

**Regular Meeting of County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday January 11, 2022 (Legislative Day)**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened virtually at 1:06 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.

**Announcement of Charles County Board of County Commissioners' Proclamations Issued for January 2022**

2022-01 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and Beyond  
2022-02 National Mentoring Month  
2022-03 National School Choice Week  
2022-04 Catholic Schools Week

**Comments**

Commissioner Collins recognized Dale Lambreth for being named the National Federation of High School Coaches 2020-2021 Boys Basketball Coach of the Year. He has been the Thomas Stone High School Basketball Coach for twenty-two (22) years. He also recognized, Bruce Davis who passed away on December 25, 2021. He was a former Lackey High School athlete who went on to play in the College Rose Bowl and then play in the NFL. After his football career, he taught and mentored youth.

**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. Craig Renner, Director of Marketing and Communication, and Dr. Joseph Moser, Chief Medical Officer, UM Charles Regional Medical Center; and Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator; Mr. Jason Stoddard, Director of Safety, Charles County Public Schools and Mr. Brandon Foster, Director Correctional Facility, and Mr. Brian Eley, Chief of Staff, Charles County Sheriff's Office, provided an update on COVID-19 statistics and how they are responding to COVID-19.

Dr. Abney explained that the Maryland State Department of Health had a network security incident, but that the website is up and running. She reviewed current COVID cases, and that Charles County was in HIGH Community Transmission Level and that everyone should wear a mask in public, indoor

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settings. She reviewed the positivity rate and case rate and indicated a slight decrease in both from last week. She reviewed fatality statistics and post-vaccination infection data. Dr. Abney shared information on the Omicron variant, which is fast spreading, and ways to try and protect against it. She stated that vaccinations will protect people from getting really sick. She discussed vaccination data and Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. She also reviewed vaccination and testing site's locations and times and informed the Commissioners of the testing site at Regency Stadium.

Ms. Lilly reported on the COVID positive EMS Transports per month in 2021 and as of this date there were sixty-six (66) transports in January. She explained that an EMS Trailer on the hospital site would take up parking spaces and that there was a pending project at the hospital for an EMS room. She also explained about decontamination (decon) and that the CDC indicated that surface spread of COVID was lower than direct contact spread. She informed the Commissioners that the Department of Emergency Services (DES) will continue to monitor COVID and provide support as needed.

Mr. Renner and Dr. Moser provided an update on the declaration of a state of emergency for the hospital, current COVID-19 hospitalizations and staff COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. They reminded residents to only go to the hospital for emergencies and to visit their primary physician or urgent care facilities for minor illness, such as coughs, colds, and low-grade fevers. Mr. Renner noted that there were sixty-two (62) patients in the hospital and the hospital has one hundred(100) beds available.

Mr. Stoddard indicated an increase in COVID positive cases but not through community spread. He reviewed the schools' COVID-19 tracing process and case statistics. He discussed the weekly screening process and updates provided on the dashboard. The school has a high supply of personal protection equipment (PPE).

Director Foster and Mr. Brian Eley provided an update on the Charles County Detention Center and how the agency is addressing the COVID-19 outbreak. They indicated that they are now outbreak free with a few cases of mild COVID positive cases. They have procedures in place on how to address COVID cases.

Ms. Harris provided an update on the County's communications efforts, which includes continuing social media monitoring and response to media inquiries. She indicated media's support to the Health Department as testing expands. She also discussed the podcast status on COVID 19.

The Commissioners indicated that they would be willing to help provide the community within home test kits once Dr. Abney submits the request.

**Discussion: Rescheduling Public Hearing on Proposed Ordinance 2021-22 Promulgation of a Local Health Regulation Requiring the Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19**

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, explained that the public hearing scheduled for January 4, 2022 was postponed due to inclement weather. This emergency legislation requires three (3) days public

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notice. He also mentioned that the Governor declared a State of Emergency for Public Health Care and did not reinstitute a mask mandate. Mr. Adams reviewed the requirements of emergency legislation, three (3) day public notice; super majority vote needed to pass this legislation- four (4) to one (1) or five (5) to zero (0); and that the legislation will take effect immediately if passed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to reschedule the public hearing on the emergency legislation, Ordinance 2021-22, for January 18, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. This public hearing will be held virtually.

**Approval of the Minutes of December 14, 15 and 29, 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 December 14, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of December 15, 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 December 29, 2021.

**Announcement: Virtual Public Hearing on Wednesday January 12, 2022 and Next Scheduled Commissioners' Session(s) will be January 25, 2022**

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that there is a virtual public hearing scheduled on January 12, 2022 on Bill 2021-12 Zoning Text Amendment 21-163, Revising Mixed Use (MX) Zone Development Standards in the Federal Opportunity Zone and the recently approved public hearing on Ordinance 2021-22 for January 18, 2022. She also stated that the next scheduled sessions will be held on January 25 and 26, 2022.

**Approval Items**

*FY2022 Budget Amendment Increase #9440 EnerGov Upgrade*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2022 Budget Amendment Increase #9440 for eighty-three thousand nine hundred and twenty dollars (\$83,920.00).

*Change to Economic Development Advisory Board Bylaws*

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the changes to the Economic Development Advisory Board bylaws.

*Resolution- Amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan- Lands Surrounding Maryland Airport*  
(Approved by Majority BOCC on October 19, 2021)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Resolution 2021-26 An Amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan: Lands Surrounding Maryland Airport.

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**Briefing and Request to Schedule a Public Hearing: Solid Waste Management Plan**

Ms. Frances Sherman, Chief of Environmental Services and Ms. Margaret Romero, Recycling and Litter Control Superintendent, Department of Public Works; and Ms. Amy Blessinger, Planner III, Department of Planning and Growth Management, explained that this plan is rewritten every ten (10) years.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to schedule the public hearing for Wednesday February 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. to be held virtually.

**Briefing and Request for Approval: Compensation Committee Report and Resolution**

Mr. William Johnson, Chair, Compensation Commission and Ms. Elizabeth Theobalds, Deputy County Attorney, Office of the Charles County Attorney, provided a review of the Compensation Committee's report and resolution related to the compensation of the Board of County Commissioners. These recommendations would take effect starting with the next elected Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Bowling indicated that he did not feel that any Commissioner should be getting an increase.

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 accept the recommendations of the Compensation Commission. Commissioner Bowling was opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Coates-yes; Commissioner Rucci-yes; Commissioner Bowling-no; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed four (4) to one (1).

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 introduce these recommendations as Bill 2022-01. Commissioner Bowling was opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Coates-yes; Commissioner Rucci-yes; Commissioner Bowling-no; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed four (4) to one (1).

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 for Wednesday February 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. to be held virtually.

**Update: 3-Step Stormwater Process for Agricultural Clearing**

Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Mr. Ray Shumaker, Chief of Codes, Permits and Inspection Services, and Mr. Randy Crowder, Engineer III, Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on the three-step stormwater management process for agricultural clearing options. Options staff presented include Option One (1) exempting clearing that is done for an agricultural use; Option

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Two (2) eliminating the three-step process and only requiring an applicant to obtain a Development Services Permit to address water quantity and obtain a Soil Conservation Water Quality Plan to address water quality; or Option Three (3) maintaining current practices requiring an applicant to undergo the three-step process. Staff recommended Option Two (2).

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor of Option One (1) provided the farm activity remains active for 20 years.

**Quarterly Update: Chief Equity Officer**

Ms. Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, and Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, Department of Human Resources, provided the quarterly update on the work the Chief Equity Office is doing to normalize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for Charles County Government. These efforts include facilitating constructive conversation about DEI; promoting awareness of DEI training, programs, and initiatives; and creating a shared understanding and establishing the importance of DEI.

**Commissioners' New Business**

Commissioner Bowling queried about receiving legislative updates. These updates are scheduled to start on January 25, 2022.

Commissioner Rucci queried about funding home test kits for COVID testing. No funding request has been submitted yet from Dr. Abney, Health Officer, Charles County Health Department.

At 3:49 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all the Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.



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Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners



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Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President