

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday May 7, 2025 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened hybrid format, in person and virtually, at 4:34 p.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
Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D., County Commissioner
Ralph Patterson, II, M.A., Vice President, 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 the Commissioners were present in person.

Announcements

Postponement Notice: May 13, 2025 Public Hearing on Proposed Bill 2025-(03) The Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services Tax Rate (Corrections to Charles County Code, Chapter 54) will be rescheduled.

Briefing: FY2025 General Fund Review-Third Quarter

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 the FY2025 General Fund Third Quarter Review ending on March 31, 2025. The FY2025 Adjusted Budget includes a thirty-four point seven (\$34.7) million dollar of fund balance use. Mainly due to favorable revenues, it is projected that six point three (\$6.3) million dollars will be needed to offset the estimated net operating loss.

Briefing: Update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Acting Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; and Ms. Kelli Scherer, Budget Analyst II, Department of Fiscal & Administrative Services reviewed the status on total obligations, total expenditures through March 31, 2025, and balance remaining on projects funded with the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) 2021. Ms. Ellin also noted the documents approved to reallocate funds in Behavioral Health from the Health Department to the Department of Emergency Services.

Meet and Confer with the Town of La Plata and the Town of Indian Head: FY2026 Tax Differential

Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services and the Towns of La Plata and Indian Head, joined the Commissioners for their annual meet and confer regarding a form of compensation for government services that are provided by the municipal government. To compensate municipalities for services, many counties implement a tax differential (tax credit) on the residents' tax bills or provide a tax rebate to the

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municipality. Charles County implements a tax differential method based on County Government services net of associated program revenue which are then prorated to an amount that would be funded by the general property tax rate. The value of the services is calculated to equate to a property tax credit rate which is then applied to the County tax bill. In the past, the municipalities of La Plata and Indian Head have chosen the tax differential method over a cash grant from the County. The Difference being: a Tax differential gives the County Residents a credit on their tax bill and the grant gives the funds to the Town to appropriate as part of their budget

The FY2026 Tax Differential Calculation:

The Town of La Plata:

- This year's calculation for FY2026 is \$0.126 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Last year's calculation is \$0.124 per \$100 of assessed value
- For FY2025, the Commissioners approved the FY2022 rate of \$0.142 per \$100 assessed value.

The Town of Indian Head:

- This year's calculation for FY2026 is \$0.024 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Last year's calculation is \$0.025 per \$100 of assessed value.
- For FY2025, the Commissioners approved the FY2021 rate of \$0.039 per \$100 assessed value

**Break 5:06 p.m. - 6:03 p.m.*

Roll Call

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

Public Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Tax Differential

The Commissioners conducted an in person and virtual public hearing on the FY2026 Tax Differential. 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, reviewed the tax differential discussion held during the Meet and Confer with the Towns of La Plata and Indian Head held earlier this evening.

There were no public comments.

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

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 set the tax rate on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. during the Board of County Commissioners hybrid meeting.

Public Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budgets, the Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program, and Proposed Fees, Rates, and Charges

The Commissioners conducted an in person then virtual public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget and the Fiscal Year 2026 through Fiscal Year 2030 Capital Budget. 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, presented an overview of the proposed budget. Mr. Dyer reviewed what was included in the proposed budget and the considerations taken to reach this budget which included discussions with departments and agencies to set priorities, community engagement, embedding equity into the budget process, balance the budget through internal reallocation of resources, no property or income tax rate increases, an increase in the Recordation Tax Rate from five dollars (\$5.00) per five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to seven dollars (\$7.00) per five hundred dollars (\$500.00). The proposed balance budget for FY2026 is five hundred and ninety-four million two hundred and ninety-three thousand three hundred dollars (\$594,293,300.00). The proposed FY2026-FY2030 Capital Improvement Program proposed funded projects of five hundred and twenty-three million nine hundred and fifteen thousand one hundred dollars (\$523,915,100.00).

There were thirty (30) in person comments provided by the community.

**Break 8:24 p.m.-8:30 p.m.*

After the break, the public hearings continued in a virtual format in order to hear virtual comments.

Roll Call

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

Public Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budgets, the Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program, and Proposed Fees, Rates, and Charges – Continued Virtually

There were two (2) virtual comment provided by the community.

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 keep the public record open until May 14, 2025. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

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

At 8:38 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to adjourn. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*