

BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC MEETING

Monday, December 6, 2021

Meeting was also Live Streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/garrettcountygovernment/>

IN ATTENDANCE

Chairman Paul C. Edwards
Commissioner James C. Hinebaugh
Commissioner S. Larry Tichnell

County Administrator Kevin G. Null

CALL TO ORDER OF PUBLIC SESSION at 4:00 PM

PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Invocation by Commissioner Tichnell

PUBLIC SESSION

1. Mr. Null indicated there was no addition or deletion to the Public Meeting Agenda. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the Public Meeting Agenda for December 6, 2021.
2. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the Public Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2021.
3. **Update on County Response to COVID-19:** Robert Stephens, Garrett County Health Officer provided an update on COVID-19 and vaccine in Garrett County.
 - Positivity Rate 15.1%
 - 7-Day Case Rate Per 100,000 - 74%. Until August, Garrett County's 7-Day rate was the lowest in the state; now, it is one of the highest.
 - Three cases of the new variant have been identified in the state.
 - Best defense is to be vaccinated. All pharmacies and the Garrett County Health Department can provide the vaccine.
 - Garrett Regional Medical Center is feeling the strain, not only with COVID admissions but also with providing monoclonal antibodies. The hospital is administering 40-50 procedures a week and the process is very labor intensive.
 - The Garrett County Health Department was the target of a "Internet Security Threat" that affected all Health Departments in the State. All Maryland Health Department computers have been shut down. The State is working on restoring service.
4. **COMCAST FRANCHISE AGREEMENT** – This Agreement covers the unincorporated areas of Garrett County serviced by COMCAST CABLE. The County grants to Comcast a non-exclusive Franchise authorizing Comcast to construct and operate a cable system in the Public Ways within the Franchise Area.

Comcast Cable will pay the County a franchise fee equal to five percent (5%) of annual Gross Revenues received from the operation of the Cable System in the Franchise Area. Projected revenue is approximately \$175,000. Funds will be allocated for broadband expansion in the County.

The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Hinebaugh, which was seconded by Commissioner Tichnell, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, adopted the Comcast Franchise Agreement.

5. **MEALS ON WHEELS – FUNDING REQUEST.** Duane Yoder, President, Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc. (CAC) presented the Board of County Commissioners with a request for additional funding of \$144,806 for the Meals on Wheels program due to an increase in meals provided. CAC provided an additional 17,036 meals at the cost of \$8.50 per meal, totaling \$144,806.

The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the additional funding of \$144,806 for the Meals on Wheels program.

6. **DISCUSSION – FIRE MARSHAL FOR GARRETT COUNTY.** Garrett County is one of 13 counties in the State where the State Fire Marshal’s office handles the review of fire prevention plans, i.e. sprinkler systems and fire prevention inspections.

The County, having received requests over the years to establish its own Fire Marshal Office, is considering this request to enable the County to manage the review and inspection requirements of the fire protection code in Garrett County.

Chairman Edwards asked for a Motion to authorize County Administrator Kevin Null to establish the Garrett County Office of the Fire Marshal, develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and develop a plan to hire necessary staff.

The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Hinebaugh, which was seconded by Commissioner Tichnell, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, authorized the County Administrator to begin the process of creating the Garrett County Office of Fire Marshal. It is anticipated the process will take four to six months.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** Dr. Kelvin Feathers presented his request to rename Garrett County to Garrett-Sincell County in recognition of the Sincell’s and their contributions to the county.
8. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The Board of Garrett County Commissioners announced that the next Public Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. at the Garrett County Courthouse.

ADJOURNMENT: The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, adjourned the Public Meeting at 4:26 P.M.

9. Garrett County 150th Anniversary Kick-Off Event – ***Garrett County: Celebrating 150 Years of Connecting Communities.*** The Board of County Commissioners, who were dressed in period clothing, hosted a kick-off celebration for Garrett County’s 150th Anniversary. Guest speakers included Robert Boal, Garrett County Historical Society, and Albert Feldstein, historian, both presented a brief glimpse of history. Chuck Trautwein also had the Garrett County Lego Map on display.

Garrett County will be celebrating throughout the 2022 calendar year with events, displays, and commemorative coin souvenirs. For additional information please visit www.Garrett150.com.

Attest:

By Order of the Board,

KEVIN G. NULL
County Administrator

PAUL C. EDWARDS, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners