

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners

Tuesday December 9, 2025

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in person at 9:09 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
Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator
Wes Adams, County Attorney
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

**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, Patterson, and Collins were present in person.
**Commissioner Stewart was absent.*

Recognition: 2025 Charles County Truck Rodeo Awards

Members of the Truck Rodeo Committee and Mr. Martin Harris, Director, Department of Public Works, assisted the Commissioners with presenting awards to participants and winners of the 2025 Charles County Government Truck Rodeo.

**Break 9:28 a.m. – 9:59 a.m.*

The Commissioners continued the session in a hybrid format.

Roll Call

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

**At about 10:02 a.m. Commissioner Stewart joined session virtually.*

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Collins offered condolences for the passing of Mrs. Marjorie Mayer, wife of former Charles county Commissioner and Maryland State Delegate, Danny Mayer; for the passing of Patricia Mudd Wills, mother of former President and CEO of the Wills Group and current chair of the Wills Group Board; for the passing of John Petty, husband of Ms. Jervie Petty, former educator in Charles County Public Schools and community advocate; and the passing of Michael “Mike” Mudd, former director of Charles County Public Works.

Commissioner Patterson offered holiday wishes and spoke about the Commission for Veterans Affairs Year in Review gathering; the Black owned Small Business Expo at the Capital Clubhouse; the thirty second (32nd) Annual Spring Dell Auction Fundraiser; the Citizen’s Academy Fall 2025 graduation; the

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday December 9, 2025

Rural Maryland Council; and the Lackey High School football team accomplishments of being in o the State Championship game even though they lost.

Commissioner Bowling offered thanks for another year of service and thanked the County employees and encourages starting the new year in positive way; he spoke about the Kris Kringle Market happening this weekend.

Commissioner Coates wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Commissioner Stewart offered holiday wishes and thanked staff; she also encouraged to take time to relax and reflect.

Approval of the Minutes of December 2, 2025

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of December 2, 2025. Commissioner Coates was opposed, and Commissioner Patterson abstained. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-yes; Commissioner Coates-no; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Patterson-abstained; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed three (3) to one (1) with one (1) abstention.

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): January 6-7, 2026.

Approval Items

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

FY2026 Budget Transfer Request #118 Mandated Local Share for Eligible Children in Private Pre-Kindergarten

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to bring back this item back in January 2026.

FY2026 Budget Transfer Request #736 College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant Replacement Project

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Budget Transfer Request #736 for three hundred and thirty thousand six hundred and twenty dollars (\$330,620.00).

FY2026 Budget Amendment Increase #273 Split Funding from Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for Local Parks and Playground Infrastructure

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Budget Amendment Increase #273 for seven hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars (\$735,000.00).

FY2026 Budget Amendment Increase #274 Capital Improvement Project Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for Local Parks and Playground Infrastructure

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve Budget Amendment Increase #274 for two

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday December 9, 2025

million two hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars (\$2,265,000.00).

Letter of Request: To Charles County Public Schools Related to Swimming Pools in the Schools

(Ms. Kelli Beavers, Director, and Mr. Sam Drury, Deputy Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism; and Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services)

*At about 10:40 a.m. Commissioner Stewart joined session in person.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to bring back this item back in January 2026 to clarify language to include stand-alone pools at the schools is still wanted when funding is available and should keep on budget projects for future date since at this time funds are being reallocated for the Sports and Wellness Center.

Request to Use Community Support Funds: Commission for Veterans Affairs Request

(Mr. Renaldo Walston, Chairman, Charles County Commission for Veterans Affairs)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Commission for Veterans Affairs Request to use one thousand forty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$1,147.50) from the Community Support Funds.

Request for Approval: Commission for Veteran's Affairs Bylaws

(Mr. Renaldo Walston, Chairman, Charles County Commission for Veterans Affairs)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Commission for Veterans Affairs changes to the bylaws.

Letter: Support Partnership with Charles County's Volunteer Fire and EMS Association Leadership

(Ms. Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; and Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; Ms. Michelle Lilly, Director Department of Emergency Services)

The Commissioners provided staff with changes to this letter to better reflect intent of the Commissioners. Official action on this letter took place later this day under Additional Approval Items- Revised Letter: Support Partnership with Charles County's Volunteer Fire and EMS Association Leadership.

Approval: Acquisition of Land, Billingsley Road

(Ms. Sarah Guy, Chief of Property Acquisition and Ms. Victoria Rickett, Assistant Property Acquisition Officer, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County)

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve staff to enter into a Purchase Sale Agreement to acquire the property at 12790 Billingsley Rd, Waldorf, Maryland for one million six hundred and nine thousand dollars (\$1,609,000.00).

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday December 9, 2025

Approval: SOP Update - CP.CAD.04.001 Internal Audit Charter

(Mr. Johnnie Coleman, Senior Internal Auditor, and Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Action County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the updated Standard Operating Policy for the Internal Audit Charter. Commissioner Coates was opposed. A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-yes; Commissioner Coates-no; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Patterson-yes; Commissioner Collins-yes. The motion passed four (4) to one (1).

Acceptance of Compensation Commission Report 2025

(Ms. Terrah Dews, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, and Ms. Vetoya Smith Chairperson, Compensation Commission)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to accept the report as presented with the understanding that further discussions on the stipends for Boards and Commissions will be brought back during the budget sessions.

*Break 12:31 p.m. – 12:41 p.m.

Roll Call

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

Briefing: Update on Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan

Ms. Kelli Beavers, Director, Mr. Sam Drury, Deputy Director, Mr. Ben Yeckley Planning Supervisor, Ms. Ashley Chenault, Chief of Tourism, and Ms. Brittney Gray, Tourism Outreach Specialist, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism; Mr. Alexander Golob, Golob Art, provided a an overview a comprehensive County Government Framework for arts and culture that responds to community needs and supports economic development, education, tourism and quality of life. They reviewed the community engagement process and responses and provided recommendations of four (4) pillars of action:

- **BUILT ENVIRONMENT** includes Public Art and Micro-Grant Program - Rolling small grants and larger scale public art commissions; Central Arts Venue - Feasibility study for a County arts center - priority siting in La Plata Town Center or Waldorf 301 Corridor; Zoning Incentives and Density Bonuses - Encourage developers to include arts spaces and walkable neighborhoods via flexible codes and incentives; and Percent For Art – Dedicate one percent (1%) of County capital budgets for public art and pool funds for larger impact.
- **CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE** includes Multi-Use Trail Network - Connect towns, historic sites, and parks through arts, signage, and experiences; Agritourism and Rural Arts Hubs - Combine farming, heritage, nature, and arts through Agri-arts trails and rural arts hubs; Waterfront Activation – Make one hundred eighty-three (183) miles of County waters a cultural destination for with artful access points, programming, and light-touch amenitization.
- **COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE** includes Creative Workforce Training Grants - Support arts workers in business and technical skills; Southern Maryland Arts Leadership Fellowship - Cross-county

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday December 9, 2025

professional development for emerging arts leaders; Youth Mentorship and Micro-Grants - Paid internships, visiting artists, youth-led projects; and Monthly Arts Convenings - Regular meetups to build creative networks and collaboration.

- GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING includes Transition Arts Alliance To Arts Council - County-appointed nonprofit partner for transparency and growth; Dedicated Arts Staff - Dedicated staff within the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism for grants, coordination, and policy oversight - also supporting review of parklets and public art; Establish Arts Capital Grants Program - Annual fund to support arts space capital investments; Entertainment, Recreation, And Arts (ERA) Districts - La Plata (ready for MD A&E District) and Waldorf (ERA District); and Dedicated Arts Funding - Fund County arts policies, programs, and grants from current one dollar and twenty seven cents (\$1.27) per capita to between state median four dollars and twelve cents (\$4.12) and top third of seven dollars plus (\$7.00+).

****Moved to Afternoon Briefing** Briefing and Request for Approval: FY2026 General Fund Review-First Quarter**

****Moved to Afternoon Briefing** Briefing and Request for Approval: Update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

****Moved to Afternoon Briefing** Briefing and Request for Approval: Sports and Wellness Complex - Current Status and Future Direction**

Closed Session

At 1:09 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed with all Commissioners 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) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss appointments to Commissioner appointed Boards and Commissions; and discuss a potential land acquisition. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, strategies, negotiations, and personnel information confidential.

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 1:18 p.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(3)(7) Potential Property Acquisition

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Danielle Mitchell, Elizabeth Theobalds, Sarah Guy, Victoria Rickett, Terrah Dews, Kelli Beavers, Sam Drury, John Adelodun.

Staff provided an overview of a potential property acquisition and proposed uses.

The Commissioners provided directions on how to proceed.

3-305(b)(1) Personnel- Vacancies on Commissioner Appointed Boards and Commissions

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

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

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday December 9, 2025

The Commissioners reached a consensus, and the official action took place later this day under Additional Approval Items- Action on Boards and Commissions

At 1:45 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to end this close session.

The Commissioners returned to open session at 1:49 p.m.

Roll Call

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

Additional Approval Items

Action on Boards and Commission

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to reappoint Linda Stansbury, Roy Naraine, Jacqueline Pressey, Cheryl Robinson, Cynthia Vaughan and to appoint Sara Cano, Fanny Urkums, Donta Varney, and Khenae Pearson as Members to the Area Council on Aging.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Hayden Jarboe, Nils Kinuani, Jabari Douglas, Erica Wilson, Marshall Edwards and Jude Mutah as Members to the Board of Social Services.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint Aaron Miskell, Christopher Allen, Justin Dick, and William Flowers as Members to the Commission for Veteran's Affairs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to appoint April Hodges as Representative of the Charles County Humane Society to the Animal Matter Hearing Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to reappoint Anbrea McCoy as an Alternate member, Maxine Somerville, Angel Rogers, and Christopher Nickerson as Citizen Members to the Ethics Commission.

Revised Letter: Support Partnership with Charles County's Volunteer Fire and EMS Association Leadership

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the Letter to Support Partnership with Charles County's Volunteer Fire and EMS Association Leadership.

***TO BE RESCHEDULED* Briefing and Request to Introduce and Schedule a Public Hearing: Proposed Bill 2025-(08) Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) #25-188 Proposed Encroachment Text Amendment.**

***TO BE RESCHEDULED* Update: Goals and Objectives-Resiliency and Sustainability**

Department of Public Works, and Department of Planning and Growth Management

Briefing and Request for Approval: FY2026 General Fund Review-First Quarter

Mr. Jacob Dyer, Acting Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services reviewed the FY2026 General Fund, first quarter report. The FY2026 Year-end estimates has an adjusted Budget includes a twenty-five point one (\$25.1) million dollars of fund balance use. Due to favorable revenues, it is projected that nine point seven (\$9.7) million dollars will be needed to offset the estimated net operating loss. They reviewed revenues, commercial vs residential property tax, and expenditures. They provided their recommendations for the use of Unassigned Fund Balance of eleven point eight (\$11.8) million dollars:

Provide One-Time Take-Home Bonus of two million one hundred dollars (\$2,100,000.00):

- Provide a one thousand dollar (\$1,000.00) one-time take-home net bonus to Charles County Government (CCG) active full-time employees, Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) active civilians, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) active union members, Charles County Correctional Officers Association (CCCOA) active union members, and State's Attorney's Office, Circuit Court, Soil Conservation, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) active full-time employees on County payroll
- Provide a prorated share of the full-time take-home net bonus to full time employees who work a reduced hours schedule.
- Provide a two hundred and fifty dollar (\$250.00) one-time take-home net bonus to CCG part time one employees who receives a paycheck on December 12, 2025.

Increase the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fund Balance Reserve by five million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$5,700,000.00)

- To lower our future debt service costs.
- Increase reserve to twenty-six point two (\$26.2) million dollars
- This will leave approximately four (\$4) million dollars in unassigned fund balance

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve using the projected unassigned fund balance surplus to support a one thousand dollar (\$1,000.00) one-time take-home bonus for eligible full time and a two hundred and fifty dollar (\$250.00) one-time take-home bonus for eligible part time one employees on County Payroll and to increase the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fund Balance reserve as presented by staff.

Briefing and Request for Approval: Update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, and Ms. Kelli Scherer, Budget Analyst II, Department of Fiscal & Administrative Services, reviewed the remaining unspent funding in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The briefing included a request to transfer money to the Surface Transportation Road Overlay budget by using savings from the Broadband Long Driveway Program and the Rental Assistance and Home Ownership Down Payment Assistance budgets.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve transferring seven hundred and four thousand nine hundred and forty-seven dollars (\$704,947.00) to the Surface Transportation Road Overlay budget from projected savings under the Broadband Long Driveway Program, Rental Assistance and Home Ownership budgets.

Briefing and Request for Approval: Sports and Wellness Complex - Current Status and Future Direction

Ms. Keli Beaver, Director, Mr. Sam Drury, Deputy Director, Mr. Ben Yeckley, Planning Supervisor, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism; Mr. Jim Chandler, Director, Ms. Michelle Frye, Deputy Director, and Mr. Mark Thompson, Chief of Commercial Development, Department of Economic Development; and Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, provided a status on the Sports and Wellness Complex project. The meeting included an update on the conceptual site plan, which provides space for both a natatorium and a sports complex, as well as additional spaces for a playground, a fitness/exercise area, basketball courts, and an amphitheater. They also requested a budget transfer for a market and financial feasibility study on the project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve FY2026 Budget Transfer Request #158 Outside Expertise to Develop and Evaluate Opportunities for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00).

Briefing: Discussion on American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSME) Proposed Bill on Collective Bargaining

The Commissioners discussed a proposed bill on collective bargaining that was submitted by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSME). Commissioner Collins requested that staff use the bill provided by the organization and create a bill in line with the County's collective bargaining guidelines.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to direct staff to bring back draft legislation.

Discussion: Information on Zoning for Cannabis Production, Manufacturing and Growing in Charles County

Commissioner Bowling, Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director, and Mr. Jason Groth, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, discussed zoning regulations related to hemp and cannabis cultivation.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to direct staff to review County regulations around cannabis and hemp to ensure consistency with state law and bring this back at a later date.

Discussion: Inspections Related Agriculture and Nuisance Abatement Hearing Board and Agricultural Reconciliation Board

Commissioner Bowling, Mr. Jason Groth, Director, Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director, Mr. Raymond Shumaker, Chief of Codes, Permits and Inspections, Department of Planning and Growth Management; and Ms. Molly Meehan, Agriculture and Rural Development Manager, Department of Economic Development, discussed the inspections and enforcement process related to agriculture and the involvement of Nuisance Abatement Hearing and Agricultural Reconciliation Boards.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to direct staff to review the County Code and potentially work on legislation to exempt agricultural operations from specific vehicle weight requirements.

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday December 9, 2025

Commissioners' New Business

There was no new business discussed.

**Break 3:04 p.m.- 6:05 p.m.*

Board of County Commissioners Quarterly Town Hall Meeting District Four (4)

The Commissioners held an in-person town hall meeting at St Charles High School in Waldorf, Maryland, hosted by Commissioner Patterson, District 4. They were joined by staff from each department.

There were seven (7) people who asked questions or provided comments in-person.

Each Commissioner was given the opportunity to respond or asked staff to provide more information on the comments/questions shared by the public.

At 7:14 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, 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