

**Regular Meeting of County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday March 23, 2021**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened virtually at 9:05 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner  
Bobby Rucci, Vice President, County Commissioner  
Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner  
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner  
Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed., County Commissioner  
Mark Belton, County Administrator  
Wesley Adams, County Attorney  
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

**Call to Order/Pledge**

Commissioner Collins called the meeting to order, and Commissioner Bowling led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

**Announcement of Additional Charles County Board of County Commissioners' Proclamations Issued for March 2021**

2021-12 National Agriculture Day.

**Comments**

There were no comments.

**Charles County Health Department Update: Coronavirus/COVID-19**

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, Charles County Department of Health; Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services, and Mr. William Grimes, Vice President, Ancillary Services & Incident Commander, UM Charles Regional Medical Center provided an update on COVID-19 statistics and how they are responding to COVID-19.

Ms. Lilly indicated that even with a slight increase in COVID positive numbers and COVID deaths, the statistics remain steady. She also informed the Commissioners that the Department of Emergency Services will continue to provide logistical support for vaccine clinics and monitor COVID in the County. She also indicated supporting vaccine site at Safeway and a local church. Dr. Abney shared information on the vaccination clinics at North Point High School, an indoor site at the College of Southern Maryland and a drive through site at New Life Church along with community sites in Bryan's Road. She spoke on the efficacy of each vaccine followed by statistics on COVID vaccination doses given to Charles County residents. She reviewed current statistics on deaths, cases and hospitalizations by race on the three (3) COVID-19 variants and location of reported cases in the United States. She also discussed recommendations for travel and interim recommendations for fully vaccinated people.

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Mr. Grimes indicated that the hospital is at the lowest number of COVID positive patients. He indicated that the vaccine clinic has given out over two thousand (2000) first doses and over thirteen hundred (1300) second doses, averaging about one hundred and sixty (160) vaccines a day.

Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator, reviewed the of the County's communication efforts related to COVID 19. She discussed COVID-19 Vaccination eligibility under Maryland's accelerating vaccination plan; the vaccine call center support information; text alerts for COVID-19 vaccination information and for safety tips and alerts before, during and after emergencies; and vaccine frequently asked questions on social media. She concluded by announcing two (2) new commercials featuring Commissioner Collins and Commissioner Bowling's father.

Mr. Jason Stoddard, Director of Safety, Charles County Public Schools joined the discussion to update the Commissioners on vaccinations for Charles County Public School staff; and reopening of the schools with approximately three thousand (3000) students for in-person instruction and an additional five thousand (5000) on April 19, 2021. He also reviewed social distance in schools and tracking of student athletes.

**Approval of the Minutes of March 9, 2021**

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of March 16, 2021.

**Announcement: Next Commissioner Session will be held April 13, 2021**

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next scheduled session is on March 23, 2021.

*\*Commissioner Collins left Session at about 9:39 a.m.*

**Legislative: Update 2021 Maryland General Assembly Session**

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney, Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Mr. Joe Green and Ms. Michelle Goodwin, Lobbyist, GS Proctor and Associates, Inc. discussed legislative bills being considered by the Maryland General Assembly.

Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Don Litten, Building Code Official, Department of Planning and Growth Management, reviewed the Charles County Board of Electrical Examiners request to send a letter of opposition to the proposed Legislation House Bill 1262/Senate Bill 762 State Board of Electrical Examiners which would replace local licensing procedures with only State registration and licensing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Rucci present, voting in favor to allow the Charles

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county board of Electrical Examiners to send their letter of opposition. *\*Commissioner Collins was not present for the vote.*

The Commissioners reached a consensus to also send a letter of opposition from the Board of County Commissioners.

Ms. Michell then provided an update on the following Bills:

**House Bill 1018 Charles County – Alcoholic Beverages – Class 4 Limited Winery License**  
Passed in the House and moved to the Senate.

**House Bill 1061 Southern Maryland – Multifamily Dwelling Registration – Fees and Fines**  
Passed in the House.

**House Bill 1072 Charles County – Community Service and Pretrial Release Programs – Authorization**  
In Senate.

**House Bill 1024 Charles County - Citizens Complaint Oversight Board**  
Conflicts with House Bill 670.

**House Bill 414 Southern Maryland Rapid Transit Project – Funding**  
Successful vote out of the House.

**House Bill 655 Local Government – County Commissioner Elections – District Voting**  
Hearing in Senate today.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Coates and Rucci present voting in favor to send an amendment requesting that all Code Home Rule Counties not to be subject of House Bill 655.

Commissioner Bowling was opposed. *\*Commissioner Collins was not present for the vote.* A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Coates-yes; Commissioner Bowling-no; Commissioner Rucci-yes; Commissioner Collins- not present. The motion passed three (3) to one (1).

**House Bill 1060 Charles County - Board of Education - Membership Alterations**  
Crossed over to the Senate with amendments.

**Review: 2019 Maryland House Bill 396 Property Tax Optional Installment Payments**

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, and Mr. Eric Jackson, Treasurer, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided an overview of House Bill 396 which was enacted May 25, 2019. It allows for advance payment of future year property taxes; allows for the option to have an installment payment schedule of current year property taxes; and allows it to be enacted locally by the County. Mr. Jackson reviewed what needs to be considered if implemented, accounts that are affected, and the fiscal impact.

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Implementing now with the current outdated software system would need to be tracked manually and would open the possibility of errors. Ms. Ellin concluded by updated the status of the search for new tax software package. The target date for implementation would be Fiscal Year 2023.

*\*Commissioner Collins returned to session at about 10:11 a.m.*

**FY2022 Budget Work Session: Remaining Enterprise Funds Operating and Capital Improvement Projects/All Fees and Charges**

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, and Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Senior Budget Analyst, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, reviewed the remaining Enterprise Funds and Capital Improvement Projects. The Landfill Operations fund pays for all related operating costs and provides a reserve for future landfill expansion and closing costs. It has a proposed budget of ten million four hundred and seventy-four thousand two hundred dollars (\$10,474,200.00). The Environmental Service Fund covers environmental programs such as recycling, litter control, hazardous waste and other related environmental programs. It has a proposed budget of seven million five hundred and eight five thousand three hundred dollars (\$7,585,300.00). The Watershed Protection and Restoration Fund is for implementation of local stormwater management plans and practices, and stream and wetland restoration activities. It has a proposed operating budget of six million one hundred and nineteen thousand four hundred dollars (\$6,119,400.00). The Inspection and Review Fund provides inspection services during various stages of construction, examination of plans to verify compliance with requirements of the various development regulations, and permitting services related to new building, remodeling, renovation and repair. It has a total proposed operating budget of five million two hundred and eighty-three thousand one hundred dollars (\$5,283,100.00). Staff then went on to review the Fiscal Year 2022 proposed Fees and Charges.

**Closed Session**

At 10:50 a.m. Commissioner Bowling made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to move into Close Session where all or a portion of this session may be closed pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(7)(8) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to review four (4) agreements/negotiations and to discuss one (1) potential litigation issue. The reason for going into closed is to keep negotiations and strategies confidential.

**Summary Closed Session Items**

At 12:08 p.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

**3-305(b)(7)Legal: Lease Agreement**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall and Shanee Major-Kelly.

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, reviewed options related to this lease agreement.

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The Commissioners reached a consensus to the terms of lease as presented. The Commissioners took official action later this day under Approval Items:

**3-305(b)(7)Legal: Agreement**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Elizabeth Theobalds, and Judy Michaels.

Ms. Elizabeth Theobalds, Deputy County Attorney, reviewed options related to a potential property acquisition agreement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to decline offer to sell the property.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to authorize staff *specified terms for negotiations*.

**3-305(b)(7)Legal: Agreement**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Shanee Major-Kelly, Jenifer Elin, Sam Drury, and Judy Michael.

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, reviewed options related to a potential agreement.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to decline purchase offer and directed staff to bring back this item in sixty (60) days if a mutual agreement can be reached.

**3-305(b)(7)(8) Legal: Potential Litigation**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, and Carol DeSoto.

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, provided an update to this potential litigation issue.

**3-305(b)(7)Legal**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, and Carol DeSoto.

Commissioner Collins reviewed a letter with the Commissioners.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to have the County Administrator respond acknowledgement on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

At 1:10 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to end this Closed Session.

At 3:03 p.m. the Commissioners returned to open session.

**Roll Call**

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

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**Approval Items**

*FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8551 Demolition of Strawberry Hill Standpipe*

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci, and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8551 Demolition of Strawberry Hill Standpipe for one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00).

*FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8567 Benjamin Stoddert Middle School Construction*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling, and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8567 Benjamin Stoddert Middle School Construction for two million seven hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars (\$2,748,000.00).

*FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8580 Election Board Deficit*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates, and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8580 Election Board Deficit for ninety-three thousand five hundred dollars (\$93,500.00).

*Board of Election Lease*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Board of Election Lease.

*Letter-Certification of Charles County's Land Preservation Program*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Letter-Certification of Charles County's Land Preservation Program.

*Letter-2021 Transportation Priority Letter*

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci, and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to send the Maryland Department of Transportation the 2021 Transportation Priority Letter with amendment.

*Maryland Recovery Funds*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to respond to the State to accept the funds and have the Charitable Trust administer them for the County.

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**Update: CCGTV County Government Virtual and Hybrid Capabilities**

Mr. Brent Huber, Lead Video Producer, and Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator, provided an update on the Charles County Government Television (CCGTV) Virtual and Hybrid Meetings capabilities. The division anticipates the ability to record to air and live for meetings in the County Government Blue Room by May 2021.

**Update: Rural Broadband Task Force**

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, and Ms. Evelyn Jacobson, Chief of Information Technology, Mr. Matt Jacobson, Network Specialist III, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, and Ms. Gina Markovich, Assistant Property Acquisition Manager, Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on the Rural Broadband Task Force, including the Nanjemoy Cobb Neck Broadband Buildout. The fiber-optic cable for Phase One of the build out has been delivered, pole surveys are being conducted in Nanjemoy and Cobb Neck, and road markups have begun. ThinkBig Networks will begin visiting neighborhoods this week to talk with residents about granting easements. An interactive map has been developed for residents to track the progress of the fiber build in their areas. A groundbreaking is expected this spring.

**Update: Commissioners' Goals and Objectives- Goal 3: Environment**

Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, Mr. Darrell Brown, Director, Department of Economic Development, Ms. Frances Sherman, Chief of Environmental Resources and Mr. Bernard Cochran, Deputy Director-Utilities, Department of Public Works, provided an update on the on the Commissioners' Goals and Objectives- Goal Three: Environment. They reviewed conservation programs, natural resource management, and environmental management.

**Commissioners' New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

*\*Break 4:47 p.m.-6:00 p.m.*

**Public Hearing: Amendment to the 2011-2021 Charles County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan**

Ms. Frances Sherman, Chief of Environmental Services, Department of Public Works Facilities and Mr. Jason Groth, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, reviewed the proposed amendment of the addition of a new Construction and Demolition (C&D) Recycling and Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Transfer Facility called the Waldorf Recovery Facility. The Waldorf Recovery Facility is a proposed privately-owned facility that would accept putrescible waste from commercial, industrial, and residential sources and source separated materials from construction or demolition of structures, including wood, metal, cardboard, shingles, masonry, and drywall.

There was one (1) speaker to who provided a public comment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close the public record.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve newly numbered Resolution 2021-05 to add the amendments to the 2011-2021 Charles County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan as presented.

*\*Break 6:07 p.m.-6:30 p.m.*

**Board of County Commissioners First Quarter Town Hall Meeting**

The Commissioners conducted their first Town Hall Meeting of 2021 virtually using the GoToWebinar platform. Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, were present to address community questions, as well as Mr. Mark Belton, County Administrator and the following Directors and designees:

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services  
Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management  
Mr. Bill Shreve, Director, Department of Public Works  
Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services  
Ms. Eileen Minnick, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism  
Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, Department of Community Services  
Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, Department of Human Resources  
Mr. Darrell Brown, Director, Department of Economic Development  
Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney II, Office of the County Attorney  
Mr. Jason Groth, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management  
Ms. Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, Department of Human Resources  
Ms. Julie Bryson, Citizen Response Manager, Commissioners Office

Commissioner Collins provided a welcoming remarks. Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, reviewed the format for the town hall meeting. Ms. Bryson read the questions and comments submitted. Questions were answered by the Commissioners or by the appropriate director in attendance.

At 8:00 p.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn the meeting.



Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President



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**FORM OF STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING**

Location: Virtual- MS Teams                      Date: March 23, 2021

Time: 10:50 a.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Bowling                      Seconded By: Commissioner Rucci

Vote to Close Session:

	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.	[X ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Gilbert O. Bowling, III.	[X ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.	[X ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Amanda Stewart, M.Ed.	[X ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Bobby Rucci	[X ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE SESSION**

**General Provisions Article §3–305(b):**

(1)  To discuss:

(i) The appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or

(ii) Any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

(2)  To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals with respect to a matter that is not related to public business.

(3)  To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

(4)  To consider a preliminary matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State.

(5)  To consider the investment of public funds.

(6)  To consider the marketing of public securities.

(7)  To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter.

(8)  To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

(9)  To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations.

(10)  To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussions would constitute a risk to the public or public security, including:

(i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and

(ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans.

**FORM OF STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING**

**Appendix C C-2**

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(11) [ ] To prepare, administer or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination.

(12) [ ] To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct.

(13) [ ] To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.

(14) [ ] Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, discuss a matter directly related to a negotiation strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

**3-305 (b)(7) Legal: Four (4) Agreements/negotiations**

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep legal negotiations confidential.

**3-305 (b)(7)(8) Legal Advice: Potential Litigation**

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep legal negotiations confidential.



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President