

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday April 18, 2023 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, virtually and in person, at 9:00 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner
Ralph Patterson, II, M.A., Vice President, County Commissioner
Gilbert O. Bowling, III, 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

**Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., 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 Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins were present.

**Commissioner Coates was not present.*

Comments

Commissioner Bowling requested an extension for accepting applications for the Charter Board since some residents had difficulty submitting applications. The Commissioners agreed to extend the deadline for applying to the Charter Board until May 2, 2023.

Recognition Charles County Students: Short Film Documentary, 'Dream Catcher' Nominated for Best Documentary Short by the IndexFilm Festival

Approval of the Minutes of March 29, 2023

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of March 29, 2023. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): April 25 and 26, 2023

Reminder Public Hearing: Tonight, April 18, 2023 (In Person and Virtual): Bill 2023-03 Zoning Map Amendment 22-1 Maryland Gardens

Approval Items

Budget Amendments and Budget Transfers:

(Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, and Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Dina Barclay, Director, and Ms. Lisa Furlow, Chief of Aging, Department of Community Services; Ms. Deborah Zrioka, Court Administrator, Charles County Circuit Court; Ms. Cathy Thompson, Planning Supervisor, Mr. Charles Rice, Acting Planning Director, and Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director,

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Department of Planning and Growth Management; Captain Kevin Leahy, Ms. Erin Shoemaker, and Captain Caroline Baker, Charles County Sheriff's Office)

FY2023 Budget Amendment Increase #27 New Initiative Cognitive Health Workshops

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2023 Budget Amendment Increase #27 for forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00). *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

FY2023 Budget Transfer Request #423 Updating Neighborhood Traffic calming Program

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2023 Budget Transfer Request #423 for seventeen thousand six hundred and eighty dollars (\$17,680.00). *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

FY2023 Budget Amendment Increase #765 Augment Grand Petit Jury Budget

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2023 Budget Amendment Increase #765 for thirty-nine thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$39,250.00). *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

Letter of Support: Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grant Application

(Charles County Sheriff's Office)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the letter of support. *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

Action on Boards, Commissions, and Committees

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to reappoint Claude Humbert as Chairperson and Benjamin Watkins as Vice Chairperson to the Board of Appeals. *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to appoint Ruth Anderson-Cole, Donald Ely and Robin Brown to the Library Board of Trustees. *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to appoint Wayne Klinger, Sr. to the LOSAP Board. *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to appoint Derek Bushrod to the Board of Electrical Examiners. *Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor appoint to appoint Eric Kareem to the Interfaith Commission. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

Briefing: Update Former National Guard Armory-La Plata

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; Ms. Judy Michael, Property Acquisition Officer, and Ms. Gina Markovich, Assistant Property Acquisition Officer, Department of Planning and Growth Management; and Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney II, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County presented an update on the status of county-owned property at the former site of the National Guard in La Plata. In 2021, staff presented a plan to surplus this property and Commissioners approved it. Since that time, County staff have been working to vacate the property and prepare it for sale. They discussed next steps and affirmed the decision to move forward with disposition of the property.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to surplus the Old La Plata Armory Property. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

Break 9:32 a.m.-9:47 a.m.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins were present. **Commissioner Coates was not present.*

FY2024 Budget Work Session: General Fund Overview & Outside Agencies

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Director, Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, and Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Assistant Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services reviewed the proposed FY2024 General Fund Budget. The General Fund is comprised of property taxes, income taxes, recordation and transfer taxes, and other revenues. During the review of each of the partnering agencies' proposed budgets, the Commissioners reviewed videos and letters on each agency's proposed budgets. The Commissioners heard additional comments from the Board of Education, Charles County Sheriff's Office, College of Southern Maryland, Charles County Public Library, Charles County State's Attorney's Office, Charles County Health Department, Circuit Court, and the Charles County Charitable Trust.

Commissioner Stewart requested a briefing from the Department of Emergency Services related to Emergency Services Incentives.

** Commissioner Stewart left session 11:29 a.m. -11:34 a.m.*

** Commissioner Patterson left session 11:33 a.m. – 11:37 a.m.*

**Break 11:33 a.m.- 11:34 a.m. due to no quorum. Commissioner Stewart returned at 11:34 a.m. and there was a quorum.*

The video presentation from the Charles County Sheriff's Office was postponed until the afternoon FY2024 Budget Work session later this day.

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Closed Session

At 12:27 p.m., motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins 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)(3)(7)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss a potential land acquisition; receive an update on collective bargaining; and to review receive an update on a lease agreement. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep negotiations and strategies confidential. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

Summary Closed Session Items

At 12:47 p.m. the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305 (b)(3)(7) Discussion: Potential Land Acquisition

Present: Commissioners Collins, Bowling, Stewart, and Patterson, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, H. James West, Martin Harris, John Stevens, and Jenifer Ellin.

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator, and Judge H. James West, Charles County Circuit Court reviewed potential land acquisitions.

The Commissioners requested staff to bring back this topic on the next agenda.

3-305(b)(9) Update Collective Bargaining Agreement

Present: Commissioners Collins, Bowling, Stewart, and Patterson, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Alexis Blackwell, Megan Donnick, and Eric Paltell.

Mr. Eric Paltell, Outside Counsel, provided an update on the collective bargaining negotiations and proposed plan.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to move forward with the plan presented.

3-305 (b)(7) Update on a Lease Agreement

Present: Commissioners Collins, Bowling, Stewart, and Patterson, Mark Belton, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Doria Fleischer, Danielle Mitchell, and Judy Michaels.

The Commissioners postponed this topic until the next scheduled session.

At 2:06 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to end this closed session. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

The Commissioners returned to open session at 2:13 p.m.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins were present.

**Commissioner Coates was not present.*

Briefing: Update on Support Youth in Charles County

Dr. Maria Navarro, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Heim, Chief of Operations and Supporting Services; Ms. Sylvia Royster, Director of Community Engagement and Equity; Ms. Simone Young, Coordinator of STEM Education; Ms. Erica Williams, Principal, Benjamin Stoddert

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Middle School; Ms. Brenda Tillotson, Principal, General Smallwood Middle School, Charles County Public School; Mr. KennethWayne Thompson, Executive Director, Charles County Public Library; Dr. Tracy Harris, Vice President, Student Equity and Success, and Ms. Destini Baldwin, Program Coordinator, Student Equity and Success, College of Southern Maryland; Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism; Department of Community Services, and Charles County Sheriff's Office joined the Commissioners to provide an update on efforts to support youth in Charles County. Charles County Public Schools provided information on an after-school youth pilot program, supported by County agencies and local nonprofits, and the Charles County Library provided an overview of a centralized website that has information and resources for residents.

To Be Rescheduled Briefing: Update Keep Charles County Beautiful Initiatives**

FY2024 Budget Work Session: General Fund Revenue Outlook/Governmental Capital Improvement Projects Overview

The video budget presentation from the Charles County Sheriff's Office was viewed.

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 overview of Governmental Capital Improvement Projects. The local share of these projects is funded by the General Fund. Staff discussed the Fiscal 2024- 2028 Capital Improvement Program, which includes projects for the Board of Education, College of Southern Maryland, General Government, Parks, and Transportation projects, as well as contingency-inflation costs.

Some of the highlighted proposed items for the Board of Education include a new elementary school and middle school, renovations and maintenance at several existing schools, open space enclosure projects at three schools, a school-based health center at Indian Head Elementary School, and full day kindergarten additions at four schools. General government proposed projects include a new VanGO maintenance facility, a new La Plata library, a new Recreation Center, a new Emergency Services facility in Waldorf, and maintenance at various County public facilities and infrastructure. Transportation proposed projects include the annual road overlay program, county drainage system improvements, safety improvements for Billingsley Road and Turkey Hill Road, Phase III of Western Parkway, Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor Stormwater Outfall project, and funding to support the next phase of the Middletown Road upgrade project.

Follow Up: Questions Submitted for the March 28, 2023 Quarterly Town Hall Meeting

Ms. Julie Losh, Acting Assistant Chief of Staff, and Ms. Crystal Hunt, Chief of Staff, Charles County Commissioners' office, reviewed questions and responses to questions that were not addressed at the Quarterly Town Hall Meeting on March 29, 2023 that were inadvertently not collected by employees.

Commissioner's New Business

There was no new business discussed.

**Break 5:00 p.m.-5:17 p.m.*

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Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins were present.
**Commissioner Coates was not present.*

Public Comments

Commissioners held an open session to receive public comments on any issue. This agenda item was added for the Commissioners to listen to feedback only, twice each month during their regular meetings.

There were five citizens who provided comments.

**Break 5:17 p.m. - 6:01 p.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins were present.
**Commissioner Coates was not present.*

Public Hearing: Bill 2023-03 Zoning Map Amendment 22-1 Maryland Gardens

The Commissioners held a hybrid public hearing on the proposed Bill 2023-03 Zoning Map Amendment 22-1 Maryland Gardens. Ms. Kelly Palmer, Planner III, and Mr. Charles Rice, Assistant Planning Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, joined the Commissioners to provide an overview of the zoning map amendment which would change the Residential Office (RO) to Community Commercial (CC) zoning over the entire tract, reconfigured to reflect compatibility with adjoining land uses that have developed since the property was last zoned in 1996.

There were no input/comments from the public.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to close the public record. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to close the public hearing. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to adopt Bill 2023-03 Zoning Map Amendment 22-1 Maryland Gardens. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

At 6:22 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.

Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President