Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Tuesday March 10, 2026 (Legislative day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, in person and virtually, at 10:02 a.m. with the following people in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, 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, and Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner, were 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. **Commissioners Bowling and Patterson were absent.*

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Stewart wanted to correct the record on a statement she made indicating an incident at the Cobb Island VFD. She misspoke and it was at the Newburg VFD and the Cobb Island VFD actually helped Newburg VFD.

Approval of the Minutes of March 3, 2026

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Stewart and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the minutes of March 3, 2026. **Commissioners Bowling and Patterson were not present for the vote.*

Announcement

Next Scheduled Session(s): March 17-18, 2026

Approval Items

Budget Amendment(s) and Budget Transfer(s):
There were no budget items.

Final Purchase and Sale Agreement: Lot One (1) Hughesville Industrial Park Well Site and Waterline Extension
(Ms. Sarah Guy, Chief of Property Acquisition and Ms. Victoria Rickett, Assistant Property Acquisition Officer, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; Ms. Alicia Afroilan, Engineering Supervisor, and Ms. Aimee 1 Castillo, Engineer II, Department of Planning and Growth Management)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, and Collins present, voting in favor to approve the Hughesville Industrial Park Well Site and Waterline Extension Agreement. **Commissioners Bowling and Patterson were not present for the vote.*

Letter of Support: Charles County Resilience Authority for Pope's Creek Living Shoreline
(Ms. Stacy Schaefer, Executive Director, Charles County Resilience Authority)

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with Commissioners Coates, Stewart, and Collins, present, voting in favor to approve the letter of support for Pope's Creek Living Shoreline. **Commissioners Bowling and Patterson were not present for the vote.*

**At about 10:09 a.m. Commissioner Bowling joined session in person.*

Letter of Support: FY2027 Congressional Earmark Application for Phoenix International Inc.
(Commissioner Collins; Ms. Angelica Jackson, Chief Executive Officer, Phoenix International, Inc.)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates but there was not second. This letter was not approved.

Letter of Support: FY2027 Congressional Earmark Application Charles County Soil Conservation District (SCD)Agricultural and Environmental Resource & Education Facility
(Commissioner Bowling and Mr. Charles Rice, Representing Charles County Soil Conservation)

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

Letter of Support: FY2027 Congressional Earmark Application for Charles County Projects and Initiatives
(Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, and Ms. Samantha Chiriaco, Chief of Budget, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services)

A motion was made by Commissioner Coates, seconded by Commissioner Bowling and passed, with Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins, present, voting in favor of approving the letters of support for the Charles County Projects and Initiatives. **Commissioner Patterson was not present for the vote.*

Legislative Update: 2026 Maryland General Assembly Session
Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Acting Deputy County Administrator, Office of the County Administrator; Mr. Joseph Green and Ms. Michelle Goodwin, G.S. Proctor & Associates, Inc., provided an update of the 2026 Maryland General Assembly Session. Ms. Mitchell reviewed:

- HB1493/SB0574 *Charles County-Student Bus Transportation Providers-Provider Displacement*
  In process of being withdrawn in the House; waiting a determination from the Senate.

- HB1497/SB0953 *Charles County-Rent Stabilization-Seniors*
  Hearings on March 11 and March 12, 2026. A letter of support was sent.

- HB484/SB987 *Corporate Income Tax - Addition Modification - Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertising*
  Bring Back on March 17, 2026 with position of the State and local Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Mitchell explained that this bill requires companies to add back certain prescription-drug advertising expenses when calculating Maryland corporate income tax, meaning those expenses would no longer reduce their state taxable income.

Commissioner Bowling queried on the group of Land Use Legislation. Ms. Mitchell indicated there was no movement since impact on local zoning control:

- SB267 *Land Use - Residential Housing - Oversight, Regulation, and Taxation (Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)*
- SB0036/HB0239 *Land Use - Zoning - Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)*
- SB0389/HB0894 *Land Use - Transit-Oriented Development - Alterations (Maryland Transit and Housing Opportunity Act)*

Ms. Mitchell also spoke on Calvert County Legislation:

- HB120 *Moratorium on Construction of New Data Centers - Co-Location and Generation Contingency*

Briefing: Small Business Permitting Workgroup

Ms. Catherine Reisinger, Deputy Director, Mr. Raymond Shumaker, Chief of Code, Permits, Inspection Services, Department of Planning and Growth Management; Mr. Anthony Adesina, Business Retention and Expansion Manager, Department of Economic Development; and Ms Kathy Guzman, CEO Charles County Chamber of Commerce, reviewed the workgroups recommendations to make a more streamlined and efficient permitting process for both the customer and staff while adhering to code requirements to ensure the safety of the public.

Phase One General Enhancements:

Create a Small Business Permitting Webpage
Revamp current permit guides with permitting flow charts
Create informational videos
Offer educational workshops
Require business owners to be a contact on the permit application
Finalize discussions with the Planning and Design Review Board (PDRB)

Phase Two: Permit Process Change Recommendation:

Larger scale change to the overall commercial permit process
Department of Planning and Growth Management (PGM) requesting a Small Business Permitting Navigator position to facilitate the process. This would be a dedicated liaison between business owners/permit applicants and the County and other agencies/reviewers; will establish check-ins throughout the permitting process; will be responsible with the ongoing task of identifying process efficiencies and implementing changes within the permitting process; and will coordinate Permit Expedite projects.

**At about 11:05 Commissioner Patterson joined session virtually.*

Briefing: College of Southern Maryland State of the College

Dr. Yolanda Wilson, President, Mr. Shawn Coates, Trustee; Dr. William Comey, Mr. Patrick Shirdon, Ms. Angelica Aguilar, and Ms. Karen Hupp, College of Southern Maryland, presented the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) State of the College. She highlighted the college's role in providing

affordable higher education, workforce training, and community partnerships across Southern Maryland. The presentation included an overview of student enrollment trends and recent accomplishments. It also highlighted new and expanded academic and workforce programs, as well as partnerships with local employers and government agencies. College leaders discussed efforts to prepare students for in-demand careers in fields such as healthcare, technology, and skilled trades. Additional initiatives that support student success were also highlighted, including scholarships, transfer agreements with four-year universities, and programs that connect students with local job opportunities. Ms. Aguilar, a current student at CSM, shared her experiences and the support and help she has received to accomplish her educational goals.

Make Today March 10, 2026 a Legislative Day

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor of making today, *March 10, 2026*, a Legislative Day.

Discussion: Preliminary Proposed Bill 2026-(04) Collective Bargaining Legislation

Mr. Wes Adams, County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County, reviewed the proposed legislation related to Charles County Employees Collective Bargaining which would establish a framework for collective bargaining for certain government employees. The legislation outlines how eligible employees may organize and be represented by a labor organization to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions. The proposal is intended to establish a clear, structured process for labor negotiations while maintaining the County's ability to manage operations and services. Mr. Jacob Dyer, Director, Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services, presented the potential fiscal impact if an additional union was created.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to introduce proposed Bill 2026-04 Charles County Employees Collective Bargaining.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates and passed, with all Commissioners present, voting in favor to schedule the public hearing on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD to be held hybrid, in-person and virtually.

Commissioners' New Business

The Commissioners agreed to Commissioner Bowling's request to allow staff to request more details from the Board of Education within their budget categories related to their budget requests.

Closed Session

At 12:40 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Bowling, seconded by Commissioner Coates, 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)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to review a potential contract; and to conduct interviews for Commissioners appointed Boards and Commissions. The reason for moving into closed session is to keep legal advice, strategies, negotiations and personnel information confidential.

**At about 12:41 p.m. Commissioner Patterson left session.*

Summary Closed Session Items

At about 12:46 p.m., the Commissioners went into closed session.

3-305(b)(7) Legal: Amendment to an Agreement

Present: Commissioners Bowling, Coates, Stewart, and Collins, Deborah Hall, Wes Adams, John Adelodun, Danielle Mitchell, Jason Groth, Tony Felts.

Staff reviewed the proposed amendments requested to the agreement.

The Commissioners present reached a consensus on this request.

3-305(b)(1) Interviews for Boards and Commissions

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

The Commissioners conducted interviews for Commissioners appointed Boards and Commissions.

The Commissioners present reached consensus, and official action will take place on March 17, 2026 under Approval Items.

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

Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President