

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

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, virtually and in person, at 9:37 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 Commissioner Bowling led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins were present. *Commissioner Coates was absent for the roll call. She joined session at 9:48 a.m.*

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

2022-11 National Women's History Month; 2022-12 Good Sportsmanship Month; 2022-13 National Agriculture Day; 2022-14 Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Day; 2022-15 National Vietnam War Veterans Day; 2022-16 Social Work Month; 2022-17 Irish American Heritage Month; 2022-18 National Deaf History Month

Comments

Commissioner Rucci explained why he would not be on camera today.

Commissioner Collins requested a moment of silence for peace in the Ukraine. He also announced that residents could apply for the free training program through the Department of Economic Development for businesses in Charles County through the Business Growth Advantage Program.

Charles County Health Department Update: Coronavirus/COVID-19

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, Charles County Department of Health; 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. 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 the LOW Community Transmission Level and that can wear a mask in public, indoor settings based on personal preference. She explained how the Center for Disease Control (CDC) measures community transmission levels. She reviewed the positivity rate which decreased from two-point seven nine

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

percent (2.79%) last week to one point eighty eight percent (1.88%). The case rate also decreased from twelve-point zero eight percent (12.08%) last week to seven percent (7.00%). She reviewed death statistics, hospitalization trends, and post-vaccination infection data. Dr. Abney shared information on the Omicron variant and subvariant BA.2, vaccination data, and Charles County booster percentages. She also reviewed vaccination and testing site's locations and times. Dr. Abney shared information on the COVID-19 vaccination among pregnant people. She discussed the distribution of at home test kits and KN95 masks. She reviewed the COVID positive EMS Transports per month in 2021-22. The number of transports for February were twenty-seven (27).

Mr. Grimes indicated that COVID cases in the hospital have dropped significantly, with six (6) total currently in the hospital and one (1) in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). This is a twenty six percent (26%) drop from last week. He announced that starting next week new visitation requirements will be put into effect but that masks would still be required.

Ms. Harris indicated that the Public Information Office maintains weekly calls with the State and continues to provide support and updates for the Health Department.

Mr. Stoddard shared that the number of COVID cases continue to decline drastically with it being at the third lowest numbers since the beginning of the pandemic. He informed the Commissioners that the State Board of Education removed the State's mask mandate for public schools starting on Friday March 4, 2022. He clarified that the Charles County Public Schools will have masks be optional. Mandatory screening for athletes has also been removed.

Discussion: Board of County Commissioners Public Hearings and Quarterly Town Hall Meetings

The County Commissioners discussed hybrid, virtual, and in-person options for weekly Commissioner meetings, public hearings, and quarterly town hall meetings.

The Commissioners directed staff to create hybrid options for weekly Commissioner meetings, public hearings and quarterly town hall meetings, with in-person options in the Blue Room of the County Government Building.

The Commissioners also directed Media Services to provide recommended costs for updating the Commissioner Meeting Room for hybrid capabilities and/or other options to provide this service.

Legislative Update: 2022 Maryland General Assembly Session

Ms. Danielle 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 update on the following legislation in the 2022 Maryland General Assembly Session:

HB1116 Charles County - Alcoholic Beverages - Abeyance of License
Considering with suggested amendments.

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

HB1428 Code Counties - Legislative Procedure - Notice Requirements
Awaiting Hearing Date.

HB1416 Charles County - Property Tax - Credit for Volunteer Emergency Responders
Awaiting Hearing Date.

HB1423/SB865 Charles County - Alcoholic Beverages - Multiple Class B Licenses
Awaiting Hearing Date.

HB739/SB916 Workgroup to Study the Fiscal and Operational Viability of Public-Private Partnerships for Charles County Public Schools
Hearing scheduled for March 15, 2022.

HB1415 Grading and Sediment Control Plans - Agricultural Land Management Practices - Definition
Awaiting Hearing Date.

HB1114/SB741 Charles County - Blighted Property - Special Property Tax Rate
Withdrawn. Need subclass defined in Code.

HB514/SB388 Charles County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting
Hearing scheduled on March 9, 2022.

SB0035 Charles County - Program Open Space - General Assembly Approval
SB0056 Program Open Space - Local Plans and Programs - General Assembly Approval
SB128 Charles County - Program Open Space - Waldorf Core Zone
All had hearings, no action at this time.

SB76 Motor Vehicle Registration - Exceptions for Golf Carts and Low Speed Vehicles - Cobb Island
In House side now for hearing.

HB1187/SB726 Transportation - Highway User Revenues - Revenue and Distribution
Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) supports this Bill.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to send a letter of support.

HB1124 Primary and Secondary Education - Local School Systems - Budget Reporting
Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) supports this Bill.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to send a letter of support.

HB1290 Education - Public School Construction - Funding and Administration
Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) supports this Bill.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to send a letter of support.

HB162 Public Safety - Law Enforcement - Body-Worn Cameras
Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) supports this Bill with amendments.

The Commissioners directed Ms. Mitchell to get feedback from the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

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

Recognition: Employee Length of Service, November 2021-March 2022; Top Performer, Fourth Quarter, October-December, 2021

The Commissioners recognized employees' years of service for November 2021 through March 2022. The Top Performer for the fourth quarter and Top Performer for 2021 was recognized during this hybrid session.

Approval of the Minutes of February 15, 2022

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of February 15, 2022.

Announcement: Next Commissioners' Session(s) are Scheduled for March 8 and 9, 2022

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next Commissioners' sessions are scheduled for March 8 and March 9, 2022.

Approval Items

FY2022 Budget Transfer Request #9610 Emergency Holding Basin Swan Point Wastewater Treatment Plant

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2022 Budget Transfer Request #9610 for one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00).

Letter of Support for Maryland Heritage Area Authority Grant for Historic Rich Hill Farmhouse

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve this letter of support.

Closed Session

At 11:08 a.m., Commissioner Bowling 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) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to review six (6) Boards and Commissions vacancies. The reason for going into closed is to keep personnel information confidential. A portion of this session will also concern matters related to the administrative function of the County Commissioners in their executive role.

Summary Closed Session Items

At 11:11 a.m. the Commissioners went into virtual closed session.

Administrative

Present: Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Alexis Blackwell, Jenifer Ellin, Bernard Cochran, Deborah Carpenter

Mr. Mark Belton, County Administrator, reviewed recommendations related to filling the Resilience Authority Executive Director position.

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

Mr. Belton also reviewed recommendations and next steps for overseeing County projects.

The Commissioners provided Mr. Belton input and recommendations.

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

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

Ms. Kenberly Stephens, Commissioner Specialist reviewed vacancies on the Police Accountability Board; Board of License Commissioners (Liquor Board); Planning Commission; Board of Appeals; Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP); and Homeowners Association Review Dispute Board (HOARDB).

The Commissioners reached a consensus on the LOSAP and HOARDB and official action took place later this day under Action on Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

The Commissioners provided direction to Ms. Stephens on next steps for the other Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

At 12:49 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to end this close session.

The Commissioners returned to open session at 1:16 p.m.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

Action on Boards, Commissions, and Committees

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint George Willett as chair of the Disability Review Board/Sheriff Disability Pension.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to reappoint Keith Hettel to the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP).

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Kimberly Goode and Tina Haney to the Homeowners' Association Dispute Review Board.

Update: Septic Tier Map-Newburg

Mr. Charles Rice, Assistant Chief of Planning, and Mr. Joel Binkley, Planner III, Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on the Newburg Septic Tier Map designation and a proposal to reclassify 900 acres from Tier 2 (planned for public sewer service) to Tier 4 (planned to remain rural allowing minor subdivision).

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to move forward with the Tier Map Amendment process and schedule a County Commissioner public hearing at a later date.

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

Update: Charles County Clean Charles Initiatives

Ms. Margaret Romero, Superintendent Recycling and Litter Control, Department of Public Works; Ms. Christina Gilroy and Mr. William Welch, Charles County Sheriff's Office, provided an update on Clean Charles initiatives. The Charles County Community Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, May 21, 2022. Residents can select an outdoor, public space to beautify and remove litter and county staff will provide supplies, such as bags, litter grabbers, gloves, safety vests, mulch, and trash disposal.

Briefing: Charitable Trust Nonprofit Workforce Panel Survey

Mr. Bill Dotson, Charitable Trust Board Member; Ms. Donna Retzlaff, Executive Director, Spring Dell Center; and Mr. Michael Young, Executive Director, Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, provided a presentation on the Nonprofit Workforce Panel Survey, which included results from thirty-nine (39) nonprofits. Top answers for nonprofit workforce shortages included a reduction in volunteer force due to the pandemic, stress and/or burnout, lack of financial resources to hire individuals in place of tasks previously performed by volunteers, and salary competition. More than forty five percent (45%) of survey participants felt there was a decrease of services during the pandemic, and more than fifty five percent (55%) saw a significant net revenue decrease because of the pandemic. They stressed that the unprecedented shortage of staff and volunteers make it very difficult to provide the services needed.

Legislative Update: 2022 Maryland General Assembly Session

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney, provided the requested follow up information from the Charles County Sheriff's Office on House Bill 162 Public Safety - Law Enforcement - Body-Worn Cameras. The Charles County Sheriff's Office has concerns with the practicality of the bill but have not taken a stance on this Bill. However, the Maryland Sheriff's Office Association is in support of the bill, with amendments..

The Commissioners reached a consensus to send a letter of support with MACo amendments included.

Briefing: Charles County Homeless and Emergency Shelter Committee

Dr. Kathleen Ruben, Sr. Program Manager, Catholic Charities; Ms. Sandy Washington, Chief Executive Officer, Lifestyles; Ms. Therese Wolf, Director, Charles County Department of Social Services; Ms. Corae Young, Chief Program Officer, Lifestyles, provided a presentation on the committee, the current services offered to the homeless community, pandemic impacts and trends, and recommendations for the future.

Commissioner Rucci requested that the County Administrator look into bridge funding sources. This would be done after Ms. Washington sends required documents needed to meet compliance for any funding resources.

**Break 3:42 p.m. – 3:54 p.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

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

Update: Commissioners' Goals and Objectives- Goal 2: Institutional Governance and Policy

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Ms. Evelyn Jacobson, Chief of Information Technology, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management; Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, Department of Human Resources; Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services; Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney; Ms. Kelly Robertson-Slagle, Director and Ms. Lucretia Freeman-Buster, Chief of Business Development, Department of Economic Development; and Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, provided an update on Goal 2: Institutional Governance and Policy of the Commissioners' Goals and Objectives. Highlights included new automated technologies; increased cyber protections; streamlining the permit system; internal learning opportunities for employees including diversity trainings at all levels and emotional intelligence trainings for executive and managing leadership; updated recruitment statistics; county branding through earned media and digital platforms; citizen engagement; legislative updates; governance leadership; and local and minority business programs.

Commissioners' New Business

There was no new business discussed.

At 4:45 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.



Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President

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

FORM OF STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING

Location: Virtual- MS Teams/Limited In-person

Date: March 1, 2022

Time: 11:08 a.m.

Motion By: Commissioner Bowling

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

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

(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:

Administrative-Update on Recommendations

3-305(b)(1) Personnel: Discuss Appointments Six (6) County Boards and Commissions Vacancies

REASON FOR CLOSING: Keep personnel information confidential.



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President