

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday May 21, 2024

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in person, at 3:02 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
Jenifer Ellin, Acting Deputy County Administrator
Wes Adams, County Attorney
Elizabeth Theobalds, Deputy 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 in person.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Patterson shared information about events he attended:

- Resource Parent and Foster Parent Appreciation Night and acknowledged the sacrifice of the families for the youth.
- Charles County Public School Community Day at St. Charles High School and the opportunity to engage with the community.
- The Carpenter's Union Training Facility Expo in Upper Marlboro which offered training in the trades as an opportunity for high school students.
- The first annual Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month event.
- Secretary Atticks, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, visit and the importance of preserving local farms, food security, and education.
- The Charter Board's constructive town hall meetings at the Chamber of Commerce and his own town hall meeting.

He also congratulated Commissioner Stewart on defending her dissertation and receiving her doctorate degree.

Commissioner Bowling thanked everyone who came out to provide public comments. He acknowledges the way the County handles its budget to prepare for future.

Commissioner Stewart thanked staff for the celebration of her finishing school.

Approval of the Minutes of May 14, 2024

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of May 14, 2024.

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Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): June 11-12, 2024

Approval Items

Budget Amendments and Budget Transfers

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services)

FY2024 Budget Amendment Increase #542 Office Renovations of Rental Space Stanhaven Place

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2024 Budget Amendment Increase #542 for one hundred and ninety-eight thousand five hundred dollars (\$198,500.00).

Letter of Support: Piscataway Conoy Cultural Museum

(Mr. Francis Gray, Tribal Chairman, Piscataway Conoy Tribe; and Ms. Ashley Chenault, Chief of Tourism, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism)

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

Change to Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Plan: Replacement of an Investment Fund

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, and Ms. Megan Donnick, Deputy Director, Department of Human Resources; and Mr. Alton Fryer, Director of Client Services, Bolton USA)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve replacing Western Asset Core Plus Bond I Fund with ALPS/Smith Total Return Bond I Fund.

Change to Charles County Pension Plan (CCPP): Change Funding Method to Entry Age Normal (EAN)

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, and Ms. Megan Donnick, Deputy Director, Department of Human Resources; and Mr. David Pappalardo, Vice President Benefit Consulting, and Mr. Morris Jackson, Director Relationship Management, Empower)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the recommended method and assumption changes:

- Entry age normal funding method with 30-year amortization of shortfall
- Administrative expense assumption increased from \$125,000 to \$250,000 to better reflect recent experience

Briefing: Update on Draft Policy/Procedure for Developer Bond Release Policy

Mr. Jason Groth, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on the process to date being used to draft policy/procedure related to developer bond release policy. Staff is exploring options with feedback from stakeholders and public to identify the root cause of issues raised and correct them where needed.

Briefing: Update on Charles County Community Cleanup and Keep Charles County Beautiful

Ms. Margaret Romero, Recycling and Litter Control Superintendent, and Ms. Frances Sherman, Chief of Environmental Resources, Department of Public Works-Facilities, provided a presentation of the County's programs for cleanup and beautification. The review included the Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup on April 6, 2024; the Charles County Community Clean Up Day which was scheduled for May 18, 2024 but is being rescheduled by communities due to inclement weather; the Adopt-A-Road program and Adopt-A-Spot Program; and future improvements of full-time Litter Control Crews, continued partnerships with County, State, and local communities, and creating an aggressive litter abatement campaign. Ms. Romero also shared a commercial video, produced by the Media Services division, that is airing at the movie theater.

Work Session: Proposed Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): Acquire Land for an Affordable Housing Development in La Plata Maryland

Ms. Barbara Farmer, Community Development Supervisor, Ms. Rita Wood, Housing Authority Chief, and Ms. Laura Gustafson, Deputy Director, Department of Community Services; Mr. Tyler Grote, Executive Vice President, Osprey Property Companies to discuss this grant application request.

Commissioners Bowling expressed concerns about the County's overall policy on housing and a clear definition of affordable housing. Commissioner Collins agreed and believed a future discussion is needed on this with the Affordable Housing Task Force the Department of Planning and Growth Management is leading. Commissioner Bowling also questioned the developer coming to the County first and not the Town of La Plata, since it is often viewed as the County supports the project and not the Town.

Commissioner Stewart expressed concerns related to the Area Median Income rates (AMI) for this project not addressing the needs for workforce housing.

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 Resolution 2024-09 Community Development Block Grant Application Osprey Affordable Housing Development. 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).

Charles County Boards and Commissions Annual Update

Briefing: Annual Update from Charles County Pension Plan Committee

Briefing: Annual Update from the Sheriff's Office Retirement (SORP) Plan Committee

Briefing: Annual Update from the Other Post Employment Benefit Committee

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Briefing: Annual Update from the Historic Preservation Commission

Staff, Chairs, and members of the Charles County Pension Plan Committee; Sheriff's Office Retirement Plan Committee; Other Post Employment Benefit Committee; and the Historic Preservation Commission provided an overview of their 2023 Annual Report.

Commissioners' New Business

Commissioner Bowling and Stewart discussed sign policy related to windows of a business. Commissioner Stewart will enter an agenda request after she has her assistant submit question to Ms. Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator, and Mr. Jason Groth, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Groth Management, to determine if code needs to be changed or just clarified.

Commissioners' Public Comment Session

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.

Commissioner Collins announced that the Commissioners' Public Comment Session scheduled on June 11, 2024 will begin at 7:00 p.m.

There were four (4) people who provided comments in person and three (3) people who provided virtual comments. Any written comments received were added to the website for the public to view.

Summary of Public Comments

In Person:

- Speaker expressed concerns about current Home Rule form of Government related to Charter Government and outlined differences between Code Home Rule process versus Charter. He also questioned Commissioners Bowling and Stewart about not inviting the Charter Board to their town hall meetings
- Speaker expressed concerns of no accountability of the Commissioners and the three (3) who are pushing for Charter and seem against accountability; He also mentioned that in the first Sargeant report, it indicated that the Department of Human Resources indicated that some of Commissioner Coates comments were not included since the County could get sued and that Commissioner Coates only wanted to hire black people and not white people. Commissioner Coates has yet to be held accountable, her lawyers defense second report seems to be based on the public forgetting what happened. Commissioner Coates allies try to weaponize hate to tear community apart; discussed Commissioner Coates's most recent town hall and how the room was told that anybody who spoke out of turn or without permission would be subject to arrest for speaking; and during that meeting the Charter Vice Chair yelled at the public and Delegate Patterson targeted individual recording the session which is bullying tactics.
- Speaker is concerned that the Board of Commissioners rarely address public comments and why he reiterates the issues. He questioned why Commissioner Patterson has not addressed the

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status of his employment with the Prince George's County Public School and requested feedback why and if you were put on administrative leave for attending political events on school time; he also expressed concerns that at Commissioner Coate's town hall meeting it was stated that people would be arrested if they recorded her meeting.

- Speaker expressed concerns about negative changes occurring in Bryans Road and need to be addressed. The Western side does not have the presence of the Commissioner representing the district and Commissioner Coates not showing up to town hall meetings in Bryans Road and sessions and questioned what the Commissioners are going to do about it. District two (2) residents care and have a voice.

Virtual:

- Speaker expressed being given a copy of the Maryland Airport Master Plan from 1999 created without public input and the difficulty of accessing documents on website.
- Speaker appreciates the engaged Commissioners in Bryans Road and notes that it has been a deserted, dry area for quite some time; The speaker hopes the elected District 2 Commissioner will join the discussion at the May 23rd Town Hall; Speaker expressed concerns of the Bryans Road area and the need for a traffic study and prioritizing concerns related to VanGO and missed scheduled times; speaker was shocked at the Charles County Board of Education meeting to hear how overcrowded the schools are and hopes the Commissioners will take care of the people who are here before bringing in more people.
- Speaker echoed what other speakers expressed and spoke about Charles County Beautification Project and the constant trash on Mill Hill Road and the high traffic in that area making it difficult to clean up.

***NO SESSION NEEDED* Closed Session**

At 5:19.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