural District; scheduled a public hearing on Rezoning Case No. 430 for May 18 to consider an application submitted by Attorney Hugh Cropper, on behalf of Cellar House Farms, LP to rezone approximately 387.5 acres of land identified on Tax Map 69 as Parcels 25 and 27 from RP to A-1; authorized the staff to submit a Department of Justice – BHA FY21 Smart Prosecution Grant Proposal – Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) for \$339,914 to fund an additional prosecutor and coordinator of victim/witness services for the State’s Attorney’s Office, a case manager for the LEAD project, and three vans to dispatch calls for service.

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed various board appointments.

Upon a nomination by the Town of Berlin and a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to appoint James Charles as the town’s representative to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for a four-year term expiring December 31, 2025.

Mike Malandro, President and Chief Administrative Officer of Choptank Electric, a non-profit and parent company to the newly-formed, for-profit Choptank Fiber, presented a “Broadband Public-Private Partnership Discussion” PowerPoint, and a proposal to extend broadband over a period of three years at a County cost of \$37.5 million. Mr. Malandro explained that the County could recognize significant savings by extending the project over six to seven years, and whichever timeline they chose, the construction model is based on the “No home left behind” motto and includes extending more than 600 miles of fiber optic backbone facilities to deliver broadband to 6,400 underserved County residents, including 3,400 of whom are current Choptank Electric customers, at monthly costs ranging from \$84.95 for up to 100 Mbps, \$99.95 for up to 250 Mbps, and \$139.95 for up to 1,000 Mbps (1 gig) and no data caps, with same speed upload and download. He advised that these costs are based on actual historical construction costs for the Choptank business model. He noted that construction would be based on the agreement of the County to contribute a nominal up-front obligation and to then repay Choptank Fiber for project costs only after the actual connections are active. Mr. Malandro advised that there would be no fee to extend fiber from the backbone to individual homes and businesses located less than 1,000 feet from a main road. He concluded that Choptank Fiber is able to leverage funds from Choptank Electric’s existing infrastructure backbone to save on costs, garner financing, and borrow at very attractive rates to keep project costs down. He noted that the three-year timeline is the most expensive option, but it is also the most efficient model for extending broadband to the unserved areas of the County.

In response to a question by Commissioner Elder, Mr. Malandro confirmed that project

costs could be reduced to about \$10 million if they extend the project timeline from three years to a period of six to seven years. Commissioner Bertino suggested the possibility that the County could invest \$10 million in CARES Act funding to the broadband project and asked Mr. Malandro if Choptank Fiber would agree to repay the County if the Commissioners were willing to extend a loan to them for the remaining balance of \$27.5 million to complete the project within three years. Mr. Malandro agreed to research that possibility with the Choptank financiers. He further confirmed that the Choptank Fiber project plan includes extending broadband service to the underserved rural areas of the County first.

Commissioner Bunting requested that Mr. Malandro provide them with a map identifying where Choptank Fiber plans to install the broadband infrastructure throughout the County. In response to a question by Commissioner Mitrecic, Mr. Malandro advised that Choptank Fiber will install fiber over 617 miles in Worcester County.

In response to concerns raised by Commissioner Purnell that Comcast refused to extend broadband down Mary Road in Berlin, Mr. Malandro confirmed that the Choptank Fiber plan would make broadband available to all currently unserved areas in the County.

Commissioner Nordstrom stated that existing coverage in southern Worcester County is spotty, but that many residents could not afford \$85 per month for broadband. Mr. Malandro stated that the proposed costs are based on current market conditions; however, Choptank Fiber may be able to offer other cost options for low-income residents.

Following much discussion, the Commissioners thanked Mr. Malandro for meeting with them.

The Commissioners conducted a hearing on Nuisance Abatement Order No. 20-3, pursuant to Section 1-102 of the Public Health Article of the Code of Public Local Laws of Worcester County, Maryland for a property identified on Tax Map 9 as Parcel 66 and located at 13204 Worcester Highway in Bishopville. Development Review and Permitting (DRP) Director Ed Tudor stated that the specific nature of the nuisance is identified within the provisions of Subsections PH 1-101(a)(1)B, (4), and (11) of the County Code and include the overgrowth of vegetation; unscreened accumulation of personal property; structures that are ramshackled or decayed and beyond reasonable hope of rehabilitation or restoration; and an unscreened accumulation of personal property exceeding 100 square feet in area.

Ronald Johnson, husband of Felisha Johnson, the deceased property owner, requested information regarding what steps he needs to take to abate the nuisance and requested additional time to correct the problem. In response to a question by Commissioner Bunting, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie stated that, while Mr. Johnson may not yet have the deed to the property, he is the administrator of the estate.

In response to concerns raised by Commissioner Nordstrom, Mr. Tudor advised that DRP staff will work with Mr. Johnson to assure he knows what steps must be taken to abate the nuisance conditions, and they will perform an inspection after the first 45 days to determine whether substantial progress is being made to abate the nuisance conditions on his property.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to grant Mr. Johnson a 90-day extension to abate the nuisance. In accordance with the Nuisance Abatement Order, failure to abate the nuisance would result in County resources being used to abate the nuisance at the property owner's expense, as referenced in Section PH 1-102(d) and (e) of the County Code.

The Commissioners conducted a hearing on Nuisance Abatement Order No. 21-1, pursuant to Section 1-102 of the Public Health Article of the Code of Public Local Laws of Worcester County, Maryland for a property identified on Tax Map 26 as Parcel 44 and located at 11827 Grays Corner Road in Berlin. The specific nature of the nuisance is identified within the provisions of Subsections PH 1-101(a)(11) of the County Code and include structures that are ramshackled or decayed and beyond reasonable hope of rehabilitation or restoration.

Mr. Ben-Shlaush, the property owner, stated that he has hired a contractor to demolish the structure, but the work has been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and he requested an additional 90 days to correct the problem.

Mr. McFarlan, an adjoining property owner, expressed concerns regarding a homeless individual who has been residing on the property and urged the Commissioners to abate the ongoing nuisance conditions.

In response to a question by Commissioner Bertino, Mr. Tudor stated that DRP began sending correspondence to the property owner last year regarding the nuisance. He further advised that DRP staff will provide an update at the Commissioners' next meeting on the progress being made by the property owner to abate the nuisance conditions.

Following some discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to grant Mr. Ben-Shlaush a 90-day extension to abate the nuisance conditions on his property. In accordance with the Nuisance Abatement Order, failure to abate the nuisance would result in County resources being used to abate the nuisance at the property owner's expense, as referenced in Section PH 1-102(d) and (e) of the County Code.

The Commissioners met in legislative session.

The Commissioners met with Development Review and Permitting (DRP) Director Ed Tudor to review a text amendment application drafted by staff following a request from Commissioner Mitrecic on February 16, 2021 to facilitate value-added agriculture and agritourism, the use of which could not be more than 20 percent of the gross acreage actively used for an agricultural purpose on a lot or parcel, for agritourism uses and structures. Mr. Tudor reviewed the draft bill, which was developed following discussions that took place between DRP, Environmental Programs, Tourism and Economic Development, and independent consultant Kevin Atticks of Grow and Fortify, who was in attendance at the meeting and who throughout the process had provided his services at no cost to the County. Mr. Tudor then reviewed the draft bill, which would repeal the definition of agritainment facility and reenact the definition of agritourism to include additional uses, add a definition of agricultural alcohol production, remove agritainment facilities and wineries as a special exception use in the A-1 and A-2 Agricultural Districts, and remove the commercial hosting of functions and events as a special exception use in the A-1 and A-2 Districts and the E-1 Estate District.

Commissioner Bunting stated that he supports certain proposed uses, such as serving as wedding venues and allowing wineries in the A-1 and A-2 District; however, as written the text amendment is far too broad and would undo the regulations that are in place specifically to protect farmlands. He also expressed concern how many of the proposed events, such as the hosting of concerts and weddings, could impact the schedules of adjoining landowners working to farm their properties. Commissioner Bertino noted that, while the County should help facilitate changes that would permit farmlands to serve as wedding venues, the bill as written is way too broad and could change the rural character of the County in unanticipated ways. He then

suggested the Commissioners conduct a work session on the draft bill. Commissioner Purnell noted that the extent of the proposed uses in the bill is a lot to take in and requested additional information about the proposed uses and potential outcomes of adopting this legislation. In response to comments from Commissioner Purnell regarding potential liability issues with some of the proposed uses, Recreation, Parks, Tourism, and Economic Development Director Tom Perlozzo stated that there would be State requirements for uses, such as weddings and concerts. He advised that the draft bill would allow the County to be competitive for agritourism and agritainment and it would be an economic benefit for farmers, many of whom are struggling financially. Mr. Perlozzo explained that County staff researched the agritourism regulations in place in other Maryland counties and worked with Mr. Atticks, who was in attendance at the meeting, to develop a bill that would increase the economic opportunities available to farmers in the southern half of the County. In response to a follow up question from Commissioner Purnell, Mr. Perlozzo stated that the County is trying to address three existing requests from individuals who call him every day to ask if the County has made any progress to facilitate their projects.

Commissioner Elder stated that it is imperative for the Commissioners to help farmers. Furthermore, while the bill needs to be cleaned up to address setbacks and parking issues, this bill is a good starting point. Commissioner Nordstrom stated that farmers in the southern end of the County have very few options available to make their properties economically viable, and this bill provides those opportunities. He supported conducting a work session on the draft legislation to address the concerns raised by his fellow Commissioners. Commissioner Mitreic expressed his appreciation to Mr. Atticks for his work and for attending the meeting.

Following much discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Bunting voting in opposition, to conduct a work session on the draft bill on May 4, 2021.

The Commissioners met with Animal Control Officer Glen Grandstaff to review a text amendment application drafted by staff from Animal Control, DRP, the State's Attorney's Office, and the County Attorney to strengthen the Animal Control Subtitle of the Public Safety Article. Mr. Grandstaff then reviewed the draft legislation, which includes revisions to the kennel license code to clarify a common breeder, commercial breeder, and the operation of a commercial kennel, adds regulations that require record keeping for vaccinations and healthcare for a breeder involved in the sale of kittens or puppies; increases the enforcement authority of Animal Control related to those involved in commercial operations; adds more provisions to define suitable shelter; establishes certain conditions in which tethering of an animal is not acceptable; and lowers the stray hold period of cats and dogs from 10 days to the industry standard of three business days. Mr. Grandstaff stated that Worcester County is the only Maryland county that holds strays for 10 days, and lowering this threshold would free up kennel space and get dogs and cats into the adoption process more quickly.

In response to comments by Commissioner Elder, Mr. Grandstaff stated that he could support increasing the stray hold period from three to five days. Commissioner Bertino stated that he could support the rehoming or adoption of stray animals within five days, but that he could not support reducing the 10-day observation period that could result in a stray dog or cat being euthanized. In response to comments by Commissioner Bunting, Mr. Grandstaff confirmed that staff closely evaluates animals in the shelter and partners with other agencies to rehome friendly, approachable animals that are not adopted during their time at Animal Control.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners voted unanimously to modify the language in the text amendment to increase the hold period from three to five days and to increase the stray-hold time for euthanasia to 10 days based on the assessment of the animal.

Following some discussion, Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, Church, Elder, Mitrecic, Nordstrom, and Purnell introduced the aforementioned text amendment as Bill 21-3 (Public Safety – Animal Control) as revised and agreed to schedule a public hearing on the bill.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tudor to review a text amendment application drafted by staff to include definitions for terms currently found in the Animal Control Subtitle, such as commercial kennel and breeder, and clarify the existing district regulations and home occupation provisions where the commercial kennel use is listed to reflect the new terminology.

Following some discussion, Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, Church, Elder, Mitrecic, Nordstrom, and Purnell introduced the aforementioned text amendment as Bill 21-4 (Zoning – Commercial Kennel) and agreed to schedule a public hearing on the bill.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tudor to review a text amendment application submitted by Hugh Cropper, IV, Esquire on behalf of John H. Burbage, Jr. to amend ZS 1-324(d)(4) and (5) of the off-premise sign section to allow billboards to take advantage of the non-conformity provisions of ZS 1-122 relative to reconstruction and to remove the prohibition on reconstruction of billboards subject to a certain amount of destruction. Mr. Tudor reviewed the draft bill. He then advised that the Planning Commission gave a favorable recommendation to the text amendment based on the addition of the following three conditions: maintaining a prohibition on the reconstruction of a billboard by Board of Zoning Appeals action for signs not destroyed by a force of nature; limiting replacement materials to in-kind; and prohibiting an electronic messaging component.

Following some discussion, Commissioners Bertino, Bunting, Church, Elder, Mitrecic, Nordstrom, and Purnell introduced the aforementioned text amendment as Bill 21-5 (Zoning – Off-Premises Signs) and agreed to schedule a public hearing on the bill.

The Commissioners met with Mr. Tudor to review a text amendment application submitted by Diana E. Nalls, which seeks to amend ZS 1-318C(2)E Campgrounds to eliminate the prohibition on living space below or above the first floor elevation for recreational vehicles, recreational park trailers, and cabins within a cooperative campground only. Mr. Tudor reviewed the bill and advised that the Planning Commission gave an unfavorable recommendation to the text amendment application as submitted by the applicant. Commissioner Bunting stated that he could not support weakening the existing bill. Commissioner Mitrecic concurred.

Following some discussion, the Commissioners declined to introduce the draft bill.

At the request of the Commissioners on March 2, 2021, Andrew and Andre DeMattia from Talkie, the County's broadband vendor, presented a proposal to install a 366-mile fiber-optic backbone and a total of 530 fiber miles, to provide broadband to the underserved and unserved areas in the County within three years at a cost to Talkie of \$811,135 for startup and certain yearly expenses and 25-year maintenance costs of \$17.7 million, and a County cost of \$51.1 million to be funded as follows: \$23.3 million in year one, \$17.9 million in year two, and \$9.8 million in year three. Andrew DeMattia outlined the proposed, three-year construction

process, with 2,500 homes to be served in the first six months, 2,000 additional homes to be served within six to 18 months, and another 1,600 homes to be served within 19-36 months. He stated that, using the existing MDBC backbone, Talkie will install within County right-of-ways three cabinets, each with a 12-mile radius that would serve 100% of the County. He advised that this project would create about 100 jobs, and Talkie will pay for the CPE and home drops, so there will be no additional cost to the subscriber for long driveways and farm lanes. He further advised that Talkie will allocate 12 strands of fiber to serve essential government locations for 20 years, an \$18.7 million value at no cost to the County.

In response to questions by Commissioner Elder, Andre DeMattia advised that because Talkie contracts with multiple vendors to install fiber underground, they are prepared to begin the project almost immediately, with service to the first customer as soon as October 2021, and with a project completion date closer to two years. He confirmed that Talkie will install 90% of the fiber backbone underground, noting that aerial fiber would be less expensive, but also far less reliable than underground fiber. Information Technology Director Brian Jones stated that the County has applied for and been approved to receive a \$3 million State grant, which would allow the County to help recoup some out-of-pocket costs, but State officials cannot issue the funds until the County selects a broadband vendor (sub-recipient). Furthermore, Mr. DeMattia advised that Talkie was awarded ARDOF funding to expand broadband in several Maryland counties.

In response to questions by Commissioner Bunting, Andrew DeMattia advised that Talkie offers three different broadband packages: \$69 for 100 megabites per second (Mbps), \$79 for 400 Mbps; and \$89 for gigabits, uncapped. He further advised that low-income residents may be eligible for rates as low as \$19 per month.

In response to questions by Commissioner Nordstrom, Andre DeMattia advised that Talkie received grants to install 4,000 miles of fiber to serve 40,000 homes in Maryland at a rate of 52 miles per month over 18 months.

In response to concerns raised by Commissioner Bertino that the Talkie proposal would cost taxpayers \$14 million more than the Choptank Fiber proposal, Andrew DeMattia advised that Choptank's proposal includes installing aerial fiber, which has a life expectancy of 20 years and is vulnerable to weather events, while the Talkie proposal includes installing the fiber underground, which has a life expectancy of more than 40 years. Commissioner Mitrecic questioned whether Talkie's current plans to install fiber-optic cable in Delaware and Maryland is overly ambitious. In response to concerns by Commissioner Mitrecic, Andrew DeMattia stated that Talkie would be willing to consider accepting a County loan to complete the project that would be repaid over a specified period of time in lieu of the free fiber.

Following a motion by Commissioner Nordstrom, seconded by Commissioner Purnell, the Commissioners unanimously voted to meet in closed session at 12:10 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room to discuss legal and personnel matters permitted under the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions (GP) Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and to perform administrative functions, permitted under the provisions of Section GP 3-104. Also present at the closed session were Chief Administrative Officer Harold L. Higgins, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, County Attorney Roscoe Leslie, Public Information Officer Kim Moses, Human Resources Director Stacey Norton, and three applicants. Topics discussed and actions taken included conducting interviews for the position of Director of Public Works; and receiving legal advice from counsel.

Following a motion by Commissioner Bertino, seconded by Commissioner Nordstrom, the Commissioners unanimously voted to adjourn their closed session at 12:53 p.m.

Commissioners Bunting, Mitrecic, and Nordstrom and County staff members on the Fire Funding Committee provided an update on progress made to date to address fire funding issues. Commissioner Mitrecic noted that the committee has met three times, with the next meeting scheduled for April 29, to address funding shortfalls within each of the fire departments operating in the County. He advised that the Commissioners requested each company submit a budget identifying their short-term needs prior to the upcoming budget work session and are awaiting their individual responses. Commissioner Bunting stated that that all of the agencies were advised that any proposed funding revisions would not be implemented in the current fiscal year. Commissioner Nordstrom noted that the formation of the committee has helped them to articulate that the individual companies need to work together to determine their overall needs. Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young stated that the committee also discussed formalizing language to the municipalities concerning pass-through grants from the County to the fire departments operating within their towns. Following some discussion, the members of the Fire Funding Committee agreed to keep the Commissioners updated on the progress of future meetings.

The Commissioners met with Information Technology Director Brian Jones to discuss staff's recommendations for the formation of a Broadband Committee.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bunting, the Commissioners unanimously agreed to table discussing the formation of a broadband committee until the Commissioners select a broadband contractor.

Pursuant to the request of Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously authorized Commission President Mitrecic to sign the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland Grant Agreement Regarding Oversight of Best Available Technology (BAT) Systems to administer and enforce onsite sewage disposal system regulations for systems that utilize BAT for nitrogen removal. Mr. Mitchell stated that, subject to State budget appropriation and approvals and contingent upon the continuance of the Enabling Act, MDE will award the County \$38,000 annually to administer this program in Worcester County. Mr. Mitchell stated that the County awarded over \$300,000 so far this year to help new and existing homeowners install BAT systems.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Public Works Director John Tustin and upon a motion by Commissioner Bertino, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the low bid of \$120,000 from Dynamic General Contracting, LLC to replace the shingle roof systems at the Ocean City Branch Library. Mr. Tustin advised that funds of \$113,892.00 provided as partial reimbursement from Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) and County funds of \$6,108 are available to complete this project.

Pursuant to the recommendation of Public Works Deputy Director John Ross and upon a

motion by Commissioner Elder, the Commissioners unanimously accepted the proposal from EA Engineering, Science, and Technology for consulting services for the design of a leachate force main connecting the Central Landfill in Snow Hill to the Newark Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at an estimated total cost of \$29,963.68 as follows: approximately \$6,785.63 for the Newark WWTP feasibility evaluation, and \$23,178.05 for the force main design and permitting.

Commissioner Church made a motion to reinstate agenda item number 17, a Second Amendment Sanctuary Proclamation from Sheriff Matthew Crisafulli, which was pulled prior to the meeting without discussion from the Commissioners. Commissioner Bunting noted that, in lieu of recent actions taken by the Maryland General Assembly, such an action by the Commissioners would be symbolic and represent their position that there is nothing more important than the Constitution and the amendments to the Constitution.

Commissioner Nordstrom stated that he could support issuing a proclamation recognizing the Commissioners support for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but that he could not support any proclamation that places the importance of any one amendment over the others. Commissioner Elder stated that the Constitution and the first, second, and tenth amendments, specifically, have been under attack, and he supported reintroducing the second amendment proclamation. Commissioner Bertino stated that it is important that County residents know that the Commissioners whole-heartedly support the liberties outlined in the Constitution and the amendments in totality, and the Commissioners should not elevate any one amendment over the others. Commissioner Purnell concurred, noting that she is willing to stand on the Constitution as a whole. Following some discussion, Commissioner Church reluctantly amended his original motion.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Church, the Commissioners voted 6-1, with Commissioner Elder voting in opposition, to issue a proclamation from the County Commissioners at their next meeting reaffirming their support of the Constitution as a whole and the Bill of Rights.

The Commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on May 4, 2020.