

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday February 1, 2022 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened virtually at 1:03 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 Commissioners were present:

Announcement of Charles County Board of County Commissioners' Proclamation(s) Issued for February 2022

2022-06 National Freedom Day
2022-07 Black History Month
2022-08 FeBREWary Month
2022-09 Career and Technical Education Month

Comments

There were no comments.

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 Mr. Jason Stoddard, Director of Safety, Charles County Public Schools, provided an update on COVID-19 statistics and how they are responding to COVID-19.

Dr. Abney reviewed current COVID cases and stated that Charles County was in still in a HIGH Community Transmission Level and that everyone should wear a mask in public, indoor settings. She reviewed the positivity rate which decreased from fourteen-point four two percent (14.42%) last week to eight-point six one percent (8.61%). The case rate also decreased from one hundred and one point one two percent (101.12%) last week to forty-eight-point two five percent (48.25%). She reviewed death statistics, hospitalization trends, and post-vaccination infection data. Dr. Abney shared information on the Omicron variant, vaccination data, and Charles County booster percentages. She also reviewed vaccination and testing site's locations and times.

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Ms. Lilly reported on the COVID positive EMS Transports per month in 2021-22. There were one hundred and eighty-three (183) transports in January. She reviewed Viral Pandemic Triage Protocol usage by the quarter along with the successful uses by the quarter. She informed the Commissioners that the Department of Emergency Services (DES) will continue to monitor COVID and provide support as needed.

Mr. Grimes stated that the number of COVID cases in the hospitals has drastically declined. The hospital has been operating in Crisis Care Center. The biggest issue still is that staffing has been down.

Mr. Stoddard shared that the number of COVID cases continue to decline for two (2) weeks and was two hundred and sixty-six (266) which is a decrease from the four hundred and thirty-eight (438) cases last week. This week's positivity numbers are also down. Guidance on field trips, proms and other activities will be coming out.

Legislative Update: 2022 Maryland General Assembly Session

Ms. Daniellé Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney; Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator; Mr. Joseph Green, and Ms. Sherri Simms, GS Proctor and Associates, Inc., provided updates on the 2022 Maryland General Assembly legislative session.

Ms. Mitchell provided an overview of legislative proposals submitted by Charles County Commissioners to the Charles County Delegation, seeking their consideration for state legislation. She indicated that two proposals have received draft Bill status:

LR1740 Workgroup Public Private Partnership (PPP) for school construction projects
STATUS: Received draft Bill.

LR1735 Sunday Hunting - Charles County
STATUS: Received draft Bill

Additional updates of the 2022 Maryland General Assembly Session included:

SB35 Charles County - Program Open Space

Hearing was held on January 25, 2022. The Board of Charles County Commissioners submitted a letter of opposition. Department of Natural Resources sent a letter of information. There was one (1) additional testimony given in support.

SB56 Program Open Space - Local Plans and Programs

This is the same as Bill SB35 but statewide. Hearing was held on January 25, 2022. Testimony in opposition was given by four (4) organization. Department of Natural Resources sent a letter of information and there was one (1) additional testimony given in support.

SB76 Motor Vehicle Registration - Exceptions for Golf Carts and Low Speed Vehicles - Cobb Island
Hearing was held on January 18, 2022. There was no testimony. Received favorable report by Judicial Proceedings. Additional historic documents were provided and reviewed.

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SB89 University System of Maryland - Regional Higher Education Center - Charles County
Hearing is scheduled for February 9, 2022. Letter was sent to Senator Ellis for more information but no response yet.

SB96 Community Parks and Playgrounds Program - Charles County - Basketball Courts
Hearing was held on January 25, 2022. There was testimony in opposition given.

SB108 Charles County Public Library - Imagination Library Program - Funding
Hearing scheduled on February 3, 2022. This Bill would require Governor funding.

SB128 Charles County - Program Open Space - Waldorf Core Zone
Hearing was held on January 25, 2022. The Board of Charles County Commissioners submitted a letter of opposition.

SB136 College of Southern Maryland - Charles County Campus - Transition to Charles County Community College
Hearing scheduled on February 9, 2022. The Board of Charles County Commissioners submitted a letter of opposition.

SB378/HB646 Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland-Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Hearing scheduled for February 9, 2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to send a letter of support.

Ms. Mitchell also mentioned tracking the following as Bills of interest:

SB85 Property Tax Credit for Disabled Veterans

SB122 Income Tax- Subtraction Modification- Volunteer Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services

SB160 Natural Resources-Sunday Hunting- Migratory Game Birds

HB177 9-1-1 Registry Program-Autism and Other Special Needs

Approval of the Minutes of January 25, 2022

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 January 25, 2022.

Announcement: Next Scheduled Commissioners' Session(s) will be held on February 8 and 9, 2022

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next scheduled sessions will be held on February 8 and 9, 2022.

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Approval Items

Agreement- State of Maryland Distributors and Janssen National Settlement Agreement (Opioid)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the State of Maryland Distributors and Janssen National Settlement Agreement and authorize Commissioner Collins to sign on behalf of the Board.

Update: Commissioners' Goals and Objectives- Goal 1: Economic Development and Supportive Services

Ms. Kelly Robertson Slagle, Director, Department of Economic Development; Ms. Ashley Chenault, Chief of Tourism, Department of Recreation, Parks and Planning; Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; Mr. Bernard Cochran, Acting Director, Department of Public Works; and Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on Goal 1: Economic Development and Supportive Services. The presentation highlighted new business support services, COVID-19 response and loan disbursements, disparity study, international market and business development, business attraction projects, and industry diversification; tourism campaigns and initiatives; infrastructure services such as broadband access and water and sewer infrastructure; and transportation updates.

Briefing and Submission of Final Plan: Charles County Redistricting Board

Ms. Dyotha Sweat, Mr. Daniel Creighton, Ms. Sowande Brown-Lawson, and Ms. Jamila Smith, Members of the Redistricting Board, provided a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners which included an overview of the Redistricting Board members, purpose, what redistricting changed and what did not change; requirements and constraints to the redistricting map; timeline of events required by County Code; methodology; public hearing schedule; documents posted prior to public hearings; public participation overview; and summary of changes. The Redistricting Board also provided the submission of the final redistricting plan for Charles County and a copy of the map.

Commissioners' New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Closed Session

At 2:32 p.m. Commissioner Bowling made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Coates 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 discuss a proposed contract related to a litigation case; and to review two (2) Boards and Commissions' vacancies. The reason for going into closed is to keep legal approaches and negotiations and personnel information confidential.

Summary Closed Session Items

At 2:49 p.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

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3-305 (b)(1)Boards, Commissions, and Committees

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

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, reviewed recommended appointment process for the Charles County Police Accountability Board.

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, reviewed the vacancies on the Planning Commission and steps that are being taken and recommendations for application process.

The Commissioners provided staff with directions on how to proceed with each of these Boards.


3-305(b)(7)(8)Legal: Proposed Contract for Legal Representation on Litigation Case

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Terrah Dews, Kyle McGee, Suzanne Sangree, Jason Wilson, and Viola Vetter.

Mr. Kyle McGee, Outside Counsel, presented information on a potential litigation case and proposal on how to proceed.

The Commissioners will review the proposal and potentially reschedule this discussion for further information and direction.

At 4:04 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 close session and 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: February 1, 2022

Time: 2:32 p.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Bowling

Seconded By: Commissioner Coates

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) [] 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) [X] 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
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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)(1) Personnel: Discuss Appointments to two (2) County Boards and Commissions

REASON FOR CLOSING: Keep personnel information confidential.

3-305(b)(7)(8)Legal: Discuss Proposed Contract Related to a Litigation Case

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



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President