

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday April 8, 2025 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in person at 9:29 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner
Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner
Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator
Wes Adams, County Attorney
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

**Ralph Patterson, II, M.A., Vice President, County Commissioner was absent and joined session later this day as noted.*

**Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D., County Commissioner was absent and joined session later this day as noted.*

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, Coates, and Collins were present in person.

**Commissioners Stewart and Patterson were absent.*

Charles County Proclamations for April 2025

2025-18 Fair Housing Month
2025-19 National Child Abuse Prevention Month
2025-20 Autism Acceptance Month
2025-21 Archaeology Month
2025-22 National Library Week
2025-23 National Public Health Week
2025-24 National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week
2025-25 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week
2025-26 National Volunteer Week
2025-27 National Crime Victims' Rights Week
2025-28 National Financial Literacy Month
2025-29 National Arab American Heritage Month

The Commissioners were joined by staff from the Department of Community Services to receive proclamations 2025-18 Fair Housing Month and 2025-26 National Volunteer Week; staff from the Charles County Department of Social Services to receive proclamation 2025-19 National Child Abuse Prevention Month; members of Charles County Archaeological Society of Maryland, Inc. to receive proclamation 2025-21 Archaeology Month; and staff from the Charles County Public Library to receive proclamation 2025-22 National Library Week; staff from the Charles County Health Department to receive proclamation 2025-23 National Public Health Week; staff from the Department of Emergency Services to receive proclamations 2025-24 National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week and 2025-25 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week; and staff from the Charles County State's Attorney Office to receive proclamation 2025-27 National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

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Recognition: Destination Imagination Teams 2024-2025

The Commissioners recognized Maryland State First Place Destination Imagination (DI) Teams from Piccowlaxen Middle School, Billingsley Elementary School, and Milton S. Sommers Middle School. These teams, Picco Pioneers of the PBJ Planet, Billingsley Imaginators, and Somers Curbside Chickens are advancing to the Global Finals in May 2025.

**Break 10:15 a.m. – 10:22 a.m.*

The Commissioners continued the session in a hybrid format.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling Coates, Stewart and Collins were present in person.

**Commissioner Patterson was absent.*

Commissioner Comments

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to make today, April 8, 2025 a Legislative Day. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

**At about 10:24 a.m. Commissioner Bowling left session.*

Approval of the Minutes of March 25, 2025

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of March 25, 2025. **Commissioners Bowling and Patterson were not present for the vote.*

**At about 10:28 a.m. Commissioner Bowling returned to session.*

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): April 29-30, 2025

Approval Items

Budget Amendment(s) and Budget Transfer(s):

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiariaco, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative)

FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #597 Environmental Service Program-Cover Cost of replacement Vehicle

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #597 for forty-two thousand and thirty dollars (\$42,030.00).

**Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #18 Mill Hill Road Improvements Project

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025

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Budget Transfer Request #18 for three hundred and eight thousand three hundred and thirty dollars (\$308,330.00). *Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #321 Construction Services Waldorf Tower #6 Project

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #321 for one million seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand five hundred and seventy dollars (\$1,769,570.00). *Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #995 Local Portion Mattawoman Middle School Roof Replacement Project

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #995 for two million fifty-six thousand dollars (\$2,056,000.00).

*Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #997 Local Portion for C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School Roof Replacement Project

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #997 for one million four hundred and eighty-eight thousand dollars (\$1,488,000.00). *Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #1027 Construction Services Gleneagles 2MG Water Tower

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #1027 for four million four hundred and fifty-five thousand six hundred and sixty dollars (\$4,455,660.00). *Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.

Letter of Support: University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center (UMCRMC) Bond Bill Application

(Mr. Albert Zanger, Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), UMCRMC)

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

Change Order #3 Charles County Animal Care Center (Munis Project #3404003245) and FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #937 Animal Care Center Construction Project

(Ms. Britta Hertling, Chief of Capital Services and Mr. James Sizemore, Acting Deputy Director-Utilities, Department of Public Works; Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve Change Order #3 for eight hundred and ninety-eight thousand two hundred and forty-five dollars and three cents (\$898,245.03) and FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #937 for eight hundred and ninety-eight thousand two hundred and forty-five dollars and three cents (\$898,245.03). *Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.

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Legislative Update: 2025 Maryland General Assembly Session

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Assistant Deputy County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Acting Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; Mr. Joseph Green, Ms. Sherri Simms, and Ms. Jeanette Tejeda de Gomez, G.S. Proctor & Associates, Inc. joined the Commissioners to provide an update on the 2025 Maryland General Assembly Session.

Ms. Mitchell explained the Maryland General Assembly concluded their session, Sine Die at Midnight on April 7, 2025. A comprehensive wrap up review of the 2025 Maryland General Assembly Session will be given on April 29, 2025. She provided a quick summary:

- HB835/SB731 *Charles County - Alcoholic Beverages - Baseball Stadium License – Alterations*
Passed
- HB841/SB730 *Gaming - Charles County Gaming Permit Review Board – Repeal*
Passed
- HB1283/SB0912 *Charles County - Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles - Regulation and Enforcement*
Passed
- HB1284/SB0728 *Charles County - Governing Bodies of Common Ownership Communities - Member Training*
Did not Pass
- HB1359/SB0727 *Charles County - Student Bus Transportation Providers - Provider Displacement*
Did not Pass
- HB503 *Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act)*
Did not Pass
- SB0729 *Special Police Officers - County Government - Protection of Employees and Public Officials*
Did not Pass
- HB0043 *Federally Qualified Health Centers Grant Program - Acquisition of Land*
Passed

HB102 Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Revisions
Passed

HB1035 Public Utilities - Electricity Generation Planning - Procurement, Permitting, and Co-Location (Next Generation Energy Act)
Passed

HB1036/SB931 Public Utilities - Generating Stations - Generation and Siting (Renewable Energy Certainty Act)
Passed

- *HB503 Housing Development Act*
Did Not Pass

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- HB97 *Economic Development - County or Municipal Corporation Economic Development Authority - Powers and Use of Proceeds*
Did Not Pass

The Commissioners requested feedback on why the Bills they were tracking did not pass and the impact of Bills that did pass how they would impact the County.

Ms. Mitchell named the five (5) Charles County Organizations that received Bond Bills:

- Charitable Trust
- WAC Hughes Elks lodge #1053
- USBTA
- Providence of Maryland
- Waldorf Maryland Elks Lodge #2421

Ms. Mitchell shared a request from Senator Van Hollen's Office for a letter of support for reintroduction of his Federal Bill Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to send a letter of support.

Briefing: Update on Residential Drainage Improvement Program

Mr. Jason Groth, Director, and Mr. Andrew Balchin, Chief of Infrastructure Management, Department of Planning and Growth Management; and Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, discussed the Residential Drainage Improvement Program. The project seeks to ease drainage and erosion issues in over one hundred (100) neighborhoods. The solution is to prioritize drainage and erosion projects, design and construct solutions for the problems, and become county-owned, operated, and maintained solutions for erosion problems. Fifty-one (51) percent of the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, sixteen point two (\$16.2) million dollars was used for this effort. Currently, forty-six (46) projects are in the design phase, and five (5) have been approved and permitted. Cost for the projects in design include: design, contingency items, and construction management.

FY2026 Budget Work Session: Update on Status of FY2026 Budget Outlook and Potential Impacts

Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget, and Ms. TaTanya Bowman, Assistant Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided an update on the FY2026 Budget Outlook. Mr. Dyer explained at this time the FY2026 requested expenditure budget is at a deficit of sixty-six million four hundred and forty-nine thousand three hundred dollars (\$66,449,340.00). Staff will continue to work on this budget and will present a proposed budget to the Commissioners on Tuesday April 29, 2025. This allows time for staff to incorporate increases to expenditures due to additional costs passed on from the State of Maryland. Staff explained that the revenue forecast presented is based on existing tax rates.

Update: Goals and Objectives- Economic Development

Ms. Michelle Frye, Deputy Director, and Mr. Jack Street, Research and Special Project Manager, Department of Economic Development, updated the Commissioners on the Department of Economic Development's efforts to enhance and support economic development across the County. The

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department introduced the first edition of the Asset Inventory, a comprehensive guide to resources for businesses, during the 2023 Annual Fall Meeting and continues to update with new resources. Ms. Frye shared the work being done in the Western Charles County Technology Corridor which includes X-Bow Launch Systems Inc's new facility, which marks a key milestone in aerospace and defense innovation; the revitalization of Carpenter's Garage by Energy Technology Center (ETC); the partnership for the Indian head shoreline restoration; the new development plans at the Former Lisa's Pub; the creation of an Aviation Business Park Zone; and the opening of Oasis Fresh Foods Market, which won the Maryland Economic Development Association Small Community Project Award. She also discussed the groundbreaking ten (10) year Public Private Partnership (P3) agreement that was signed between the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division (NSWC IHD) and the United States Bomb Technician Association (USBTA) under the Command's Center for Industrial and Technical Excellence (CITE) designation, which will foster collaboration in defense innovation and training. The presentation concluded with a review of data related to business contacts by month, business engagement hours, and Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE) program by year.

Closed Session

At 1:07 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates, and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, 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)(1)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to review vacancies on Boards and Commissions and review a personnel matter. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, and personnel information confidential. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 1:16 p.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(1)(7) Personnel: Vacancies on Boards and Commissions

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins, Deborah Hall, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, and John Adelodun.

Mr. John Adelodun, Assistant Clerk to the Commissioners, reviewed vacancies on the Commissioner appointed Boards and Commissions.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus on appointments. The official action took place later this day under Additional Approval Items-Actions on Boards and Commissions.

3-305(b)(1)(7) Personnel:

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

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, reviewed a draft letter to be sent to a Commissioner Appointed Board member.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to send the letter with the additional language and to be signed by the full Board of County Commissioners.

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At 1:27 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to end this closed session. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

At about 3:59 p.m. the Commissioners returned to open session.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins were present in person. Commissioner Patterson was virtual.

Additional Approval Items

Action on Boards and Commissions

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed with all Commissioners present, voting to appoint Rayanne Benya as Representative of the Humane Society, and Michelle Quigley as the Veterinarian or Knowledgeable of Veterinarian Practices to the Animal Matter Hearing Board.

**At about 4:05 p.m. Commissioner Patterson joined session in person.*

Discussion: Charles County Veterans Resource Center

Mr. Renaldo Walston, Chairman, Ms. Omyni Harrell, Vice Chair, Mr. Michael Moses, Mr. Charles Harding, Mr. James Wade Members, Commission for Veterans Affairs, Charles County, to discuss their proposed need for a Veterans Resource Center. They outline some of the services that could be provided in a Resource Center, such as claims assistance, mental health services, housing assistance, and workforce development.

Commissioner Collins stressed the support the Board of Commissioners has for the Veterans. He further explained that the process to fully consider this type of proposal would need to start with a data assessment, surveys, and veteran input. The Commission for Veteran Affairs needs to begin gathering data of the specific needs of veterans in Charles County as the foundation for consideration, which the Commissioners agreed to look at once compiled. He also suggested that they look into partnering with non-profits and other organizations to help move this goal forward.

Commissioner Coates shared that the Commission for Veterans Affairs should look into developing partnerships with the Military Alliance of Charles County (MAC), the United State Bomb Technician Association (USBTA) and other non-profits that may be looking into creating a Resource Center for Veterans.

Commissioner Stewart asked Ms. Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator, to look into staff support and services provided from the Department of Community Services.

Ms. Hall shared the availability now of office space that can be scheduled for use by the Commission for Veteran's Affairs after hours that the building is already has after hour meetings.

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Discussion: Establishing an Inspector General Office

Commissioner Collins; Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, discussed staff drafting local legislation and bringing back a fiscal note for establishing an Inspector General's Office in Charles County.

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County explained that he has been talking with Ms. Isabel Cumming, Inspector General, Baltimore City to help model this legislation. He indicated that he would be able to provide draft legislation by June 2025 which would include a timeline for a selection board by July 2026 before this Board of County Commissioners term ends and with staggered elected terms.

The Consensus of the Commissioners present was to have Mr. Adams draft proposed legislation for an Inspector General Office. However, prior to presenting this proposed legislation, Mr. Adams will request and coordinate with Ms. Cumming to meet with the Commissioners to help educate and clarify the role of an Inspector General's Office.

Commissioners' New Business

There was no new business discussed.

**Break 4:58 p.m. – 5:05 p.m.*

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. All the Commissioners were present in person.

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.

There were five (5) people who provided comments in person and four (4) 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 Agreed with term limits
- Speaker expressed concerns with unchecked development in the Town of LaPlata in relations to the water issues/resources faced by the County.
- Speaker supports initiatives proposed by Commissioner Collins for Inspector General and term limits.
- Speaker thanked Commissioner Collins for initiatives for Inspector General and term limits and believes these should be grandfathered in. He also believes it is important for debt management.
- Speaker expressed opinions on the untruths talked about Commissioner Bowling and Stewart at the Joint Town Hall Meeting held in March and the need for transparency from Commissioner Coates and Commissioner Patterson wanting County staff names unredacted if second Sargeant

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report released.

Virtual:

- Speaker expressed concerns about constituents being called out and issues with Commissioner; Stewart's husband Christmas in April project receiving funds from the Charitable Trust and concerns about the Capital Club House; and criticism of the Commissioners' accountability and transparency.
- Speaker has not received any information related to the Public Information Act (PIA) information he requested on March 31, 2025; Frustration over FOIA response and Economic Development Equity.
- Speaker spoke on financial mismanagement, criminal law and ethical violations; concerns over County Governance, Accountability, and Development policy Practices
- Speaker agrees with Inspector General and term limits with a two (2) term maximum and is encouraged since in the past only Commissioners Stewart and Bowling were supportive and the Commissioners Coates, Patterson and Collins were not.

Commissioner's Responses

Commissioner Bowling:

- Thanked for the comments; Supports term limits but for all elected officials and Inspector General but feels details in the legislation is important. Agrees that the water issue is a challenge that needs to be addressed and is in discussions with the Town of La Plata.
- Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney, clarified that the Public Information Act (PIA) information requested was received on March 31, 2025 and the Commissioners' Chief of staff has thirty (30) days to gather the information.

Commissioner Patterson:

- Agrees with term limits; believes the water issue can be best addressed by staff; thanked another speakers; feels Inspector General is moving in the right direction; he clarified for the online comment that he does live in Charles County and has never lived in Prince George's County; he attended a meeting with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) in Oxon Hill to be a voice at the table related Route 210 and encouraged other Commissioners to attend meeting with Virginia as well.

Commissioner Stewart:

- Water issue with Town of LaPlata and County is moving forward looking at intake and treatment as well.

Commissioner Coates:

- Feels most of the Commissioners provided responses.

Commissioner Collins:

- Feels important for County residents to speak on impact on the future of the County. He is proposing transformative reform. He does not believe that even if it affects this current Board, it should be kicked down the road. It is important to hear from residents on term limits not individual Commissioners; the Inspector General discussion and process needs input from residents; the water is a part of the Comprehensive Plan process.

*Break 5:53 p.m. – 6:01 p.m.

Public Hearing: Proposed Bill 2025-(02) Zoning Text Amendment 23-179 Multifamily and Infill Development in the Residential Office (RO) Zone

The Commissioners held a hybrid, virtual/in-person, public hearing on proposed Bill 2025-02 Zoning Text Amendment #23-179. Ms. Amy Blessinger, Planner III and Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, joined the Commissioners and explained that the original Residential Office (RO) Zone was to be a transitional zone to serve as a buffer between higher-intensity commercial uses and residential uses; 2016 Comprehensive Plan designates much of RO zoned area in Waldorf as Transit Corridor; Higher density residential uses would support the vision of the Transit Corridor for mixed-use, walkable, higher density development; The number of properties eligible to receive the proposed residential uses is limited; the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the revised ZTA #23-179, Multifamily Uses and Infill Development in the Residential Office (RO) Zone which incorporates Mixed-Use Building uses 8.01.000 and 8.02.000 as permitted in the RO Zone.

The applicant provided an overview and testimony related to this request.

There was one (1) person who provided comments in person on this Bill.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close the public record.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close this public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adopt Bill 2025-(02) Zoning Text Amendment 23-179 Multifamily and Infill Development in the Residential Office (RO) Zone.

Public Hearings: NIKE Land Donation (The Official Piscataway Conoy Tribe of Maryland, Inc.)

The Commissioners held a hybrid, virtual/in-person, public hearing on the NIKE Land Donation to the Official Piscataway Conoy Tribe of Maryland, Inc. Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Assistant Deputy County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; and Ms. Victoria Rickett, Assistant Property Acquisition Officer, Department of Planning and Growth Management, reviewed the property details and location; background on the property and use; the donation request and process the County follows for land donation requests. It was clarified that if the donation request is approved, that after the transfer is complete, there will be a deed restriction that states the property will revert to the County if it ceases to be owned by the non-profit organization, or if the non-profit ceases to exist. Ms. Mitchell also clarified a resolution to codify this land donation will be prepared by staff once a confirmatory deed from Prince George's County is received since this property is recorded in both counties. Official action will take place on April 29, 2025, under Approval Items.

There were twenty-two (22) people who provided in person comments and two (2) people who provided virtual comments.

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Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, noted that based on the findings of the Ethics Commission, Commissioner Coates is not prohibited from voting on this matter since there is no personal benefit.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close the public record.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to close this public hearing.

At 7:56 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Coates, 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