



## Office of the Treasurer for Charles County

F. Wayne Cooper  
President  
Charles County Maryland Commissioners  
200 Baltimore Street  
La Plata, Maryland 20646

February 24, 2009

President Cooper:

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you and the other commissioners on Tuesday, February 10, 2009 to present comments on changing the Charles County Investment Policy. As we reported during the meeting, the investment policy was adopted in 1995 and last officially updated in 2001. Since that time the financial climate has changes considerably, and our policies must change as well. It is important that Charles County be ready to make adjustments that will bring more revenue by increasing our returns on our investments without any additional risk. Hopefully this in turn will delay the need to seek a possible tax increase. The Deputy Treasurer and I are prepared to move forward to implement the investment posture approved by the Commissioners including amendment of the County Code.

Upon completion of the my presentation Commissioner Hodge asked me to state my personal opinion on a matter that has been mentioned off and on over the six plus years of my two terms and by my predecessors as well. Specifically, the question was "How do you feel about the Treasurer being elected or appointed". I was not, at that time, prepared to fully discuss my opinion on the matter and so stated this to Commissioner Hodge. I informed the Commissioners that I would follow up those comments with a letter. I hope this letter will give the Commissioners the necessary information to come to a decision.

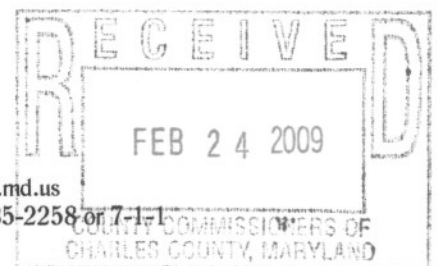
As I stated during the meeting, I am somewhat conflicted on this matter. I realize that I was elected to serve in the Office of Treasurer by the citizens of Charles County. However, I believe that ultimately this position should be filled by appointment for the following reasons:

-5-  DMF \_\_\_\_\_ GVH \_\_\_\_\_  
C.S. \_\_\_\_\_ EJP \_\_\_\_\_ WC \_\_\_\_\_  
REH \_\_\_\_\_ RPT \_\_\_\_\_ SG \_\_\_\_\_  
CMS \_\_\_\_\_ NV \_\_\_\_\_ Press \_\_\_\_\_  
Other pwe

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Treasurer must be a credible person and be constantly vigilant for improper actions by others. At the current time the Deputy Treasurer and I have implemented cross checks and various procedures to ensure that our record is absolutely spotless, and all funds are accounted for at the end of every day. Recent internal and external audits have proven this to be a fact.

- **Management Skills:** The Office of the Treasurer collects funds for a variety of dissimilar reasons from dog tags to building permits to real estate taxes to red light tickets and so on. In addition we manage the sale of properties for failure to pay taxes. This year we are implementing a new on-line process used successfully in other counties. My staff of 14 consists of the deputy treasurer, five revenue specialists, four tax specialists, two deed specialists and an administrative/bankruptcy clerk. Workloads vary from time to time

throughout the year and are constantly shifting and continually need to be rebalanced to meet customer requirements. Furthermore, the Treasurer must be familiar with the State Statutes and the Code of Charles County while managing the workforce in a manner that makes the best use of personnel consistent with mission requirements. In short, the Treasurer requires leadership skills as well as in-depth management experience.

To summarize, in my opinion the citizens of Charles County would be best served by converting the Office of the Treasurer to an appointed position. Stringent qualification requirements must be established, and the potential candidates subjected to background checks to include both financial and criminal history. The election of a Treasurer who does not possess the education, experience and personal integrity essential to this position invites an unacceptable risk to the Charles County Government and every citizen of this county. At the present time, only 9 of the 23 Maryland Counties continue to elect their County Treasurer. There may be some criticism of a decision to convert the Treasurer to an appointed position; however, I believe the vast majority of residents have no opinion either way and will support the change. Their main concern is that their tax dollars are secure and wisely invested to support the services they need. With regard to the impact on me personally, my only concern would be job security. As an appointee, I would be subject to momentary termination. Otherwise, should you decide to make the Treasurer an appointed position, I am prepared to work for and with anyone in the County Government. In either an elected or appointed status, I will continue to work toward making the Treasurer's office responsive to the citizens and the needs of the Charles County Government.

Very truly yours,

  
Jerome E. Peuler, Jr.  
Treasurer

CC: Commissioner Edith J. Patterson, Vice President  
Commissioner Samuel N. Graves, District 1  
Commissioner Reuben B. Collins, II, District 3  
Commissioner Gary V. Hodge, District 4  
Paul W. Comfort, County Administrator