

Special Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday January 18, 2021 (Legislative Day)

The special scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was virtually at 4:03 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 the Commissioners were present.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Bowling requested potential agenda item for next week on a discussion related to assistance with economic development. Commissioner Collins will discuss this request further during the agenda meeting for next week.

Joint Discussion: Coronavirus/COVID-19 Measures Charles County Board of Education

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, and Ms. Amber Starn, Charles County Department of Health along with Dr. Maria Navarro, Superintendent, Charles County Public Schools, members of the Charles County Board of Education, and Mr. Jason Stoddard, Director of Safety, Charles County Public Schools joined the Commissioners to discuss Charles County Public Schools COVID-19 processes and status.

**Break 4:23 p.m. – 6:05 p.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All the Commissioners were present.

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

The Commissioners conducted a virtual public hearing on the proposed Emergency Ordinance 2021-22 Promulgation of a Local Health Regulation Requiring the Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19. This Ordinance would institute a Countywide mask mandate. Prior to hearing from the public, Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, Charles County Department of Health, shared data and other information regarding current COVID-19 statistics, including vaccination rates, case rates, hospitalizations, and deaths.

There were seventy-six (76) citizens who registered to speak. Sixty-five (65) citizens provided public comments.

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**Break 6:55 p.m. – 7:04 p.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All the Commissioners were present.

Commissioner Bowling requested that the numbers of public comments received be read into the record.

There were two thousand one hundred and forty-four (2144) comments received. One hundred and ninety-seven (197) were for the legislation; one thousand nine hundred and forty-two (1942) were against the legislation; and five (5) were neutral.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close the record.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and failed, with Commissioners Stewart, Coates and Collins present, voting in favor to adopt Emergency Ordinance 2021-22 Promulgation of a Local Health Regulation Requiring the Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19. Commissioners Rucci and Bowling were opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Rucci- no; Commissioner Coates-yes; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Bowling-no; Commissioner Collins-yes. Since a super majority was needed to pass emergency legislation, the motion failed two (2) opposed to three (3) for the legislation.

At 9:53 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.



Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President