

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday May 11, 2021

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened virtually at 9:00 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner
Bobby Rucci, Vice President, 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

**Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner, was absent
At about 10:43 a.m. Commissioner Bowling joined session*

Call to Order/Pledge

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

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Collins, Rucci Coates, and Stewart were present. **Commissioner Bowling was not present.*

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

Additional May 2021 Proclamation(s): 2021-28 National Police Week; 2021-29 Emergency Medical Services Week; 2021-30 Emergency Medical Services for Children Day; 2021-31 Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes and Hypermobility Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month.

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 COVID positive numbers have been on a steady decline. She indicated that COVID positive transports are down as well. She reviewed the number of Charles County residents who have been vaccinated including first dose, second dose and single dose vaccine. 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.

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Dr. Abney indicated that fewer people are getting vaccinated and to counter this there will be an increase in smaller community vaccine clinics, partner more with the Vaccine Equity Task Force (VETF) sites, encourage more partnerships with churches and other organizations and consider nontraditional sites for vaccine clinics in addition to all the current community sites. Dr. Abney reminded everyone that the County is in the vaccination phase three (3) which everyone sixteen (16) years old or older are eligible to be vaccinated. She is waiting for the Pfizer vaccine that is available for youth twelve (12) and older. She is in the planning stage of vaccine clinics at high schools once a survey to parents is reviewed to judge the interest. She reported the statistics on COVID vaccination doses given to Charles County residents. She also reviewed COVID cases by age, Charles County COVID deaths by age and hospitalization by age. She reviewed contact tracing data. She concluded with recommendations for fully vaccinated people.

Mr. Grimes indicated that the number of COVID patients currently in the hospital is five (5) which is a decrease in the numbers. The hospital will continue to evaluate the visitation policy to review procedures. He also mentioned that the hospital continues providing one hundred twenty (120) to one hundred and eighty (180) first and second dose vaccines a day.

Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator, reviewed the County's communication efforts related to COVID 19. She discussed COVID-19 Vaccine Priority list, that vaccines are widely available, addressing vaccine hesitancy, and the Vaccine Rumor Control on social media, and frequently asked questions.

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; the decrease in COVID positive cases and low numbers and no community spread has remained steady. He also indicated that the plan for the next school year would be for schools to be open five (5) days a week for all students. and the plan for in-person graduation ceremonies for this year have been scheduled.

Approval of the Minutes of May 4, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Rucci, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of May 4, 2021. **Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

Announcement: Next Commissioner Session will be held May 18, 2021

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next scheduled session was on May 18, 2021.

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Approval Items

FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8726 Sludge Disposal Expense

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, and passed with Commissioners Rucci, Stewart, Coates, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8726 Sludge Disposal Expense for five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00).

**Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8750 Gilbert Run Park Boardwalk Replacement

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, and passed with Commissioners Rucci, Stewart, Coates, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2021 Budget Transfer Request #8750 for two hundred and fifteen thousand dollars (\$215,000.00). **Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

Resolution 2021-10 Water-Sewer Service Category Amendments for Spring 2021 Cycle

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, and passed with Commissioners Rucci, Stewart, Coates, and Collins present, voting in favor to adopt newly numbered Resolution 2021-10 Water-Sewer Service Category Amendments for Spring 2021 Cycle.

**Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

**Break 9:44 a.m. – 10:13 a.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Collins, Rucci Coates, and Stewart were present. **Commissioner Bowling was not present.*

Briefing: Creating a Racial Equity Resolution/Policy for Charles County

Mr. Benjamin Orr, President/CEO, Maryland Center on Economic Policy, Dr. Shauna Knox, Chief of Racial Equity Strategy, Associated Black Charities, and Ms. Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, Department of Human Resources provided presentations on creating a Racial Equity Resolution/Policy for Charles County by incorporating a racial equity lens in policy making.

The Commissioners affirmed the racial equity work that the County is doing and directed staff to research and begin the process of creating a racial equity resolution like the one established in Montgomery County.

At about 10:43 a.m. Commissioner Bowling joined session.

Review of Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Work Session Recap: General Fund Operating Budgets and Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Projects Recap

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, and Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided a review of the Commissioners approved proposed revisions of the proposed FY2022 General Fund Operating Budgets and the proposed FY2022– FY2026 Capital Improvement Budgets from the May 4, 2021 session. Staff also reviewed options to provide more funding to the Board of Education (BOE).

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A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to allocate one time funding of ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000.00) from fund balance to support Charles County Public School (CCPS) system social and emotional development services for their staff. *(It was clarified that this was instead of the thirty-thousand-dollar (\$30,000.00) sign on bonus discussed last week.)*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Rucci and Bowling voting in favor to direct staff to support Charles County Public School (CCPS) for a one percent (1%) Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the next school year with a cost of two million dollars (\$2,000,000.00). *The motion was clarified to have staff to do the work and come back next week with options on how to reach this dollar amount.* Commissioners Collins and Coates were opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Bowling-yes; Commissioner Coates-no; Commissioner Rucci-yes; Commissioner Collins-no. The motion passed three (3) to two (2).

Commissioner Rucci questioned how much the Board of Education (BOE) had in its fund balance. Mr. Dyer clarified that the BOE had twenty-seven million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand one hundred and five dollars (\$27,875,105.00) of unassigned fund balance.

Commissioners' New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Closed Session

At 11:29 a.m. Commissioner Rucci made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Coates 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)(4)(7)(8) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss a proposal for a business to locate in Charles County; to discuss one (1) update on the options for a potential litigation issue; to discuss one (1) update on a response to an agreement. And to discuss procedures and schedules pertaining to the administrative function of the County Commissioners in their executive role. The reason for going into closed is to keep negotiations strategies, plans and approaches confidential.

Summary Closed Session Items

At 11:34 a.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

3-305(b)(4) Proposal for Business to Locate in Charles County

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Frances Sherman, Bill Shreve, Darrell Brown, Marcia Keeth, Taylor Yewell, Mark Augenblick, Jim Wilson, and Ed Kelly.

The Commissioners reviewed a proposal from a business interested in opening a site in Charles County.

The Commissioners provided staff with directions on how to assist this business.

3-305(b)(7)(8) Legal: Update on Potential Litigation Options

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

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At 12:00 p.m. Commissioner Bowling recused himself from the discussion.

The consensus of the Commissioners present was to authorize Mr. Adams to draft a potential settlement agreement.

3-305(b)(7) Legal: Update on Response to an Agreement

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

At 12:07 p.m. Commissioner Bowling returned to closed session.

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, reviewed a letter sent to Commissioner Collins related to an agreement with the County.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to have Mr. Adams respond to the letter with specific points to be addressed.

Administrative: Procedures and Schedule

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

The Commissioners discussed specific procedures and scheduling related to approval of closed session minutes.

At 12:41 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 and adjourn.



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: May 11, 2021

Time: 11:29 a.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Rucci

Seconded By: Commissioner Coates

Vote to Close Session:

	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gilbert O. Bowling, III.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amanda Stewart, M.Ed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bobby Rucci	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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)(4)(7) Legal: Proposal for a Business to locate in Charles County

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep business proprietary information confidential.

3-305(b)(7)(8) Legal: Update on Plan/Procedures Related to a Potential Litigation Issue


REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep legal approaches, plans, and strategies confidential

3-305(b)(7) Legal: Update on Response to Letter Related to an Agreement

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep legal negotiations confidential

Administrative: Review Administrative Procedure and Schedule

REASON FOR CLOSING: Executive role of the Commissioners



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President