

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday January 13, 2026

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, in person and virtually, at 10:05 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

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 Commissioners were present in person.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Patterson spoke on the Charles County Restaurant Week January 9-18, 2026; he announced his Town Hall meeting on Land Use on January 29, 2026 in Waldorf.

Commissioner Bowling recognized the service of George Hayden as past Chief of Bel Alton VFD and offered condolences for his passing.

Approval of the Minutes of January 6, 2026

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of January 6, 2026.

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): January 27-28, 2026

Approval Items

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

There were no budget items for approval.

Letter: To Governor Moore Outlining the County's State Budget Priorities

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve the letter to Governor Moore with requested changes (*request to not cut local aid for education; needs for special population and high need learners requires greater resources for students with special needs.*)

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Letter to Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) Regarding Waldorf Sports and Wellness Center

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to approve this letter to the Maryland Stadium Authority.

Sworn Charles County Sheriff's Office Bonus for Fraternal Order of Police Bargaining Unit Members

(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Ms. Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and failed, with Commissioners Bowling and Stewart present, voting in favor to approve a bonus for sworn Charles County Sheriff's Office Fraternal Order of Police Bargaining Unit Members. **Commissioners Coates, Patterson, and Collins were opposed.* A roll call of the vote was taken: Commissioner Bowling-yes; Commissioner Coates-no; Commissioner Stewart-yes; Commissioner Patterson-no; Commissioner Collins-no. The motion failed two (2) to three (3).

Briefing: Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) #25-188 Proposed Encroachment Text Amendment

Ms. Sarah Guy, Chief of Property Acquisition, Ms. Victoria Rickett, Assistant Property Acquisition Officer, Mr. Marc Potter, Associate County Attorney I, Office of County Attorney for Charles County; Mr. Jason Groth, Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management, reviewed the proposed Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) #25-188 Encroachment. The amendment would provide Charles County Government with the authority and the framework to regulate encroachments onto certain properties owned by Charles County Government. Staff had presented this ZTA to the Planning Commission which denied support due to five (5) concerns:

1. Need to review the County's Encroachments Standard Operating Policy (SOP)
2. Desire to cap potential fines imposed
3. Desire to review "benchmarks" from other jurisdictions to demonstrate that Charles County is not acting uniquely among Maryland jurisdictions
4. Prioritization of Health & Safety in remediation
5. Need to guarantee of equity in approach to enforcement

Staff presented a modified proposed Bill for ZTA #25-188 Encroachment to address the Planning Commission's concerns which includes the limitation on fines and equitable implementation of remediation. They also have a copy of the existing SOP; information on eighteen (18) similar encroachment enforcement provisions "benchmarks" across ten (10) of twenty-four (24) jurisdictions in Maryland; but "prioritization" or similar delineation of which encroachments are "more urgent" is not feasible. Mr. Groth outlined options for the Commissioners to take. They could send the modified text amendment staff presented back to the Planning Commission or they could incorporate the proposed changes in the updated bill without additional Planning Commission review and introduce the Bill.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to send the amended zoning text amendment back to the Planning Commission and provide the information related to the other concerns they voiced.

Briefing: Promotional Pay Increase Policy for Charles County Government

Mr. Jack Street, Research and Special Project Manager, Department of Economic Development; Mr. Marc Potter, Associate County Attorney I, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; Ms. Catherine Reisinger, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management; Mr. Dylan Moyer, Budget Analyst, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services; Mr. Anthony Johnson, EMT II, Department of Emergency Services; and Ms. Alexis Blackwell, Director, Department of Human Resources, provided the Commissioners an overview of the Promotional Pay Increase Committee's work on proposed changes to address concerns about the salary increases that employees are eligible to receive when being promoted through a competitive recruitment process.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

1. Keep the current midpoint scale currently used by the county.
2. Change the standard promotion percentage increase to correlate to the actual grade growth percentage increase(s).
3. Add the ability for employees to negotiate their salary during a promotion via a recruitment process.
4. Add approval layers for internal negotiations.

The new policy will be presented to staff on January 21, 2026 with implementation in the revised Personnel Policies and Procedures manual.

Discussion: Preliminary Proposed Bill 2026- () Establishing an Inspector General Office

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; Ms. Isabel Cumming, Baltimore City Inspector General, joined the Commissioners to provide an overview of the preliminary draft Bill Establishing and Inspector General Office in Charles County. The proposed Bill outlines the structure independence of the Office of the Inspector General, including the jurisdiction and scope of its authority. It also includes whistleblower protections and a mechanism for Commissioner removal from office if an inspector general recommends it. In addition, the Bill establishes a double-blind selection process to nominate individuals to a Citizens Advisory Board, along with other provisions.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to hold a work session on February 3, 2026 to continue discussions on the proposed Bill before considering introduction of this Bill.

Commissioners' New Business

The Commissioners directed staff to send a letter of support for Baltimore County Legislation related to the ability for an Inspector General to investigate matters related the Board of Education.

Commissioner Stewart shared that she submitted two (2) agenda requests, one on Zoning Code Amendments related to retail sales over one hundred thousand (100,000) square feet and the other on project labor agreement.

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)(3)(7) of the General Provisions

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Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss potential land request. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, strategies, negotiations, information confidential.

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 1:31 p.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(3)(7) Discuss a Potential Land Request

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, Patterson, and Collins, Wes Adams, Deborah Hall, Carol DeSoto, Danielle Mitchell, Elizabeth Theobalds, Sarah Guy, Victoria Rickett, Cathy Thompson, and Britta Hertling.

Staff reviewed the request related a potential land donation and their recommendations.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus to authorize Commissioner Collins to join staff to meet with requestor to explain the Boards' decision.

At 2:02 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to end this close session and adjourn.

Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President