

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
February 9, 2021**

The County Council of Cecil County met in work session in an online virtual meeting because of the current health crisis and based on the Governor's orders to avoid public meetings. Council Members and presenters participated in this meeting; the public observed the meeting by connecting online at www.ccgov.org/council and selecting "livestream".

The following members of the Council were present:

Robert Meffley, Council President
Al Miller, Council Member
Jackie Gregory, Vice President
William H. Coutz, Council Member
George Patchell, Council Member

NOTE: The video and audio recording with transcription of this meeting is available on the County website at www.ccgov.org.

Call to Order

The meeting of the County Council of Cecil County of February 9, 2021 was called to order by Council President Meffley at 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call of Council Members

Council President Meffley asked for a roll call of attending Council Members. The Council Manager called the roll and recorded the following Council Members in attendance:

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Present, Miller-Present, Patchell-Present, Gregory-Present, Meffley-Present.

Council President Meffley announced that there were five Council Members present, which constitute a quorum.

Suspension of Rules

Councilman Coutz made a motion to suspend the rules to allow Council Members who are connected to participate and vote in this work session, because of the current health crisis and orders by the Governor to avoid public meetings. The motion was seconded by Vice President Gregory.

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Y, Miller-Y, Patchell- Y, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y
The motion was approved unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION**January 26, 2021****5:30 P.M.**

On motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to convene in closed session, pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions § 3-305 (b) (1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Y, Miller-Y, Patchell-Y, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y
The motion was carried unanimously.

Present: Council Members: President Meffley, Vice President Gregory, Councilman Coutz, Councilman Miller, Councilman Patchell; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, and Maggie Tome, IT Specialist.

Mr. Massey and Ms. Hale were excused at 5:30 pm. The Council discussed Council staff compensation and Council Attorney compensation. Adjustments were approved by Council by consensus.

Mr. Massey and Ms. Hale were asked to return and the Council President announced the Council staff compensation adjustments.

On motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to conclude the closed session at 6:04 P.M.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Councilman Miller, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of February 2, 2021, as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ethics Commission Appointees

Council President Meffley welcomed Ethics Commission appointees to the Council session. He thanked them for applying to this committee and for their patience in this confirmation process. He explained that Council Members wanted to get to know them and ask a few questions before the Council confirmed their appointments.

Ethics Commission appointees were introduced; Heather O'Rourke, Andrew Goins, Janet Pope, Charles Kelso, and Joe Graf.

Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, thanked the Council for the opportunity so the administration could present their nominees for the Ethics Commission. He reviewed the

requirements of Ethics Board members and discussed the issue of Ethics Commission members serving on staggered terms.

Council President Meffley called on each appointee to introduce themselves and Council Members took turns asking several questions.

At the end of the questioning, Council President thanked the appointees for their willingness to participate in this action and explained that the Council takes the responsibility of appointing committee members very seriously. He thanked them for their thoughtful responses.

Final consideration of these appointments will be held on February 16, 2021.

Cecil County Public Schools FY 22 Budget

Dr. Jeff Lawson, School Superintendent, presented the school system's proposed FY 2022 draft budget, which will be reviewed and considered for approval by the Board of Education. He showed that student enrollment has been reduced to 14,718 while staff positions have been reduced to 2,016. He provided his budget categories and amount of unrestricted funds, which increase from \$207M in FY 2021 to \$211M in FY 2022, an increase of \$3.6M (1.7%). He also presented his budget request of \$224M, which includes \$211M in unrestricted funds and \$12M in restricted funding. He stated that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, referred to as the Kirwan Commission, proposed Cecil County to receive \$13M, which includes \$8M in unrestricted funds and \$5M in restricted funds.

He stated that CCPS enrollment has not declined as much as other counties. He also demonstrated that Cecil County will spend \$15,826 per child, based on \$6,071 from county, \$8,820 from state, and \$936 from federal. He stated that Cecil County's wealth per pupil is increasing while the pupil funding per student is flat. He reviewed possible sources of additional funding.

Council questions and comments ensued.

State Legislation Review

Vice President Jackie Gregory, Council representative on the MACo Legislative Committee, provided a review of State legislation.

Bills related to Environmental issues:

HB 503 Environment – Office of Climate Change – Establishment: No position

HB 583/SB414 Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021: No position

Bills related to Agriculture

HB 472 Agriculture- Use of Glyphosate-Prohibition (Roundup): Oppose

HB 249/SB 562 Hemp-Limits right to farm: Oppose

HB 581/SB486 Labor and Employment- Employment Standards During an Emergency (MD Essential Workers Protection Act): Oppose

Bills related to Law Enforcement

HB 16/SB 478 Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act): Oppose

HB 670 Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021: Oppose
HB 151 Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights – Repeal: Oppose
HB 187 Public Safety-Law Enforcement-Body Worn Cameras: Oppose
SB 245 Public Schools- School Resource Officers-Requirements and Prohibition: Oppose
HB 721/SB 602 Tort Claims Act – Limits on Liability: Oppose
HB 353 Civil Actions – Violation of Rights – Government Liability: Oppose
HB 894/SB 746 Education – Community Colleges-Collective Bargaining: Oppose
HB 1080/SB 760 Criminal Law-Animal Cruelty-Petition for Costs for Care of Seized Animal:
Support

Letters of support and opposition will be prepared and submitted to the committees, delegation, and members, if needed.

Redistricting Commission

Council Manager Massey led discussion about the process for redistricting. He stated that the Council must appoint a Redistricting Commission by April 1, 2021. He stated that the Charter specifies the procedure to be used. He stated that the Republican and Democratic Central Committees must nominate five persons so that one person resides in each of the five residency districts; the Council must appoint all such nominees as well as one or two additional members to ensure that the number of members is not an odd number. He stated that the Council must appoint a chair and that no Commission member can hold elective office.

He stated that the Commission must present the Council with a plan of residency districts with a report explaining it by November 15, 2021. After the Commission has presented their plan, he stated that the Council must schedule a public hearing on the plan. He cited that if no other legislation reestablishing the boundaries of the residency districts has been enacted within 90 days from the presentation of the Redistricting Commission's plan, then the Commission's plan becomes law.

The Council determined that Mr. Massey will be the liaison to the Redistricting Commission and that central committee chairs will be contacted to begin the process in establishing the Commission by April 1, 2021.

Council Departmental Budget FY 2022

Council Manager Massey reviewed the draft Council's departmental budget for FY 2022, which reflected staff and attorney adjustments in compensation. The total proposed Council departmental budget of \$449,975, which is an increase of \$3,069.

Councilman Coutz made a motion to approve the Council's FY 2022 department budget. The motion was seconded by Vice President Gregory.

Roll Call vote:

Coutz-Y, Miller-Y, Patchell-Y, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y

The motion was approved unanimously.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey updated the Council on COVID task force, the North East Library dedication, and planned presentations by Clean Chesapeake Coalition, and General Kilgo from Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Council Member Items

Councilman Coutz thanked the Council for providing an opportunity for Council Members to interview and vet the appointees to the Ethics Commission. He also thanked the administration for the opportunity to interview these candidates. He stated that he had worked with the administration in resolving constituent complaints about mailboxes being hit by snow clearing county vehicles. He reported on the weekly Sheriff's Intel meeting and stated that calls for emergencies in all categories were down. He encouraged the administration and Council to focus on way to improve treatment for overdoses, the only statistic that increased.

Councilman Coutz expressed concerns about the rotating homeless shelter, lack of space for homeless during cold weather, and lack of hotel vouchers. He stated that he would like representatives of the homeless services to discuss these problems with the Council. He also mentioned the difficulty in contacting the Veterans Administration for services for a local disabled veteran.

Councilman Miller attended the Local Management Board and commented on the great job that is being done for drug prevention, mental health, and domestic violence.

Vice President Gregory attended the MACo legislative committee. She thanked Dr. Lawson for his presentation. She also commended Lauren Levy for the Health Department keeping us updated on COVID testing and vaccinations. She thanked the Ethics Commission appointees for attending and commended them for stating their commitment to enforcing the laws and be apolitical. She stated her appreciation for their motivation for public service.

Councilman Patchell thanked the Health Department for their efforts in offering COVID vaccinations. He commended Lauren Levy for her leadership and cooperation with other organizations to ensure that the vaccines are given efficiently.

Council President Meffley thanked Lauren Levy for her efforts in managing COVID testing and vaccinations. He stated that Cecil County is ahead of other counties. He thanked the Ethics Commission appointees for participating in today's interview process. He thanked Council Members for asking good questions of appointees. He recognized Mr. Massey and Ms. Hale for their recent efforts in keeping up with changes in the agenda. He stated that the deadline for the Council agendas is on Thursday at close of business. He stated that there will be no changes unless it is a county emergency. He also stated that Council Members needed time to study and review the agendas. President Meffley attended the Social Services meeting and commended them for providing a \$2,500 scholarship for a student. He attended the Chesapeake City Council meeting and observed their Town concerns for road repair. He stated that the Elkton Rotary will be serving meals at the Mary Randall Center for the homeless.

Adjournment

Council President Meffley asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Coutz made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Councilman Miller. Motion was approved unanimously. Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 6:54 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 4:30pm, which is planned as a virtual meeting because of the current health crisis. The session will be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage. Members of the public who do not have broadband access should contact the Council Office for instructions to be connected via telephone.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley
Council President