

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday May 25, 2021 (Legislative Day)

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 the Commissioners were present.

Announcement of Charles County Board of County Commissioners' Proclamations Issued for June 2021

2021-35 National Gun Violence Awareness Day

Comments

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to make today, May 25, 2021, a legislative day.

Charles County Health Department Update: Coronavirus/COVID-19

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, Charles County Department of Health; and Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services, provided an update on COVID-19 statistics and how they are responding to COVID-19.

Ms. Lilly indicated that COVID positive numbers continue to decline. She indicated that COVID positive transports are low with no transport last week. 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 as needed and monitor COVID in the County.

Dr. Abney reviewed the multiple vaccination clinics, pop-up clinics, and the mobile vaccines within the community that are being held indoors and drive through. She discussed the youth vaccinations for ages twelve (12) and older being given at La Plata, Westlake, Lackey and Thomas Stone High Schools. She stressed that everyone is eligible to get the vaccination. She reported the statistics on COVID

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vaccination doses given to Charles County residents. She also reviewed COVID cases by age, Charles County COVID deaths by age and hospitalization by age and the racial and gender breakdown of fatalities. She also reviewed the average age of COVID cases and contact tracing data. She stated that masks are not required in most places but are still required in schools indoors, public transportation, and health care facilities. She concluded with recommendations for fully vaccinated people.

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. She also mentioned promoting vaccinations for children ages twelve (12) to fifteen (15) years old.

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. He stated that there was one (1) COVID positive case of a fully vaccinated person but that the decrease in COVID positive cases and low numbers and no community spread has remained steady. He reviewed a pilot COVID-19 screening program that will be used at schools. He reminded that in-person graduation ceremonies for this year will be held next week.

Bi-Annual Update: Charles County Health Department

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, Charles County Department of Health, Abney provided the Department of Health's bi-annual update, which included statistics on mortality rates, infant mortality rates by race, induced mortality rates, obesity statistics, and the COVID response and nursing and emergency response. She reviewed chronic disease prevention and management virtual classes and socially distanced, outdoor park meetings. She also discussed new projects, BMI screening for children in dental setting, disability inclusion coalition, home fall risk assessment program, Overdose Data to Action (OD2A). She concluded with updates on the Mobile Integrated Health, Environmental Health and Behavioral Health Services, and the Community Health Needs Assessment.

Approval of the Minutes of May 18, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of May 18, 2021.

Announcement: Next Commissioner Session will be held June 8, 2021

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next scheduled session was on June 8, 2021.

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Approval Items

Lease: Capital Club House/Black Bear

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Capital Club House/Black Bear lease.

Letter of Intent for the College of Southern Maryland New Packaged Wastewater Treatment Facility

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci, and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the letter of intent for the College of Southern Maryland.

Commission for Veterans Affairs Video Participation- "Vets in Transition"

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling, and passed with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Commission for Veterans Affairs participation in the video.

Briefing: Request to Introduce and Set the Public Hearing: Amendments to the Charles County Code-Redistricting Board

Commissioner Stewart suggested introducing Bill 2021-03 Redistricting Board to amend the Charles County Code to provide certain selection criteria for the members of the Charles County Redistricting Board to be in line with the State regulations and not be influenced from outside groups to help the board stay impartial.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to introduce Bill 2021-03 The Charles County Redistricting Board Amendments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to set the public hearing for June 22, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. to be held virtually.

Update: Rural Broadband Task Force

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, and Ms. Evelyn Jacobson, Chief of Information Technology, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided an update on the Rural Broadband Task Force, including the Nanjemoy and Cobb Neck (NCN) Broadband Buildout project and that the County is receiving the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband's Expansion of Existing Broadband Networks Grant. This grant would assist with the Neighborhood Broadband Expansion Category Two (2) project, which includes Comcast expansion into the Serenity Woods neighborhood, and onto Belle Ridge Court, Cameron Ridge Road, Emory Place, Oaks Road, Waverly Point Road, and Banks O'Dee Road. These grant funded projects must be complete by December 31, 2022.

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Memorandum of Understanding agreements are being developed between the County and the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband and with the County and Comcast.

Staff indicated that Verizon has not agreed to partner with the County to expand services to underserved areas.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to have Ms. Hall and the task force draft a letter to Verizon expressing the County's concerns.

Ms. Hall indicated that she would bring back a draft letter for approval.

Briefing: Charles County Code Violation Fees

Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, and Mr. Ray Shumaker, Chief of Codes Permits and Inspection Services, Department of Planning and Growth Management, joined the Commissioners to discuss Commissioner Stewart's concerns of charging noncompliance daily violation fees during COVID pandemic.

Ms. Carpenter indicated that Calvert and St. Mary's did not alter their violation fees during this time and that only two (2) cases out of four hundred and seventy-nine (479) cases received in Charles County during this timeframe were assessed daily fines. If the violator completes permit process to get into compliance, then fee is stopped. Fees are assessed to help incentivize compliance and each violation is looked at on a case-by-case basis. The end goal is to get violators into compliance for public safety.

Commissioner Stewart clarified that she felt that if fines were assessed based on the pandemic, then consideration to change policy should be made, if not due to pandemic, then they should not change.

Commissioner Bowling suggested looking at changing the policy.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to have Mr. Adams provide legal advice in closed session on the legal ramifications of any potential policy changes.

Briefing: Renewable Energy Work Group Recommendations

Ms. Beth Groth, Planner III, Department of Planning and Growth Management; Ms. Frances Sherman, Chief of Environmental Resources; Mr. John Stevens, Chief of Capital Projects, Department of Public Works; Mr. Taylor Yewell, Chief of Development, Department of Economic Development; Ms. TaTanya Bowinan, Assistant Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; and Ms. Terrah Dews, Associate County Attorney, Office of the Charles County Attorney, joined the Commissioners to provide a presentation on the Renewable Energy Work Groups' recommendations

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for a climate action planning process. A climate action plan (CAP) is a comprehensive roadmap that outlines specific activities that a community will take to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Staff recommended a phased approach, starting with Phase One (1) Government Operations Climate Action Plan followed by Phases Two (2) and Three (3) Community-wide Climate Action Plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to accept staff recommendations.

****TO BE RESCHEDULED** Update: American Rescue Plan Proposed Spending Plan**

Closed Session

At 11:35 a.m., Commissioner Coates made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bowling 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)(1)(4)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss one (1) potential new business locating in Charles County; to discuss one (1) Appointment to a Committee Assignment and Appointments to Commissioner Appointed Boards, Commissions, and Committees The reason for going into closed is to keep business proprietary information confidential and to keep personnel information confidential.

Summary Closed Session Items

At 12:04 p.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

3-305(b)(4)(7) Proposal for Business to Locate in Charles County

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, and Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, John Steven, Bradley Jeffries, Candis Stretcher, Patrick Welch and Meng Ji.

Mr. Bradly Jeffries, Energy Ventures, provided a presentation on the proposed business and current contract.

At 1:16 p.m. Mr. Jeffries, Ms. Candis Stretcher, Mr. Patrick Welch and Mr. Meng Ji left closed session.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to have further open session discussion on this topic.

3-305(b)(1) Commissioner Committee Assignment

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

The consensus of the Commissioners was to have Commissioner Coates serve on the College of Southern Maryland Mediation Center Advisory Board.

Official action will be taken on June 8, 2021.

3-305(b)(1) Personnel: Boards and Commissions Appointment Discussion

This item will be rescheduled for June 8, 2021.

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

Mr. Mark Belton, County Administrator, reviewed recommendations of a potential process for selection of position required by the Kirwan legislation.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to bring this item up for discussion today under "New Business".

At 1:34 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.

The Commissioners returned to open session at 2:04 p.m.

Roll Call

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

Briefing: Update on Charles County Disparity Study

Ms. Lucretia Freeman-Buster, Chief of Business Development, Department of Economic Development; and Ms. Michele Clark Jenkins, Ms. Ana Paula Pohl, Sascha Hollingsworth and Mr. Keonnie Igwe, Griffin & Strong, provided an update on the Charles County Disparity Study. Ms. Jenkins reviewed items currently underway: conduct relevant market analysis, utilization analysis, availability analysis, disparity analysis and statistical significance test. Tasks that have not yet begun including complete findings and recommendations, draft report, final report and presentations. The draft report should be completed by June 2021 and the final report by the end of July 2021.

**At 2:11 p.m. Commissioner Rucci joined session.*

Discussion: Housing Authority in Charles County History

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney II, Office of the County Attorney, Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, and Ms. Rita Wood, Chief of Housing, Department of Community Services, participated in a discussion with the Commissioners on the history of the Housing Authority in Charles County.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to have staff from Community Services, Planning and Growth Management and the Housing Work Group review ideas of an advisory board.

Update: Commissioners' Goals and Objectives- Goal 5: Quality of Life

Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services, Ms. Eileen Minnick, Director, Mr. Sam Drury, Chief of Recreation, Mr. Tim Drummond, Chief of Parks, and Ms. Ashley Chenault, Chief of Tourism, Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism; Mr. Martin Proulx, Agriculture Business

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development Manager, Department of Economic Development; Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, Community Services; and Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on the Commissioners' Goal Five (5); Quality of Life. They reviewed public safety, healthcare, recreation and entertainment, parks and amenities, entertainment and events, agritourism, affordable and equitable housing.

Commissioners' New Business

Mr. Mark, Belton, County Administrator, reviewed proposed process to move forward with selection of Implementation Coordinator required from the Kirwan legislation.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to have Mr. Belton work with the Charles County Board of Education on the selection of an implementation coordinator to act as a liaison to the State Accountability and Implementation Board.

At 3:29 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to 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 25, 2021

Time: 11:35 a.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Coates

Seconded By: Commissioner Bowling

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) [X] 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) [X] 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) [X] 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.

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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: Potential Business Locating in Charles County

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep business proprietary information confidential.

3-305(b)(1)(7) Personnel One (1) Appointment to a Committee Assignment and Appointments to Commissioner Appointed Boards, Commissions, and Committees

REASON FOR CLOSING: Keep personnel information confidential.



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President