

**Regular Meeting of County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday December 7, 2021 (Legislative Day)**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened virtually at 1:04 p.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.

**Comments**

Commissioner Collins took time to remember those who defended our Country and lost their lives during the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941.

**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, Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator, and Mr. Michael Meiser, School Safety and Residency Administrator, Charles County Public Schools, provided an update on COVID-19 statistics and how they are responding to COVID-19.

Dr. Abney indicated that masks help prevent the spread of respiratory illness and is a key strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19. She felt the private sector should require masks if they wanted to. She indicated that the positive case rate in Charles County is in the moderate to substantial range. It is the third lowest level in Maryland. The Delta Variant accounts for ninety nine percent (99%) of all COVID 19 cases. The Omicron is the newest variant and there have been three (3) cases in Maryland. She reviewed the case rates and percentages of positivity and overview of COVID-19 cases. She mentioned the vaccination and test sites.

Ms. Lilly reported on the COVID positive EMS Transports per month in 2021 and as of this date there were ten (10) transports in November which continues downward trend. She informed the Commissioners that the Department of Emergency Services (DES) will continue to monitor COVID and provide support as needed.

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Mr. Grimes noted that there were ten (10) COVID positive patients in the hospital. He said that all hospitals in Maryland have had a thirty-three percent (33%) increase during the past week since the Thanksgiving holiday. He also mentioned the critical staffing needs across all hospitals.

Ms. Harris reiterated media's support for the Health Department efforts and the ongoing media support related to the importance and availability of COVID-19 vaccinations and testing. She indicated that the communications efforts are still focused on informing residents about misinformation. She also mentioned the time taken to respond to the County's efforts related to the mask mandate.

Mr. Meiser indicated an increase in COVID positive cases but not through community spread. There has also been an increase in the registration for COVID screening test in the public schools.

**Approval of the Minutes of November 30, 2021**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Minutes of November 30, 2021.

**Announcement: Next Commissioner Sessions will be held on December 14 and 15, 2021**

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next scheduled sessions will be held on December 14 and 15, 2021.

**Approval Items**

*FY2022 Budget Amendment Increase #9317 VICS 18 Fund Deficit*

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2022 Budget Amendment Increase #9317 for twenty thousand six hundred and forty dollars (\$20,640.00).

**Request to Introduce and Schedule a Public Hearing: Zoning Text Amendment 21-163, Revising Mixed use (MX) Zone Development Standards in the Federal Opportunity Zone**

Mr. Kirby Blass, Planner III, Department of Planning and Growth Management explained that the proposed Bill would amend the development standards for the Mixed Use (MX) zone, specifically for properties that are located within the designated Federal Opportunity Zone.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to introduce Bill 2021-12 Zoning Text Amendment 21-163, Revising Mixed Use (MX) Zone Development Standards in the federal Opportunity Zone.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to schedule the public hearing on January 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, Maryland.

**Update: Charles County Public Schools Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

Ms. Christina Mulhollan Miller, Coordinator of District Innovation, and Ms. Karen Acton, Assistant Superintendent of Fiscal and Administrative Services, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), provided an update on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Kirwan restructures the funding formulas to increase and target the per pupil funding to each of the educational goal areas. County Government is required to fund CCPS the equivalent of at least the same per pupil level as in the prior year or its required local share, whichever is greater. This cost sharing is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2025.

**Briefing: Project Lifesaver**

Sergeant Charles McCue, and Corporal Mark Bourgeois, Charles County Sheriff's Office; Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, and Ms. Cindy Olmsted, Long Term Care Coordinator, Department of Community Services, provided a presentation on Project Lifesaver. The project uses a tracking device for persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's, related dementias, or individuals with special needs who are at risk of wandering away from their caregivers. The tracking device assists the Sheriff's Office with locating vulnerable persons if they should wander and become lost. This program has deemed to be very successful.

**Discussion: Rental Housing Market Data**

Mr. Mark Belton, County Administrator, Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, and Ms. Rita Wood, Chief of Housing Authority, Department of Community Services and Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, and Mr. Jason Groth, Deputy County Administrator, Department of Planning and Growth Management, joined the Commissioners to discuss Rental Housing Market Data. Staff explained difficulties and barriers to gathering housing information from a dynamic housing market. Staff recommended professional research study to obtain the following information:

- Assess the county's rental housing market to better understand the factors that impact rental housing affordability.
- Determine average rent increases year over year for existing tenants.
- Develop a method of collecting information on actual rental costs by housing type.
- Identify barriers and opportunities for affordable rental housing, as well as the current state of supply/demand in the County.
- Develop recommendations for new or modified housing policies that are consistent with established goals and objectives concerning rental housing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates to have staff begin the Request for Proposals (RFP) process to conduct research for this information. There was not a second, so this motion died.

**Follow Up: Discussion on Maryland House Bill 670 Police Accountability Board Membership**

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, II, reviewed the draft resolution for the creation of the Charles County Police Accountability Board. Ms. Mitchell explained the additional language added for membership qualifications.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Resolution 2021-23 as presented by Ms. Mitchell.

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**Discussion: Pre-Trial Services**

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney and Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, II, Office of Charles County" County Attorney, provided a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners on pre-trial services. House Bill 1072 passed the General Assembly during the 2021 session. It enables the Charles County Commissioners to establish and provide for the administration of a community service program and a pretrial release program as a criminal justice resource.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to have the County Attorney draft legislation and to begin to incorporate this into the public process.

**Closed Session**

At 3:33 p.m., Commissioner Coates 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)(1)(7)(8) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to review one (1) Litigation Proposed Settlement; to discuss appointments to two (2) Commissioner appointed Boards; The reason for going into closed is to keep legal approaches, strategies, and negotiations confidential and to keep personnel information confidential. A portion of this session will also concern the administrative function of the County Commissioners in their executive role.

**Summary Closed Session Items**

At 3:48 p.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

**3-305(b)(1): Personnel Boards and Commissions Appointments**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Jesse Bungcayao, Kenberly Stephens

Ms. Jesse Bungcayao, Executive Assistant, reviewed requested appointments to the Disability Review Boards and the Ethics Commission,

The Commissioners reached a consensus related to these boards. Official action was taken later this day under Action on Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

**Administrative**

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

The Commissioners reviewed a letter/email received from a resident related to ongoing issues. The Commissioners agreed that if any individual Commissioner would like to meet with this resident, they will schedule their own meeting.

**3-305(b)(7)(8)Legal: Potential Litigation Related to an Agreement**

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

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Mr. Matthew McCarly, Outside Counsel, reviewed the negotiation process related to this litigation. He also reviewed the proposed settlement options. This discussion will be scheduled for further discussion on December 14, 2021.

At 4:39 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to end this closed session.

The Commissioners returned to open session at 6:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

**Actions on Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Dr. Howard Haft to the Sheriff Disability Review Board and the Charles County Disability Review Board.

**Discussion: Overview of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resolution**

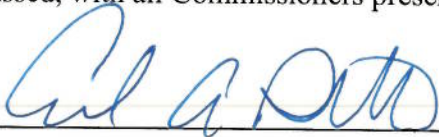
Ms. Nancy Navarro, Councilwoman, and her staff Mr. Craig Wilson and Mr. Roland Ikheloa Montgomery County Government, joined the Commissioners to share a presentation on her work in Montgomery County on advancing racial equity and social justice.

The Commissioners will review a Charles County resolution concerning commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the next Commissioners meeting.

**Commissioners' New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

At 6:37 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Stewart 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: December 7, 2021

Time: 3:33 p.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Coates

Seconded By: Commissioner Rucci

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)(3)(7)(8) Legal One (1) Potential Litigation Issue**

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

**3-305(b)(1) Personnel: Two (2) Commissioner Appointed Boards**

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep personnel information confidential.



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President