

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
January 26, 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 26, 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 (arrived at 4:32 pm), Meffley-Present.

Council President Meffley announced that there were four (Vice President Gregory arrived at 4:32 pm) 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 Councilman Miller.

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Y, Miller-Y, Patchell- Y, Gregory-absent, Meffley-Y

The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. Vice President Gregory arrived at 4:32 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 January 19, 2021, as presented. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. Vice President Gregory arrived at 4:32 p.m.

Hemp Legislation

Ernie Beck, a hemp grower from Cecilton, stated his concern about proposed state legislation to prohibit hemp growing licensing on properties within 35 feet from 3 individual residences. He stated that HB 562/SB 249 would hurt the hemp industry and conflicts with the "right to farm" legislation in many counties. He stated that opponents complain about the hemp odor that occurs for about sixty days during its growing cycle. Council questions and comments ensued.

State Legislation Review

Vice President Gregory, the Cecil County Council representative on the MACo legislative committee, provided an overview of the committee's process in reviewing and taking positions on pending state legislation. She stated that weekly committee meetings are conducted during the session and counties vote on whether to take a position to support or oppose. She provided an annotated list of proposed legislation and explained salient points of each. She suggested that the Council should send a letter of support for SB 294 Cecil County – Sales and Use Tax Exemption – Federal Facilities Redevelopment Areas.

Vice President Gregory made a motion to support SB 294, which was seconded by Councilman Coutz. The motion was carried unanimously.

Council Departmental Budget FY 2022

Council Manager Massey reviewed the draft Council's departmental budget for FY 2022, which is proposed at the same amount of \$446,906. Council Members were asked to review so that the proposed budget can be discussed at the next work session.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey updated the Council on the start of Elkton West sewer project, the American Community Survey, a delegation meeting planned on February 1, and Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee Cecil 21 Session Legislative event.

Council Member Items

Councilman Coutz thanked the audience for attending. He reported on end of the year statistics from the Sheriff's Intel Meeting and expressed his concern over the dramatic increase in fatal overdoses. He commended the administration for setting a Summit on Opioid Crisis to be held in March.

Councilman Miller commented that members of the Farm Bureau will be volunteering to assist the Health Department with vaccinations. He attended the Conowingo WIP meeting and reported that the group was working with Virginia and Pennsylvania in addressing the high levels of sediment, phosphorus and nitrogen at the Conowingo Dam and its impact on the Chesapeake Bay.

Vice President Gregory stated that she participated in discussion of proposed state legislation with the Maryland Rural Counties Coalition. She reported on several bills that affect law enforcement and stated that she will be meeting with Sheriff Adams to discuss. She stated that there are concerns over several bills that change election rules. She reported that there is a bill to raise highway user funds. She also encouraged the public to contact the Council office if they were having trouble in contacting the state employment office.

Councilman Patchell reported on visiting the Senior Center where COVID vaccinations were being given. He commended the community's cooperation from the Health Department, National Guard, Social Services, Singler Fire Company, Cecil County Public Library and Emergency Services.

Council President Meffley also commended the vaccination clinic held at the Senior Center in Elkton. He stated that the seniors were very appreciative of the opportunity to be vaccinated as well as the efficiency of the process. He also stated that he hoped that Cecil County will receive funding from the Upper Shore Regional Council for FY 2022. He reported that the Paris Foundation plans to move to Hollingsworth Manor and work with MRDC on a new facility.

Adjournment

Council President Meffley asked for a motion to adjourn the open session in order to go into closed session. Councilman Coutz made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Vice President Gregory.

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

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 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.

Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 5:27 pm.

CLOSED SESSION

5:30 P.M.

Councilman Coutz made a motion to go into closed session, which was seconded by Vice President Gregory.

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

Council Manager Massey stated for the record: Pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Section 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.

The closed session began at 5:28 p.m.

The closed session was concluded at 6:04 P.M.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:

Robert Meffley
Council President