

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday October 21, 2025 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format (in person and virtual) at 9:03 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
Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner
Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D., 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.*

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, Stewart, and Collins were present in person.

**Commissioner Patterson was absent.*

Commissioner Comments

There were no comments.

Approval of the Minutes of October 7, 2025

These minutes will be rescheduled for approval. Commissioners Coates, Patterson, and Collins needs to be present for the motion since Commissioners Bowling and Stewart were not present at the October 7, 2025 meeting.

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): October 28-29, 2025.

NOTICE: Due to staff oversight of meeting the legal requirements for notification to be published in the local newspaper: Public Hearing: Proposed Bill 2025-(07) Commissioners Term Limits is being rescheduled to November 18, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Government Building, 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD 20646. To be held hybrid, In-Person and Virtually.

Approval Items

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

There were no budget items for approval.

Request Waiver of Permitting Fees for the Resilience Authority Stormwater Projects on County Land

(Ms. Stacy Schaefer, Executive Director, Ms. Teresa Ball, Chairwoman, Resilience Authority of Charles County)

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

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fees for the Resilience Authority (*Note: For County properties*)**Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Request: Use of Community Support Fund for Expenses for the Historic Preservation Commission Awards Ceremony

(Mr. Cal Carpenter, Planner I, and Mr. Joel Binkley, Planning Supervisor, Department of Planning and Growth Management)

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 using the Community Support Fund for four hundred and sixty-one dollars and thirty cents (\$461.30).

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

Briefing: Mobile Crisis Teams Update

Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director, Department of Emergency Services; Dr. Dianna Abney, Charles County Health Officer, Charles County Health Department; Ms. Donna Brennan, Assistant Director, Maryland Local Behavioral Health Authority; and Ms. Michelle Grisby-Hackett, CEO, and Mr. Sam Richberg, Chief of Programs, Sante' Group, provided a review of the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT), which provides behavioral health crisis intervention. The existing MCT is provided by Sante' Group which has a contractual agreement with St. Mary's County to share a regional team, through a State Regional Grant awarded to St Mary's County Department of Health for both Charles and St. Mary's MCT. Ms. Lilly reviewed and explained two (2) options for MCT, Option One (1) Regional deployment which St Mary's will be priority, and Option Two (2) Charles County Specific Contract 24/7/365.

**Break 9:40 a.m. – 9:46 a.m.*

Roll Call

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

**Commissioner Patterson was absent.*

Briefing: Mobile Crisis Teams Update (continued)

Option One (1):

- No changes to existing structure
- The Dept of Health can continue to seek grant funding from State/Federal to further sustain operations.
- Singular regional team.
- Reports to St. Mary's Dept of Health with Charles County Dept of Health as a partner for operations.
- Commissioners could choose to contribute additional funding to sustainment through Dept of Health
- Only sent to calls via 9-8-8 and Sante' call center – no dispatch.

Option Two (2):

- Develop a contractual agreement with Sante' for a Charles County specific MCT
- Director oversight would be a shared cost with St Mary's
- Deputy Director and Team would be Charles County specific.
- The Team would operate 24/7 in compliance with COMAR 10.63.03.20 - Mobile Crisis Team Programs
- Referrals from 9-8-8 and direct calls to Sante'

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- Dispatched to calls at the request of CCSO post Officer evaluation
- Can continue to seek grant funding, but would ensure continued operations
- Total cost for this option is one million forty-seven thousand dollars (\$1,047,000.00) yearly.

Ms. Lilly further explained, that in FY2022 Delegate Wilson's office sponsored a capital grant award of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) for acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of the Behavioral Health Crisis Mobile Response Unit, including the acquisition and equipping of vehicles. This funding is available through May 2029. The Department of Emergency Services (DES) would facilitate the purchase of a vehicle along with necessary equipment and lease which would have no cost to Sante' for the Charles County MCT. If option two (2) was selected than a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would govern the roles and responsibilities of the Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) to request the MCT be dispatched by DES to a call; Health Department to maintain the contract with Sante'; DES/County to lease response vehicle to MCT (grant funded) ; and the Health Department/DES coordination and reporting with MCT.

The Commissioners did not make a decision related to these option. They requested this discussion be included on the agenda for the Joint Meeting on Public Safety scheduled on the October 28, 2025 agenda. Discussion should include additional data for breakdown on Charles County usage; role of Sante' Group as a nonprofit and funding their organization; potential use of Opioid Recovery Funds for MCT; and potential funding with the indirect cost savings to CCSO.

Bi-Annual Health Department Report

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer, and Ms. Amber Starn, Director of Community Health and Evaluation, Charles County Department of Health, provided a presentation on the bi-annual update on the health department services. They shared information on vaccinations and clinics for the flu season, emergency preparedness training activities, community events and programming, health screenings, dental services, behavioral health, and school health support. They also highlighted services for the Developmental Disabilities Program, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, and coordination of healthcare for uninsured, vulnerable groups. They highlighted environmental health data on food inspections, avian flu monitoring, permit reviews, animal bite investigations, and other public health review services.

Annual Update: Docket 90

Mr. Mark Anderson, Vice President of Land Development, Mr. Matthew Wineman, Division President, Lennar; Mr. Andrew Vail, Associate Vice President, Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP; and Mr. Rick Barnas, President, Barnas Engineering, PC, joined the Commissioners to provide their annual update on Docket 90. This report provided an overview on the development of the St. Charles community. They provided an overview of progress on neighborhood centers, housing affordability, parks and recreational spaces, the Homes for Heroes program, customer feedback, and economic impacts.

Commissioner Stewart requested a key for the maps be included on each of the maps used in the presentation and requested the inclusion of issues submitted by residents be included along with solutions.

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Closed Session

At 11:44 a.m., 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 move into Close Session where all or a portion of this session may be closed pursuant to Section 3-305 (b)(1)(3)(7)(10) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss a public safety matter; review with legal a lease renewal; receive an update on a potential property acquisition and to discuss appointments to Commissioner appointed Boards and Commissions. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, strategies, negotiations, and personnel information confidential. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 11:59 a.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(7) Legal: Lease Renewal

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

Staff reviewed the six-month renewal agreement and potential uses of the of the subleases.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus, and official action took place later this day under Additional Approval Items- Lease Renewal: United Way.

**At about 12:17 p.m. Commissioner Patterson joined session virtually.*

3-305(b)(3)(7)Update on a Potential Land Acquisition

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Danielle Mitchell, and Erica Risor.

Staff provided an update on a potential land acquisition and the next steps being taken.

3-305(b)(1) Personnel- Boards and Commissions Appointments

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

Mr. John Adelodun, Assistant Clerk, reviewed the appointment of a Chairperson for the Compensation Committee.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus. Official action took place later this day under Approval Items- Action on Boards and Commissions.

3-305(b)(7)(10) Public Safety In Charles County

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Patterson and Collins, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Danielle Mitchell, David Hill, Marvin Butler, and Terrance McCant.

The Charles County Government Security staff reviewed recommendations to enhancing security in the County Building.

**At about 12:48 p.m. Commissioner Stewart joined closed session in person.*

**At about 12:49 p.m. Commissioner Patterson left closed session.*

**At about 12:50 p.m. Commissioner Collins left closed session.*

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The Commissioners present reached a consensus to make changes to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and look at potentially adding security enhancement in the FY2027 budget and bring back this discussion.

At 1:12 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, present, voting in favor to end this close session. **Commissioners Patterson and Collins were not present for the vote.*

The Commissioners returned to open session at 3:03 p.m.

Roll Call

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

Additional Approval Items

Action on Boards and Commissions

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to appoint Vetoya Smith as Chair to the Compensation Commission. **Commissioners Coates and Stewart were not present for the vote.*

Lease Renewal: United Way

(Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Acting Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator)

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

Briefing: Update on the Charles County Military Alliance Council (MAC)

Mr. Steve Mitchell, Chair, and Ms. Pam Frank, Executive Director, and Board Members, Charles County Military Alliance Council provided a briefing on its efforts to support the mission of Naval Support Activity Indian Head, its tenants, the Town of Indian Head, and the greater Southern Maryland region. Representatives discussed its efforts to help secure grants, funding, and new investments; facilitate strategic partnerships; support an electric resiliency project with Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO), and advocate for the development of the Western Technology Corridor leading into Indian Head.

**At about 3:30 p.m. Commissioner Stewart joined session in person.*

Briefing: Annual Audit Report of Commissioners' Business Expenses FY2025

Mr. Johnnie Coleman, Senior Internal Auditor, Office of the County Administrator, presented its annual report of Commissioners' Business Expenses for FY2025. He reviewed audit objectives, expenditures, and followed up on prior recommendations regarding Commissioners' policy and procedures. The County Commissioner Expense Policy (SOP #: CP.CC.01.002) outlines the guidelines for expenses incurred by County Commissioners during the execution of their official responsibilities.

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Annual funding is allocated to each Commissioner Expense Account to assist Commissioners in fulfilling their official responsibilities. Annual funding allocated for FY2025 was Conferences and Meetings of four thousand six hundred dollars (\$4,600.00) per Commissioner; Mileage Reimbursement of two thousand two hundred dollars (\$2,200.00) per Commissioner; and Commissioner Special Projects of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) per Commissioner. As part of the audit, a review of all backup documentation for FY2025 transactions, including receipts, and associated SOP's, and interviewed staff. The County Commissioner Expense Policy, SOP #: CP.CC.01.002 was reviewed and revised in July of 2025. The revision was to ensure consistency of information required from non-profits receiving funding from the special projects account. Information now required includes: Description of how the special projects funds will be used and the impact on the community; Mission of the organization receiving the funds; Anticipated date funds are expected to be used; Verification of the organization's status as a recognized non-profit.

**At about 4:09 p.m. Commissioner Patterson joined session in person.*

Charles County Boards and Commissions Annual Update

Briefing: Annual Update from Board of Fire and Rescue

Briefing: Annual Update from Commission on Individuals with Disabilities

Briefing: Annual Update from Charles County Commission for Women

Staff and members of the Board of Fire and Rescue, the Commission on Individuals with Disabilities, and the Charles County Commission for Women provided an overview of their 2024 Annual Reports.

Commissioners' New Business

Commissioner Collins acknowledged staff that attended the Bond Rating Trip for the spot on presentation.

Commissioners Bowling and Stewart requested that other Commissioners be able to attend the Bond Rating Trip and Commissioner Stewart will submit an agenda request related to this procedure.

**Break 4:53 p.m. -4:59 p.m.*

Roll Call

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

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 and provide feedback, twice each month during their regular meetings.

There were two (2) people who provided comments in person and two (2) 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:

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- Speaker spoke about concerns with data centers and environmental and public health concerns
- Speaker spoke about Windsor Manor HOA Flooding, Sidewalks, and Safety.

Virtual:

- Speaker indicated feeling unrepresented from District 2 and deep concerns and frustration with leadership and transparency; criticized the proposal to create an Office of Community Engagement and not doing their core responsibilities. Concerned with legal costs related to Commissioner Coates appeals and the County Administrator still on administrative leave.
- Speaker stressed the need for the proposal for Attendance and Accountability. Speaker also took time to acknowledge appreciation for staff.

Commissioner's Responses

Commissioner Stewart:

Acknowledged Windsor Manor HOA concerns; She Remains open-minded but emphasized use of reliable research before any decision and requested staff to include peer-reviewed health and environmental data in future presentations.

Commissioner Bowling:

He explained that the issue expressed related to the HOA neighborhood is being addressed and moving forward; he is open minded to data centers for revenue source but is open minded to peoples concerns related to this; He acknowledged the national energy supply challenge, suggesting exploration of nuclear energy alongside renewables and Reaffirmed that health and safety outweigh financial gain.

Commissioner Patterson:

Recalled visiting the site in Windsor Manor and flooding, he pledges continued oversight by himself and Commissioner Coates, but it remains the responsibility of the developer until turnover; he emphasized protection of local values and environment over corporate pressure related to data centers and that he was going to visit operating data centers to gather findings.

Commissioner Collins:

Confirmed that the County approved the zoning text amendment process where data centers may be permitted not approve a specific project and requested and received the Sierra Club position paper on environmental impacts and emphasized that all industrial projects have risks, but strong mitigation and planning can minimize harm. He also stressed that he has not made a decision supporting any proposal and stressed a focus on transparency, caution, and accountability, ensuring public feedback guides all actions.

***TO BE RESCHEDULED*Public Hearing: Proposed Bill 2025-(07) Commissioners Term Limits**

At about 5:32 p.m., 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 adjourn. **Commissioner Coates was not present for the vote.*

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Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President