

**Regular Meeting of County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday May 9, 2023**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, virtually and in person, at 10:30 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  
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner  
Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed., County Commissioner  
Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator  
Wes Adams, County Attorney  
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners  
Christina Elkins, Assistant Clerk to the Commissioners

**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. All Commissioners were 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 in-person and two citizens who provided comments virtually.

**Commissioner's Comments**

Commissioner Stewart stated that she is going to put in agenda requests regarding items brought up today. She stated that she is planning a town hall meeting with the Sheriff's Department to talk about the shooting that happened at the mall. She stated that we will work with staff regarding the public comments on the website to make sure accessibility is better. She stated that she will put in an agenda request to discuss a taskforce reviewing the APFO Manual. She stated that she would leave the Cobb Island ROW to Commissioner Bowling but that she would like to visit Cobb Island to see the area and meet with Mr. Foote. She stated she will put in another agenda request regarding the issues that Mrs. Swann has brought up.

Commissioner Bowling stated he would like to address the shootings in the county, the Sheriff needs partners, there are challenges we face in the community with mental health, violence, gun reform and he looks forward to working with the Sheriff to help. He stated that as far as the website goes, we will make sure it gets to the appropriate staff. He discussed the APFO Manual and making changes to include the Sheriff's Department, especially when it comes to future developments and making sure that they can provide the correct resources to people moving into our county. He stated that he will schedule a date to go to Cobb Island to visit and talk to folks to come up with an answer. He stated that there is a second investigation that has been conducted over the last three months regarding allegations of harassment, retaliation, bullying and discrimination that HR offered for the

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Commissioners to view. He stated that he thinks that the discussion should happen in public because the community has the right to read it themselves and make their own determination of what they think of the report, and he is asking for an agenda item to discuss it next meeting.

Commissioner Collins stated that in response to Bowling's he would like to discuss with counsel before he can respond to Commissioner Bowling's request. He stated in response to some of the statements today he concurs with the idea of maintaining strong partnerships with the Sheriff's Department whether it be in the form of a town hall or opening a door to a session with the Sheriff's Department and various players that have an impact on the criminal justice system. He stated in reference to our youth the Commissioners have been working on developing youth programs and services with the Charles County Public Schools and partnering with our agencies within the county government, Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Coates stated that she has been meeting with the Bryans Road Business Association to form a Public Safety Town Hall in the Bryan's Road area. They have engaged with a Sheriff in Bryan's Road to ensure public safety. She stated that there is a center in the Bryans Road area for anyone who needs support. She stated in regard to developer projects that she is looking forward to working with developers who are building our workforce "middle income housing". She stated that being a Piscataway member herself she would like to remain involved in any matters pertaining to that is not a legal matter but anything else we can discuss to bring collaboration with the Piscataway Tribe. She stated that she is focused on this county and at no point she has discriminated in any nature and that she has been silenced.

Commissioner Patterson stated that their job is to support the Sheriff to make sure he has the tools to keep our county safe. He stated that he plans to have at least every three months a town hall. He plans to work with his colleagues to make sure EMS has what they need. He stated that we need to have a dialogue on Legislative proposals. He stated that he would love the opportunity to join the Cobb Island visit. She stated that regarding the Piscataway legal has told them to be quiet, so he has no comment.

Commissioner Bowling stated that he asked earlier in the week for their outside counsel to be present so they can address the investigation.

Commissioner Collins stated that this is a point of order, and he needs to discuss with counsel or the county attorney.

Wes Adams recused himself from anything involving personnel. He suggested to follow Commissioner President's request to defer to outside counsel before bringing this up.

Commissioner Stewart stated she will do an agenda request to request a legal conversation regarding the second report in Closed Session with our outside counsel.

**Announcements**

Next Scheduled Session(s): May 16-17, 2023

Reminder: Public Hearing on 2023 Local Legislative Proposals on May 10, 2023, virtual and in-person.

**Approval Items**

**Resolution 2023-10 The 2023 Update of the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan for Charles County, Maryland**

Ms. Alicia Afroilan, Planning Supervisor, Ms. Aimee Castillo, Engineer II, Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management requested a motion to approve resolution 2023-10 the 2023 Update of the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan for Charles County, Maryland.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, and seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Resolution 2023-10 The 2023 Update of the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan for Charles County, Maryland.

**Briefing and Request to Schedule a Public Hearing: Spring 2023 Water and Sewer Category Cycle**

Mr. Ben Yeckley, Planner II, Ms. Heather Kelley, Planning Supervisor, Ms. Melissa Hively, Planner I, Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management reviewed the Spring 2023 Water and Sewer Cycle and requested to schedule a public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, and seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to schedule a Public Hearing on the Spring 2023 Water and Sewer Category Cycle on June 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. *virtual and in-person at the Charles County Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street LaPlata Maryland.*

**Discussion:** Commissioner Stewart requested additional information and staff report prior to the Public Hearing.

**\*\*RESCHEDULED\*\* Cobb Island Right of Way (ROW)**

**\*\*RESCHEDULED\*\* Briefing: Tri-County Animal Shelter**

**Closed Session**

At 11:39 a.m., motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed (*after discussion*), 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 two (2) lease agreement; receive one update on one (1) potential litigation issue; and review applications for a Commissioner appointed Board. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep negotiations and strategies and personnel information confidential.

*Discussion:*

Commissioner Bowling asked to discuss the Charter Board in open session and not closed session. There was discussion on scheduling interviews on May 17, 2023, and May 24, 2023. Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney, suggested limiting the interviews to 3 minutes each virtual and in person.

**Summary Closed Session Items**

At 2:03 p.m. the Commissioners went into closed session.

**3-305(b)(7) Legal: Lease**

Present: Commissioners Collins, Bowling, Stewart, Coates and Patterson, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, and Christina Elkins.

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator, discussed a lease renewal.

The Commissioners reached a consensus on this lease and the required notification.

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

Present: Commissioners Collins, Bowling, Stewart, Coates and Patterson, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Christina Elkins, Jennifer Harris, Doria Fleischer and Judy Michael.

Ms. Deborah Hall, Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator, and Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, provided the Commissioners with an update on the status of this lease.

The Commissioners reached a consensus to move forward with the process as discussed.

**3-305 (b)(7)(8)- Legal: Potential Litigation**

Present: Commissioners Collins Bowling, Stewart, Coates and Patterson Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Christina Elkins, Carol DeSoto, Marc Potter, Elizabeth Theobalds, Mark Rosen and Joseph Donovan

*\*Commissioner Collins recused himself from this discussion at 2:45 p.m.*

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; and Mr. Mark Rosen and Mr. Joseph Donovan, Outside Counsel, Pierce Atwood, LLP reviewed their findings.

A motion was by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart and Patterson voting in favor to rescind the contract. Commissioner Coates was opposed. *\*Commissioner Collins was not present for the vote.*

At 3:50 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Coates present, voting in favor to end this closed session. *\*Commissioner Collins was not present for the vote.*

The Commissioners returned to open session at 4:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

A roll call was taken. All Commissioners were present.

**FY2024 Budget Work Session: General Fund, Special Revenue Fund and Enterprise Fund and FY2024-FY2028 Capital Improvement Projects**

Ms. Jennifer Ellin, Director, Mr. Jacob Dyer, Chief of Budget, Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Assistant Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, reviewed the Commissioners' add/delete requests.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, and seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the additions to include Commissioner Collins' request for a Communications Coordinator and Commissioner Stewart's request for a Security Technology Specialist under the FY2024 Contingency Budget.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, and seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Estimated Unassigned Fund Balance.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, and seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Commissioner Stewart's request for a second Pop Up Park at the Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center out of Contingency Fund Grant and Commissioner Collins' request to secure live entertainment for Regency Furniture Stadium and other county locations out of the Arts and Entertainment District Grant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, and seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve General Fund Funding.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, and seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Commissioner Bowling to add to the Budget (*Capital Improvement Project*).

**Commissioner's New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

At about 6:10 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.

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Christina Elkins, Assistant Clerk

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Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President