

Special Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday, December 29, 20221 (Legislative Day)

The special meeting of the County Commissioners was convened virtually at 9:01 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 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

Closed Session One (1)

At 9:02 a.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)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to seek legal advice on strategies to address recent increase in COVID-19 positive numbers. The reason for going into closed is to keep legal approaches confidential.

Summary Closed Session Items

At 9:08 a.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

3-305(b)(7) Legal: Advice Related to COVID 19

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Dr. Diana Abney, and Amber Starn.

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, with input from Dr. Diana Abney, Charles County Department of Health, provided recommended action/strategy the Commissioners should follow to address the recent increase in COVID-19 numbers.

At 9:39 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to end this closed session.

The Commissioners returned to open session at 9:42 a.m.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates, and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to make today a Legislative Day.

Special Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday, December 29, 2021 (Legislative Day)

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; Mr. William Grimes, Vice President, Ancillary Services & Incident Commander, UM Charles Regional Medical Center; and Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator; and Mr. Jason Stoddard, Director of Safety, Charles County Public Schools, joined the Commissioners to discuss continued increase of cases of COVID-19 in the Charles County.

Ms. Lilly reported on the COVID positive EMS Transports per month in 2021 and as of this date there were fifty-eight (58) transports in December. She informed the Commissioners that the Department of Emergency Services (DES) will continue to monitor COVID and provide support as needed.

Commissioner Stewart requested that Department of Emergency Services look into setting up and cleaning of ambulances again at the hospital site.

Mr. Grimes explained that there were thirty-one (31) COVID positive patients with six in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). He explained that people should not just come to the hospital to get COVID testing unless they are very sick. They should go to one of the many testing sites in the County.

**Break 9:56 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

Dr. Abney shared the latest COVID-19 statistics which revealed a significant increase in positivity case rates and hospitalizations in the County. She stated that wearing a face covering is an important mitigation effort to protect the health, welfare, and safety of all residents and recommended that Commissioners act urgently on this issue. She recommended going to a County wide mask mandate.

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 focused on informing residents about not going to the hospital just to get tested and where they can go to get tested.

Mr. Stoddard indicated an increase in COVID positive cases. He also explained about parents being able to register for the free resource screening process.

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, explained that the Commissioners could reintroduce the proposed legislation on the County wide mask mandate as emergency legislation and change the public hearing from January 12 to January 4, 2022. As emergency legislation, the public hearing needs three (3) days' notice. Emergency legislation will need to pass with a super majority, four (4) out of five (5) votes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve reintroducing Ordinance 2021-22 Promulgation of

Special Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday, December 29, 2021 (Legislative Day)

a Local Health Regulation Requiring the Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 as emergency legislation from Board of County Commissioners in their role as the County's Board of Health.


A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-yes; Commissioner Coates-yes; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Rucci-yes; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed five (5) to zero (0).

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to hold this public hearing on Tuesday January 4, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. to be held virtually.

At 11:10 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.



Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President

Special Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday, December 29, 2021 (Legislative Day)

FORM OF STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING

Location: Virtual- MS Teams Date: December 29, 2021

Time: 9:02 a.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Coates 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) [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.

FORM OF STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING

Special Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday, December 29, 2021 (Legislative Day)

Appendix C C-2

(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: To Seek Legal Advice on Options to Address COVID-19 Increases

REASON FOR CLOSING: To keep legal approaches confidential.



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President