

**Regular Meeting of County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday September 20, 2022 (Legislative Day)**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, virtually and in person, 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  
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner  
Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed., County Commissioner  
Mark Belton, County Administrator  
Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator  
Wes Adams, County Attorney  
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

*\* Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner was absent*

**Call to Order/Pledge**

Commissioner Collins called the meeting to order and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins were present.

*\*Commissioner Bowling was absent.*

**Comments**

Commissioner Collins offered sincere condolences to the Bowling family on the passing of Commissioner Bowling's mom.

**Approval of the Minutes of September 13 and 14, 2022**

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of September 13, 2022. *\*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of September 14, 2022. *\*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

**Announcement: Next Commissioner Session(s) are Scheduled for September 27 and 28, 2022.**

**Reminder: September 14 Public Hearing on 2023 Legislative Proposals**

Ms. Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, announced that the next Commissioners' sessions are scheduled for September 27 and 28, 2022 and provided a Reminder: Annual Consolidated Transportation Program Tour September 21, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. and Public Hearings at 6:00 p.m. on September 21, 2022 on Bill 2022-03 Changes to Chapter 54-LOSAP and on the Amendment to the Charles County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan.

**Briefing: FY2022 Fourth Quarter General Fund Review**

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, and Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Assistant Chief of Budget Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided a presentation on the FY2022 General Fund Report for the Fourth Quarter ending June 30, 2022. The net operating gain was forty-eight million fifty thousand and seven hundred and sixty-two dollars (\$48,052,762.00).

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A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the proposed fund balance reserve for Broadband Reserve in the Cable Fund. *(six million four hundred and seventy thousand four hundred and three dollars-\$6,470,403.00) \*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the new fund balance reserves for the General Fund *(funds from Charles County Sheriff's Office-Equipment/Capital Carryover; Election Board, and Blue Crabs Security Camera Project).* \*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve a one-point five percent (1.5%) increase to the January 2023 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to make it a three-point five percent (3.5%) COLA. \*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the one time, one point five percent (1.5%) bonus to sworn officers. \*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.

**Briefing: Update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, and Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Assistant Chief of Budget Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided an update on the American Rescue Plan Act. The plan was revised to move additional funds from the Broadband category to cover stormwater projects. Due to additional broadband grants, the amount for broadband infrastructure was reduced. The remaining three (3) million dollars in the Broadband category will be utilized to fund the broadband projects and the long-driveway grant program.

The Commissioners directed staff to have a plan on how to communicate with residents.

**Briefing: 2022 Bond Issue**

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, and Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Assistant Chief of Budget Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided a presentation overview of the 2022 Bond Issue. The proposed bond size is fifty (\$50) million dollars. There is a public hearing scheduled on Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 for the bond resolution. The Rating Agency Meetings are scheduled for October 11-October 13, 2022. The Bond Sale will be held on November 1, 2022.

**Closed Session**

At 9:44 a.m., Commissioner Coates made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins 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)(3)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss a potential Land acquisition; to review one (1) lease agreement and to discuss one (1) personnel issue related to Boards and Commissions. The reason for going into closed session is to keep strategies, negotiations and personnel information confidential. A portion of this session will also concern the

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administrative function of the County Commissioners in their executive role. *\*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

**Summary Closed Session Items**

At 10:01 a.m. the Commissioners went into closed session.

**Administrative Update**

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

Mr. Mark Belton, County Administrator, informed the Commissioners of a potential concerns of a business operating in the County.

**3-305 (b)(7)Agreement: Lease Renewal**

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

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator and Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, reviewed a lease renewal agreement.

The Commissioners directed staff to add additional options at the end of the lease.

Commissioner Stewart requested that Ms. Hall get additional information on another property as well.

**3-305 (b)(3)(7)Potential Land Acquisition**

Present Commissioners Collins, Rucci, Bowling Coates, Stewart, Mark Belton, Deborah Hall, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Deborah Hall, Judy Michael, Taylor Yewell, and Jeni Ellin.

Staff reviewed a potential land acquisition available for the County.

The consensus of the Commissioners present was for staff to move forward with an options contract while doing the required studies and, appraisal and other required research.

Staff will bring back an identified funding source for these studies and costs for approval next week.

**3-305 (b)(1)(7) Personnel-BCC**

\*Will be reschedule on the September 27, 2022 agenda.

At 11:03 a.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to end this close session. *\*Commissioner Bowling was not present for the vote.*

At 1:00 p.m., the Commissioners returned to open session.

**Roll Call**

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Coates, Rucci, and Collins were present. *\*Commissioner Bowling and Stewart were absent.*

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**Briefing and Request to Introduce and Schedule a Public Hearing: Amendments to the Charles County Forest Conservation Ordinance**

Mr. Michael Jurkovic, Planner II and Mr. Charles Rice, Assistant Chief of Planning, Department of Planning and Growth Management, reviewed the history of Forest Conservation Act, the Charles County Forest Conservation Ordinance and highlights, the Priority Forest Retention Area Map, and the Forest Conservation Ordinance process to date and the request to schedule a public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci, and Collins present, voting in favor to introduce and schedule the public hearing on the amendments to the Charles County Forest Conservation Ordinance on Wednesday October 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Government Building Conference Room, using a hybrid format (in person and virtual). *\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

**Approval Items**

*Action on Boards, Commissions, and Committees*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to appoint Lester Anderson to the Board of License Commissioners (Liquor Board) as the District Four (4) Representative.

*\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Rucci, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to appoint Ernestine Ward to the Board of Appeals. *\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

**Briefing and Request for Approval: Health Officer Processes for Nomination, Evaluation, Removal**

Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, Department of Human Resources, and Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney, Charles County, provided a recommended process on the Health Officer Processes for nomination, evaluation, and removal as required by State Code.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to approve Resolution 2022-14 To Establish the Process by Which the County Commissioners of Charles County Nominate for Appointment, Annually Review and Recommend Removal of the County Health Officer.

*\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

**Briefing: Language Access Services in Charles County Government**

Ms. Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, Office of the County Administrator; Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; and Ms. Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, and Ms. Elaine Pollard, DEI/HR Coordinator, Department of Human Resources, provided the Board of County Commissioners with a presentation on Language Access Services in Charles County Government. The presentation highlighted the laws of language access, statistical data

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for language access needs, interpretive services that County Government is currently providing, and additional interpretive services offered in Charles County.

**Update: Rural Broadband Task Force**

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator, Ms. Evelyn Jacobson, Chief Information Officer and Mr. Matthew Jacobson, Network Specialist III, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, and ThinkBig representatives provided an update on Charles County broadband projects. Highlights included the Long Driveway Grant Project, the North Nanjemoy Grant Project, Nanjemoy and Cobb Neck Broadband Buildout update, and easements.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to extend the NCN (Nanjemoy -Cobb Neck) Broadband Buildout completion date by six (6) months -from December 2023 to June 2024. *\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the LD-Category 3 (Long Driveway) Grant program. *\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote*

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, Rucci and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the use of a portion of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that has been set aside for Broadband projects. *\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

**Bi-Monthly Update: Western Parkway Roadway Improvements**

The consensus of the Commissioners present was to reschedule this briefing for September 27, 2022.

**Commissioner's New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

At 2:35 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Rucci and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Rucci, and Collins present, voting in favor to adjourn.

*\*Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

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Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

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Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President