

**Regular Meeting of County Commissioners**  
**Wednesday July 26, 2023 (Legislative Day)**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, virtually and in person, at 2:01 p.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, Acting County Administrator  
Wes Adams, County Attorney  
Carol A. DeSoto, 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.

**Briefing: Zoning for Cannabis Dispensaries**

Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Mr. Charles Rice, Director of Planning, Mr. Cynthia Bilbra, Planning Supervisor, Department of Planning and Growth Management joined the Commissioners to review the current zoning for medical cannabis dispensaries and recommended that it be amended to reference cannabis, whether medical or recreational thereby eliminating the medical requirement, while maintaining the existing conditions.

The Commissioners directed staff to develop a draft bill that will ensure the locations for the additional five (5) anticipated state licenses are evenly distributed among each district in the County.

**Joint Meeting with the Town of La Plata: Discussion and Request for Approval of Granting a PILOT for Magnolia Gardens Project**

Representatives from the Town of La Plata were unable to attend this meeting, but sent a letter providing an update on current status of the project. The Commissioners discussed the request for granting a PILOT for the Magnolia Gardens Project.

Commissioner Stewart stressed the need for a conversation with the Town of La Plata's Mayor and Council about the number of dwellings in La Plata to have a wholistic view of all housing projects to look at affordable housing versus workforce housing; water supply issue; and school seat allocations. She felt that the Town did not show respect to the Board today by not attending this discussion.

Commissioner Bowling stated that this was a Town of La Plata project and not all in the County want to subsidize a developer which will increase traffic; more use of the hospital; and that the Town has five (5) other projects. It was disingenuous receiving a letter from the Town Manager and not the Mayor or Council.

Commissioner Collins reiterated that this PILOT was discussed in open session and had support of the Town of La Plata and was supported by the Board of County Commissioners.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to grant a PILOT agreement for the Magnolia Gardens Project. Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-no; Commissioner Coates- yes; Commissioner Stewart-no; Commissioner Patterson-yes; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed three (3) to two (2).

**Note:** Before the motion was completed, during the discussion, Commissioner Stewart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and failed, with Commissioners Stewart and Bowling present, voting in favor to table this discussion until water issues are negotiated. Commissioners Coates, Patterson, and Collins opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-yes; Commissioner Coates- no; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Patterson-no; Commissioner Collins-no. The motion failed two (2) to three (3).

**Approval Items**

**Commitment Letter- GHD for RFP No. 19-09, MWWTP Flow Equalization Basin Engineering Services**

(Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve this commitment letter

**FY2024 Budget Transfer Request #471 and Change Order #21 Mattawoman Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) Flow Equalization Basin, ITB 20-35**

(Mr. Olin Straus, Senior Project Manager-Utilities, Mr. Bernard Cochran, Deputy Director-Utilities, and Mr. Martin Harris, Director, Department of Public Works)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2024 Budget Transfer Request #471 for two million one hundred thousand dollars (\$2,100,000.00) and Change Order #21 for one million seven hundred and seventy nine thousand five hundred and two dollars and eighteen cents (\$1,779,502.18).

**Magnolia Gardens PILOT Agreement**

(Ms. Zhypar Beishenalieva, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the Magnolia Gardens Pilot Agreement. Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-no; Commissioner Coates- yes; Commissioner Stewart-no; Commissioner Patterson-yes; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed three (3) to two (2).

**Action on Boards and Commissions**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Raymona Middleton and Candyce Harris as Citizen Members and Jessica Richards as an Ex-Officio Member to the Area Council on Aging.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Jared Cooney as the Sheriff's Office Representative to the Animal Matters Hearing Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Davis Saunders as the Chair of the Charles County Police Accountability Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to reappoint Jenifer Ellin and appoint Martin Harris to the Resilience Authority.

**Closed Session**

At 2:57 p.m., motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling 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) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to conduct interviews for Commissioner appointed Board, the Board of License Commissioners (Liquor Board). The reason for moving into closed session is to keep personnel information confidential.

**Summary Closed Session Items**

At 3:06 p.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

**3-305(b)(1) Boards and Commissions Interviews**

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

The Commissioners interviewed applicants for the Board of License Commissioners (Liquor Board)

The Commissioners' reached a consensus and official action will take place on September 12, 2023 under Approval Items- Action on Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

At 3:41 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn.

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Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

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Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President