

County Connection

<http://ccgovernment.carr.org>

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Carroll County
*a great place to live
 a great place to work
 a great place to play*

Learn about waste options

Carroll County Government will hold two informational meetings this month for people interested in learning more about options for the future of solid waste.

Recycling, composting, and waste-to-energy are among the topics that will be discussed.

Both sessions will begin with a brief presentation, followed by time for residents to ask staff questions.

The first meeting is slated for 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, in Room 003 of the County Office Building.

The second is scheduled for 1-3 p.m. on Monday, March 10, also in Room 003.

The County Office Building is located at 225 North Center

RESERVE UNITS



Office of Public Information

Commissioners (from left) Julia W. Gouge, Michael D. Zimmer and Dean L. Minnich inspect the new reserve fire engine that the County funded for the Volunteer Emergency Services Association. The engine can be used by any of the county's 14 fire stations when their trucks are out of service. Two other new reserve units, an ambulance and a utility truck, also were on hand for the February 21 joint meeting of the VESA officers

Street in Westminster.

Recordings of previous presentations to the Board of County Commissioners and the Environmental Advisory Council are available on the county government's web site, ccgovernment.carr.org. Click on Video Library & Agendas.

Commissioners have been

asked by Frederick's Board of County Commissioners to consider building a waste-to-energy facility in partnership with Frederick.

Carroll's Environmental Advisory Council, however, has asked that the county place a greater emphasis on reducing, reusing and recycling.

Discussions to begin soon on upcoming budget year

The Board of County Commissioners will start work on the Fiscal Year 2009 budget in March.

Work sessions and agency requests will be held in public sessions and broadcast both on cable Channel 24 and on the County's web site, <http://ccgovernment.carr.org>.

While dates and times are still being confirmed, the first session is tentatively scheduled for 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, in Room 311 of the County Office Building.

As is the case each year, county staff will recommend a spending plan. Commissioners

make adjustments to that plan before unveiling their own proposed budget.

This year's proposed budget will be outlined at a press conference on April 24. Residents can suggest changes during a public hearing on May 13. Adoption is slated for May 22.

The fiscal year begins July 1.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 9th. Move your clocks forward one hour.
- Because of a change in federal law, as of 2007, Daylight Savings Time begins on the second Sunday of March.
- Under the new law, Daylight Savings ends on the first Sunday of November.
- Remember to put fresh batteries in your smoke detectors when you change your clock each spring and fall.

Costs examined as part of police force decision

Management and Budget Director Ted Zaleski was recently asked to explain some of the financial questions associated with a transition from the Maryland State Police Resident Trooper Program and Sheriff's Office to a County Police Force. What follows is a portion of his response.

The Commissioners' focus on a county police force instead of a sheriff is not and has not been driven by cost/benefit analysis. I have found no evidence of a cost/benefit argument showing that a sheriff or a police force is an inherently better or worse approach. This choice is not driven by numbers, but by philosophy, by approach and by preference on the method of providing law enforcement.

Supporters of a sheriff have argued that our regional neighbors with police departments spend more on law enforcement than Carroll does. They are correct. However, it is also correct that our regional neighbors with sheriffs spend more on law enforcement than Carroll.

Whether they are served by a sheriff or by a police force, our neighbors spend more than we do in total dollars and on a per capita basis. There is no case to be made that either approach to law enforcement is inherently more or less expensive.

Though there is nothing inherently more expensive about a sheriff, the Commissioners' concerns about the potential costs of a sheriff are not without basis. Maybe the most interesting jurisdiction for comparison is Charles County. There are many similarities between Charles and Carroll including similarly sized populations. Though a little smaller in population, Charles is served by a sheriff at more than three times the cost of law enforcement in Carroll.

Let me address some specific concerns:

Number of post-transition deputies – We differ with the Sheriff on the number of positions necessary to perform the duties of the office without the responsibility for general law enforcement. It follows that any cost estimates based on a greater number of positions will also be greater than our estimates. We have made preliminary estimates of the staff for a post-transition sheriff, but certainly work remains to be done before any final determination is made.

A debate over the number of post-transition positions and the costs obscures a very important idea – the duties to be performed by a post-transition sheriff are already being per-

formed by the Sheriff; positions are already devoted to these duties. Where then is the need for additional positions and the new costs that go along with them?

It is conceivable that moving the law enforcement function might create a need for some new support positions, for example staffing a front desk. This need might be offset by the elimination of other support positions that become unnecessary.

Number of positions for the money – Given the same funding, the Sheriff cannot provide more deputies than a police chief could provide officers, because the costs for a deputy and a county police officer are the same. If the Commissioners believed we could provide 25 percent more positions through a sheriff, this would be a very different discussion.

Cost of transition from the Sheriff – The estimated \$300,000 of transition costs from the Sheriff include \$2,500 in uniforms, \$850 to change vehicle decals, and \$500 for costs associated with the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission transfer of deputies. The costs associated with the Trooper transition are captured separately from the Sheriff transition, and the costs for any new positions would be new costs that exist with or without a transition.

Law enforcement headquarters – There will be costs associated with a headquarters building, but they are the same with or without a transition from the Sheriff. The Commissioners have been working for several years on providing a new home for law enforcement independent of this decision. Space will be needed for either form of law enforcement.

Office costs – Phones and computers are already provided and aren't dependent on what uniform is being worn. Phones and computers would be needed for new positions, but that is true whether the new positions report to a sheriff or a chief.

Vehicles – We already provide vehicles for every deputy, the cost of vehicles for the trooper transition are captured separately from the sheriff transition, and the cost for vehicles for new positions are new costs whether the new positions report to a sheriff or a chief. Our Budget and Operating Plan already address the on-going cost of maintaining and replacing vehicles.

Salaries and benefits – There has been absolutely no conversation about com-

pensating police officers any differently than deputies.

Police chief salary – The estimated costs assume a \$120,000 salary. This is low relative to other jurisdictions, but that is true of most positions in Carroll.

Background checks – The transition costs from a sheriff include \$500 per position for meeting the requirements of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission. We are working with them on the possibility of waiving the requirements, but we have assumed the costs in our estimates.

Some concerns slip into the trooper transition cost estimates rather than the sheriff transition.

The move from the Resident Trooper Program contract is in part driven by cost and it is easily demonstrated that the County will save money whether troopers are replaced by deputies or county police officers. If we replace 45 troopers with the same number of police officers or deputies, it doesn't matter which, the County will save the overhead costs we pay the state every year. That is nearly \$1 million and growing.

The costs of the trooper transition are considerably higher than the sheriff transition, but have been accounted for and shared in the presentation of a sample three-year transition.

In the first year we believe there will be a net cost to the County because of the transition. The second year will more or less break-even; the transition costs and the overhead savings are roughly equal. In the third year we will realize a net savings, and once the trooper transition is complete, there will be annual savings no matter how we choose to replace the troopers.

It has been suggested that the sheriff could add staff with the savings from the state contract. That is true, but equally true for a county police force. The costs are the same and the benefit would be the same. Any decision to increase staffing, funding or levels of service would affect a sheriff or police force equally. Costs will grow for a police force, but costs will also grow for a sheriff.

The costs for a sheriff and police force are overwhelmingly the same costs, which brings us back to the earlier idea that the decision for the Commissioners on a police force is driven by philosophy, by approach and by preference on the method of providing law enforcement, not by cost.

Votes made, actions taken by the Board of County Commissioners during February

FEBRUARY 7

◆ Equipment purchase. On separate 3-0 votes, the Board approved two purchases from Finch Services using a State of Maryland contract: one John Deere skid loader for \$37,611.06; and one John Deere compact skid steer track loader for \$63,453.

◆ Northern Landfill. Awarded 3-0 a contract to Geosyntec for \$35,552 to provide engineering services for the repair of the transfer station floor at the Northern Landfill.

◆ Substance abuse treatment. Voted 3-0 to accept a \$46,216 award for the third and final year of funding for the Substance Abuse Treatment Jail Diversion Program from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. There is a county match of \$45,934.

◆ Employment of illegal immigrants. Agreed 3-0 to adopt a proposed resolution that will require all vendors who provide goods and services to Carroll County Government to comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the employment of illegal aliens.

FEBRUARY 14

◆ Code amendments. Voted 3-0 to adopt proposed amendments to the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances affecting two chapters: Chapter 71, Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency management, and Chapter 103, Development and Subdivision of Land. The changes are related to the sunset provisions in the event a project is placed in a queue. They also update definitions, applicability, building permits, and thresholds for schools and fire and emergency services.

◆ Purchase of property. Agreed 3-0 to exercise the option to purchase the Wheeler property located at 112 Railroad Ave. in Westminster for \$1.95 million.

The property includes 1.53 acres of land and a 23,590-square-foot building, and will be used for Carroll County Government operations.

◆ Recycling policy. Approved 3-0 a policy encouraging recycling in Carroll County Government offices.

◆ Housing plan. On a 3-0 vote, agreed to proceed to public hearing with the Bureau of Housing's Streamlined Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2008.

◆ Land preservation. Approved 3-0 a maximum match of \$1.33 million in order to obtain up to \$2 million in state funds for the FY08 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation for easement purchases.

◆ Water conservation. Agreed 3-0 to move forward with recommendations from the Water Resource Committee that include water conservation practices, potential for rate changes, and other cost-saving options.

FEBRUARY 21

◆ Change order. Agreed 3-0 to grant authority to the director of General Services to sign a change order on a contract with Continental Technologies to install support equipment in the computer room at the Public Library Headquarters. The backup electrical system is not compatible with those of the County, the Board of Education, and Carroll Community College, which have

different voltage requirements. The change order is for \$39,472.14 to cover the costs of the additional equipment. The project will remain within budget.

◆ Engineering contracts. On a 3-0 vote, awarded one-year contracts for geotechnical and mate-

rials testing services to the following firms on an as-needed basis: Foundation Test Group, ARM Group Inc., and CTI Consultants.

◆ Inspection services. Voted 3-0 to award Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani, LLC a term contract to perform water and sanitary sewer inspection services.

◆ Carroll County Public Network. Approved 3-0 the allocation of funds already budgeted for the fiber-optic network being run throughout the county. The request is for a maximum of \$1 million each for BGE and Verizon to prepare their utility poles for fiber attachment.

◆ Gypsy moth program. Approved 3-0 a request for \$10,000 to be transferred from the reserve for contingency fund for the Gypsy Moth Suppression program. Surveys performed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture in the fall indicate that the number of acres in the county with gypsy moth egg masses has tripled since last year to 3,788 acres. The additional funding will be used to treat the forests identified in the surveys.

FEBRUARY 28

◆ Watershed restoration. Approved 2-0 (Commissioner Julia W. Gouge was absent) a grant application that will be submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for planning and engineering of stream restoration activities in the Patapsco Road Watershed. The grant request for \$27,642.70 requires a County cash match of \$3,642.68 and a County in-kind match of \$3,037.32.

◆ Noise. Agreed 2-0 to postpone a public hearing for a variance from the noise ordinance so Liberty High School's marching band can practice outside. The Board of Education requested the March 25th hearing be postponed until the General Assembly has voted on a bill that would exempt public schools in Carroll County from local noise ordinances.

★ The Board of County Commissioners holds regular sessions on Thursdays, beginning at 10 a.m.

★ Sessions are open to the public, televised on Cable Channel 24, and webcast live.

★ Videos of previous meetings are available online at ccgovernment.carr.org. Click on "Video Library & Agendas."

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This keeps you from having to deal with large attachments that can clog up your inbox.

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When you sign up, please provide your ZIP code so we can notify you when a meeting or an emergency situation is occurring in your area.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Unless noted otherwise, meetings will be held in the County Office Building at 225 North Center Street, Westminster. All times are subject to change. Check the County's Web site closer to the date of the meeting, or call 410-386-2400.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

7 p.m. Public meeting: Future of solid waste options – Room 003

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

9:30 a.m. Open community discussion with Commissioners – Room 311

10 a.m. Board of County Commissioners – Room 311

6:30 p.m. Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board – Room 007

MONDAY, MARCH 10

1 p.m. Carroll County Farm Museum Board of Governors – George Grier Meeting Room, Carroll County Farm Museum, 500 S Center St., Westminster

2 p.m. Circle of Caring Governance Committee – Citizen Services Large Conference Room, Suite 101, 10 Distillery Drive, Westminster

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

1:30 p.m. Circle of Caring Ten Year Planning Committee – Human Services Programs Conference Room, 10 Distillery Drive, Westminster

3 p.m. Environmental Advisory Council – Room 003

4 p.m. Behavioral Health and Addictions Council – Room 153, Carroll County Health Department, 290 S Center St., Westminster

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

9 a.m. Board of License Commissioners – Room 003

11 a.m. Commission on Aging – Bureau of Aging Administrative Conference Room, 125 Stoner Ave., Westminster

3 p.m. Circle of Caring Committee – Human Services Programs Conference Room, 10 Distillery Drive, Westminster

6:30 p.m. Historic Preservation Commission – Room 003

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

7:30 a.m. Economic Development Commission Executive Committee – Room 105

9 a.m. Design and Architectural Review Committee – Room 205

10 a.m. Roundtable discussion with Cabinet and allied agencies – Room 003

11 a.m. Board of County Commissioners – Room 311

More county news at
ccgovernance.carr.org
or watch CCG 24 TV!

MONDAY, MARCH 17

1:30 p.m. Animal Matters Appeal Board – Room 003

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

8 a.m. Department of Social Services Board, DSS Conference Room, 10 Distillery Drive, Westminster

9 a.m. Planning and Zoning Commission – Room 003

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

8 a.m. Electrical Board, Baugher's Country Restaurant, 289 W Main St., Westminster. (A portion of this meeting may be closed to choose exam questions and review applications.)

8:30 a.m. Board of Zoning Appeals – Room 113

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

9:30 a.m. Open community discussion with Commissioners – Room 311

10 a.m. Board of County Commissioners – Room 311

FRIDAY, MARCH 21

County offices closed in observance of Good Friday

MONDAY, MARCH 24

7 p.m. Mount Airy Community Meeting – Mount

Airy Senior Center, 703 Ridge Avenue, Mount Airy

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

7:30 a.m. Industrial Development Authority – Room 105

9:30 a.m. Board of Zoning Appeals – Room 003

10 a.m. Board of County Commissioners work session to develop proposed budget – Room 311

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

8 a.m. Economic Outlook Seminar and Breakfast – The Portico at St. John's, 43 Monroe St., Westminster

1 p.m. Recreation & Parks Advisory Board – Hashawha Environmental Center, 300 John Owings Road

4 p.m. Water Resource Coordination Council – Room 105

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

8 a.m. Economic Development Commission – Room 105

10 a.m. Roundtable discussion with Cabinet and allied agencies – Room 003

11 a.m. Board of County Commissioners – Room 311

1 p.m. Board of County Commissioners work session to develop proposed budget – Room 311

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

1 p.m. Board of County Commissioners work session to develop proposed budget – Room 311

MONDAY, MARCH 31

9 a.m. Technical Review Committee – Room 003

10 a.m. Open budget meetings with agencies – Room 311

6 p.m. Planning and Zoning Commission – Room 003

Vision

Carroll County offers a safe environment in which all its residents may live, work, and play. The rural character of our county is preserved through measures that protect our natural and cultural resources, minimize future residential sprawl, and save farmland. Carroll County is enriched by sustainable agriculture and agribusiness as well as responsible, productive business and industry that offer family-wage jobs and employ the county's skilled workforce.

Mission statement

The mission of Carroll County Government is to provide excellent, efficient service to our residents in a courteous, friendly manner. We conduct business openly. We encourage each resident to play a role in keeping Carroll County a great place to live, to work, and to play.



Email your commissioners

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Or reach all three at Commissioners@ccg.carr.org

Not sure who to contact?

Email PublicComments@ccg.carr.org

CARROLL COUNTY

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