

# BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC MEETING

**Tuesday, December 21, 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**

## ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION

### **Board Appointments/Reappointments:**

- ❖ **Drug Free Communities Coalition**– fulfilling unexpired term.  
Recommendation to appoint Jessica Howard to fill the unexpired term of Kathy Beals. Term will expire on December 31, 2022.
- ❖ **Garrett County Commission for Women** – 3-Year Term  
Recommendation to appoint Lisa Baker to the Commission.
- ❖ **Region I Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board** – 3-Year Term  
Recommendation to reappoint Diane Lee, Garrett County Health Department representative.

The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Hinebaugh, which was seconded by Commissioner Tichnell, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the recommendations for appointment to the Drug Free Communities Coalition, Garrett County Commission for Women, and the Region I Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board.

## **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 Hinebaugh, which was seconded by Commissioner Tichnell, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the Public Meeting Agenda for December 21, 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 December 6, 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.
  - ❖ Due to a cyberattack on all Maryland Department of Health computer systems, current COVID surveillance data is not available. All computer systems are now up statewide.
  - ❖ **COVID update:**
    - 53.5% of the population over the age of 12 are vaccinated
    - 86 deaths, however this number has not been updated by the State

- State is seeing a surge. 40% of cases are the Omicron virus.
- No Omicron virus is reported in Garrett County
- Monocochromal is only one of three types of antibodies proved to be effective against Omicron, this could be a challenge when the Omicron variant hits here due to supply.
- ❖ Protect yourself - wear mask indoors and limit your exposure to large groups.
- ❖ **Home Test Kits:**
  - Library receives supplies from the Health Department when available.
  - The number of kits each person can receive is limited to four. Due to supply demand considering limiting to 2 kits per person.
  - Pharmacies are sold out of home test kits. As soon as they receive a supply they sell out.

#### 4. **Garrett County Diversity Committee**

Thirteen (13) applications seeking appointment to the Diversity Committee were received. These applications were reviewed and discussed by the Board of County Commissioners. All applicants would bring important perspectives to the Committee, and it has been difficult to narrow the selection.

After consulting with the Committee Chairperson, Duane Yoder, the Board of County Commissioners asked that the five appointed members of the Committee representing the Community Action Committee, Board of Education, Garrett College, Appalachian Crossroads, and the Garrett County Chapter of the NAACP, interview candidates and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for the appointment of three (3) Community Members.

#### 5. **Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance – Solar Energy Generating System.**

The Board of County Commissioners conducted a Public Hearing on November 4, 2021 to receive public input on the proposed amendments to the Garrett County Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance concerning Solar Energy Generating Systems.

After hearing testimony and reviewing the proposed amendments, the Board of County Commissioners had several concerns. Specifically, there was not a separate definition for a “community solar system”, the proposed setbacks seemed excessive, and the proposed screening was too restrictive.

The Board of County Commissioners requested that Planning staff revise the proposed amendments to allow limited solar development within the Watershed while maintaining the overall intent of the Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance.

Chad Fike, Division Chief of Community Development & Planning presented an overview of the proposed revisions to the amendments. During this amendment process, staff evaluated the proposed solar uses to determine how they would conform to the existing use regulations and purposes of the Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance.

In general, very few manufacturing and industrial uses are permitted in the Deep Creek Watershed. Most parcels in the Watershed large enough to be suitable for commercial or industrial solar systems are located in the residentially oriented zoning districts where almost no commercial or industrial uses are permitted. Therefore, it was determined that the impact of Commercial or Industrial Solar Energy Generating Systems is similar to other large scale commercial or industrial uses and likewise should not be permitted.

It was determined that it was possible for the smaller Community Solar Energy Generating Systems and the ground or roof mounted solar systems that would be accessory to existing uses and buildings to be permitted without conflicting with the purposes of the Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the proposed amendments allow these systems with some restrictions.

Community Solar Energy Generating Systems and ground mounted systems accessory to a non-residential use will require a Special Exception. This will allow the Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Board

of Appeals to review each of those applications on a site-specific basis and add conditions as appropriate.

Public Comment/Question – How does this effect the current solar system? *It has no impact – The amendments apply to new systems.*

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 amendments as presented.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** None

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The Board of Garrett County Commissioners announced that the next Public Meeting will be held on Monday, January 3, 2022, 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 4:27 P.M.

**Attest:**

**By Order of the Board,**

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**KEVIN G. NULL**  
County Administrator

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**PAUL C. EDWARDS**, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners