

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
January 19, 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 January 19, 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 (arrived at 4:35 p.m.), 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- absent, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y

The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. Councilman Patchell arrived at 4:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilman Miller, seconded by Councilman Coutz, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of January 5, 2021, as presented. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. Councilman Patchell arrived at 4:35 p.m.

Cecil County Public Schools COVID Update

Dr. Jeff Lawson, School Superintendent, provided a timeline of the Cecil County Public Schools reaction to the pandemic. He stated that 5% of students returned to school on January 4, 2021. Another 5% of students will return to school on January 11, 2021. School policy is formulated with staff, board of education members and Health Department officials. He stated that his staff have received the COVID vaccine. Council questions and comments ensued. Councilman Coutz clarified that federal funding will be used for personal protection equipment, IT needs, HVAC upgrades and summer programs to help with learning losses. Vice President Gregory clarified that the public school system has lost 431 students to homeschooling. Council President Meffley commended public school teachers for their extra efforts in teaching online and in person students.

Cecil County Health Department COVID Update

Lauren Levy, Health Officer, introduced Dr. Henry Taylor, Clinical Deputy Health Officer, and Laurie Humphries, Deputy Health Officer. She stated that there is significant transmission of COVID in Cecil County with 4,563 confirmed cases, 107 fatalities and 7 day positive rate of 8.67%. She stated that COVID testing has been moved to 107 Chesapeake Blvd, Elkton. She stated that plans are to shift testing to private providers by April 2021 so that the Health Department can concentrate on vaccinations. Ms. Levy discussed the priority groups but cautioned that vaccine supplies are limited and little advance notice given. She said that the Health Department needs additional volunteers for clerk, traffic control and vaccinating. Ms. Levy is encouraging seniors and others to register to be called for vaccine appointments.

Review of Legislative Agenda

The Council proceeded with the review of the legislative agenda.

Bill No. 2021-01 County Council – Qualifications, will be introduced at tonight's session. James Massey, Council Manager, provided introductory comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Bill No. 2021-02 Ethics – Employment and Financial Interest Restrictions, will be introduced at tonight's session. James Massey, Council Manager, provided introductory comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 04-2021 Amendment – Comprehensive Plan – Mineral Extraction District, will be introduced at tonight's session. Steve O'Connor, Acting Director, Land Use and Development Service, provided introductory comments. Council President Meffley clarified that this property is adjacent to other properties that conduct mineral extraction. Vice President Gregory clarified that notice of this action was sent to municipalities and not adjacent property owners.

Resolution No. 05-2021 Appointment—Weed Control Advisory Board, will be introduced at tonight's session. There were no introductory comments. Council President Meffley stated that he enjoyed learning about the effects of problem weeds on agriculture.

Resolution No. 06-2021 Appointment—Human Services Agency – David Trolio, will be introduced at tonight's session. Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, provided introductory comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 07-2021 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – COVID, will be introduced at tonight's session. James Appel, Finance Director, provided introductory comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 08-2021 Appointment – Ethics Commission – Janet Pope; Resolution No. 09-2021 Appointment – Ethics Commission – Andrew Goins; Resolution No. 10-2021 Appointment – Ethics Commission – Joseph Graf; Resolution No. 11-2021 Appointment – Ethics Commission – Charles Kelso Resolution No. 12-2021 Appointment – Ethics Commission – Heather O'Rourke; will be introduced at tonight's session. Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, provided introductory comments. Council questions and comments ensued. Council Members expressed their concerns, which included that the Executive is replacing all five members of the Ethics Commission, which will leave the commission with no one who has experience; the nominees are currently listed on the County website as Ethics Commission members; the County currently has no Ethics Commission since all current members were terminated; the appearance the new Ethics Commission appointees did not need Council confirmation, and the Council's need to vet the appointments. Mr. Schneckenburger explained that the administration was being proactive in listing the new appointees on the County's website. Council Vice President Gregory expressed her concern that if the Council fails to approve the appointees, Cecil County will have no Ethics Commission, as required by State law. Council President Meffley polled Council Members on what action they would like to take. Councilman Coutz cited the Charter section 304 that permitted the Council to reject legislation at introduction with four votes.

Resolution No. 13-2021 Supplemental Appropriation-Fund Balance- Volunteer Fire Services – Vehicle Replacement Program, will be introduced at tonight's session. Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, provided comments. Council President Meffley thanked the administration for looking at these fire company requests.

Resolution No. 01-2021 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Tourism – Winter Lights Cecil Nights will be considered for approval at tonight's session. Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, provided comments. Additional comments were provided by Steve Overbay, Economic Development Director. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 02-2021 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – MARBIDCO – Micro- Ag Grant Program, will be considered for approval at tonight's session. Steve Overbay, Economic Development Director, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 03-2021 Supplemental Appropriation—Grant Funds—Upper Shore Regional Council – Micro- Ag Grant Program, will be considered for approval at tonight's session. Steve Overbay,

Economic Development Director, provided comments. Councilman Miller asked that the specific allocation of \$2,000 for marketing be included in the legislation.

Under New Business, Cecil County Public Schools budget amendment #82, in the amount of \$265,309 for December 2020, will be considered for approval at tonight's session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey updated the Council on the availability of Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway grants, reported sediment plume caused by Conowingo Dam full reservoir, Conowingo Dam dredging project, and SB 294 that would exempt materials and equipment, purchased for Bainbridge redevelopment, from sales and user tax.

Council Member Items

Vice President Gregory expressed her condolences to the family and friends of State Senator Miller on his recent passing. She attended the MACo Legislative Committee and commented on the large amount of bills proposed in this year's General Assembly. She will be bringing some State bills for consideration of support and opposition at the next work session. She expressed her concern of the Ethics Commission's previous actions that were politicized and weaponized; and hoped that new Ethics Commission members will be better.

Other Council Members agreed to hold their comments until this evening's legislative session.

Adjournment

Council President Meffley asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Coutz made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Vice President Gregory. Motion was approved unanimously. Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 6:18 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, January 26, 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