

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday June 24, 2025 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened hybrid, in person and virtually at 11:01 a.m. with the following people in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner
Ralph Patterson, II, M.A., Vice President, County Commissioner
Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D., County Commissioner
Jenifer Ellin, Acting Deputy County Administrator
Wes Adams, County Attorney
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

** Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner was absent*

**Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner was absent*

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 Stewart, Patterson, and Collins were present in person.

**Commissioners Bowling and Coates were absent.*

Commissioner Comments

The Commissioners present discussed postponing tonight's Joint Town Hall Meeting due to some Commissioner's conflicts and not having full board present.

Consensus of the Commissioners present to postpone the Joint Town Hall Meeting scheduled for this evening and reschedule it as soon as possible.

Commissioner Patterson acknowledged the efforts related to meeting with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) related to including Charles County to the proposed express lane discussion on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, comments until June 26, 2025; acknowledged that D. Marvin Jones, Charles County public Schools, new Superintendent of schools for Essex County; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority (Eta Omicron Sigma) for Distinguished Service Award; Charles County NAACP ACT-SO County Youth moving on to National Competition; Remembrance of Lillian Parks, daughter of JC Parks, funeral; Jerome Short eightieth (80th) Birthday

Commissioner Collins recognized the youth attending this meeting today were participants in the Student Citizens Academy. The Commissioners responded to questions from these young people.

Approval of the Minutes of June 10, 2025

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of June 10, 2025. **Commissioners Bowling Coates were not present for the vote.*

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): July 8-9, 2025

Approval Items

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

FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #213 Department of Emergency Services (DES) Billing Contract Account Overrun

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #213 for one hundred and sixty-six thousand four hundred dollars (\$166,400.00).

**Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #174 Support Credit Card Processing Budget Inspections and Review Fund

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase #174 for two hundred and sixteen thousand dollars (\$216,000.00).

**Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #626 Cover FY2025 Year End Expenses Building Inspections

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #626 for nine hundred and thirty thousand dollars (\$930,000.00). **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #186 Move Old Washington Road Sewer Budget to Sewer Contingency Project Budget

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #186 for two million one hundred and eleven thousand five hundred and seventy dollars (\$2,111,570.00). **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #821 Consultant Streamline Review Process Infrastructure Management

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Transfer Request #821 for sixty-four thousand five hundred dollars (\$64,500.00). **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to carry over the one hundred thousand dollars \$100,000.00 of the general fund and the sixty-four thousand five hundred dollars (\$64,500.00) to the FY2026 Budget. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

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Change Order #35 Mattawoman Flow Equalization Basin ITB 20-35

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve Change Order #35 Mattawoman Flow Equalization Basin ITB 20-35 for one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars (\$175,000.00). **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Budget Amendment Increase # 915 for one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars (\$175,000.00).

**Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Board of Education FY2025 Inter-Category Budget Change Request

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Sherri Fischer-Davis, Budget Manager, and Ms. Karen Acton, Chief Financial Officer)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve FY2025 Inter-Category Budget Transfer Request for five point seven (\$5.7) million dollars. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

FY2026 Board of Education Budget

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Sherri Fischer-Davis, Budget Manager, and Ms. Karen Acton, Chief Financial Officer)

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the FY2026 Board of Education Budget. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Letter of Intent: College of Southern Maryland for FY2027 Renovation of Campus Center and Bookstore Project and Petition for Grant

(Dr. Bill Comey, Vice President Division of Operations and Planning, Dr. Yolanda Wilson, President, Ms. Judith Mills, Vice President Financial Services, College of Southern Maryland (CSM))

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioner Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the Letter of Intent for the College of Southern Maryland for FY2027 Renovation of Campus Center and Bookstore Project and the Petition for Grant **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreements for Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and Charles County Correctional Officers Association (CCCOA)

(Ms. Jenifer Ellin, Acting Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, and Ms. Megan Donnicks, Deputy Director, Department of Human Resources; Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the Memorandum of

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Understanding between the County Commissioners of Charles County and the Sheriff of Charles County and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) #24 **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the agreement between the County Commissioners of Charles County and the Sheriff of Charles County and the Charles County Correctional Officers Association (CCCOA). **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Quarterly Update: Impact of Federal Executive Orders on Charles County

Ms. Michelle Frye, Acting Director, and Mr. Mark Thompson, Chief of Commercial Development, Department of Economic Development, and Ms. Ruthy Davis, Workforce Director, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) joined the Commissioners to provide an update of the impact on Charles County. Ms. Frye and Mr. Thompson shared resources developed by the Department of Economic Development to support residents, local businesses and federal employees impacted. This includes a Federal Transition Webpage on MeetCharlesCounty.com which is a centralized hub for reliable up-to-date support resources; staying aligned with broader State strategies; and launch of dedicated Federal Transition Impact Survey, has become a model for other counties. Ms. Davis provided an overview of the Maryland Department of Labor statistics of Federal jobs and Federal Contracting in Southern Maryland. She also provided state and local resources for separated employees.

Discussion: Virginia Department of Transportation Toll on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge

Mr. George Clark, Transportation Director, Southern Maryland Tri-County Council (TCCSMD) reviewed with the Commissioners an overview of the 495 Southside Express Lanes Study conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Transportation. This process began in 2022, yet Southern Maryland just became aware of it due to public meeting in spring of 2025. There are concerns that the new toll lanes could have a significant impact on traffic across the bridge, which residents use in their daily commutes to and from Virginia. The proposed plan:

No Build Alternative to add one (1) Express Lane in each direction features: funds new bus service between Central-West Prince George's County and Tysons; adds bike/pedestrian facilities and improvements; preserves space on Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge for future rail transit; provides potential funding source for new/expanded transit services and other improvements benefitting the corridor.

No Build Alternative to add two (2) Express Lanes in each direction features: funds new bus service between Central-West Prince George's County and Tysons; adds bike/pedestrian facilities and improvements; preserves space on Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge for future rail transit; provides potential funding source for new/expanded transit services and other improvements benefitting the corridor. This is VDOT preferred alternative.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioner Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to have the County Attorney send a letter of opposition to VDOT related to their preferred alternative to the I495 Southside Express Lanes project. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Briefing: Review the Equity Assessment Findings

Ms. Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, and Ms. Elaine Pollard, DEI/HR Coordinator, Department of Human Resources; Ms. Zunilda Rodriguez, Director, MGT; and Ms. Janice Banks, President/CEO, Small Planet Works, Inc., reviewed the findings of the equity assessment of Charles County Government. Survey respondents prioritized issues that focused on the selection and promotion process, pay equity and transparency, and other cultural improvements.

Commissioner Stewart suggested creating a safe space for employees to discuss events going on in the world.

Closed Session

At 1:15 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, 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)(3)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss a potential legal agreement; review potential land acquisitions; and receive legal advice on a County Matter. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, strategies, and negotiations confidential.

**Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 2:15 p.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(7) Discuss Potential Legal Agreement

Present: Commissioners Stewart, Patterson and Collins, Jenifer Ellin, Wes Adams, Carol DeSoto, Jacob Dyer.

Staff reviewed a potential agreement.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to have staff move forward with developing and negotiating this agreement and bring back on July 22, 2025 for approval.

***TO BE RESCHEDULED* 3-305(b)(3)(7) Review Land Acquisitions**

***TO BE RESCHEDULED *3-305(b)(7) Receive Legal Advice on a County Matter**

At 2:22 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to end this closed session. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

At about 4:00 p.m. the Commissioners returned to open session.

Roll Call

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

**Commissioners Bowling and Coates were absent.*

Charles County Boards and Commissions Annual Update

Briefing: Annual Update from the Ethics Commission

Briefing: Annual Update from the Charles County Commission for Veterans Affairs

TO BE RESCHEDULED *Briefing: Annual Update from the Charles County Commission for Women*

Staff and members of the Ethics Commission and the Charles County Commission for Veterans Affairs provided an overview of their 2024 Annual Reports.

Update: Fire Suppression Task Force

Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services, and Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, provided the Commissioners an update on establishing a Fire Suppression Task Force. Staff met with the Voluntary Leadership on June 16, 2025 related to creating a central leadership, handle personnel complaints, having the Board of Fire and Rescue be considered for this charge, and looking at St. Mary's County as a possible model. The volunteers were open and receptive to these talks and willing to continue these discussions to develop recommendations. The next update will be in September 2025.

Work Session: 2025 Local Legislative Proposals

Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Assistant Deputy County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County reviewed each of the proposals, presented at the May 13, 2025 public hearing, with the additional information she researched on each proposal.

- TOPIC: *Ballot Initiative*
Submitted by Carlos Child

This is not consistent with Maryland Code nor the Maryland Constitution. Legislation cannot originate from the voters on a ballot. (State Code)

- TOPIC: *Special Elections*
Submitted by Carlos Child

Vacancies created on a Board of County Commissioners is filled by the Governor who accepts nominations by the Central Committee of the party vacancy. Code Home Rule Counties cannot call for a special election. (State Code)

- TOPIC: *Term Limits*
Submitted by Durrell Gray

The Commissioners are already in the process of drafting proposed legislation.

- TOPIC: *Nuisance Abatement*
Submitted by Terrah Dews on behalf of the Nuisance Abatement Hearing Board

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to have staff move forward with preparing draft proposed legislation.

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- TOPIC: *Volunteer Emergency Responders Tax Credit*
Submitted by Submitted by Bill Smith on behalf of Charles County Volunteer Firemen's Association

The income cap is state legislation. The amount of the credit can be changed by County Code. The Commissioners directed staff to bring back a fiscal note evaluation to reach the two thousand five hundred dollar credit (\$2500.00) in a phased approach for both the one hundred and fifty thousand dollar (\$150,000.00) household and the two hundred and fifty thousand dollar (\$250,000.00) household.

Also consider revisiting this with the Charles County State Delegation for State Code and the possibility of a phase in approach from the one hundred and fifty thousand dollar (\$150,000.00) household to the two hundred and fifty thousand dollar (\$250,000.00) household.

Commissioners' New Business

Commissioner Patterson informed the Board that he would be putting in an agenda request to schedule a special session on August 6, 2025.

At 4:43 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to end this closed session and adjourn. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President