

COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
February 22, 2022

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room
4:30 P.M.

NOTE: The recording and transcription of this meeting are available on the County website at www.ccgov.org/council.

PRESENT: Council Members: William Coutz, Al Miller, Donna Culberson and Jackie Gregory; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, and members of the public.
Absent: Council President Meffley

Call to Order

Vice President Gregory called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm, and announced that there were four Council Members present, which constitute a quorum. Council President Meffley is out of state.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Councilwoman Culberson, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of February 15, 2022, as presented. The motion approved unanimously.

Cecil College Budget Planning Process

Dr. Mary Way Bolt, College President, introduced Chris Mills, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Craig Whiteford, Comptroller. Dr. Bolt summarized the college's budget process that begins in October so that the College Board of Trustees may approve in December. She explained that the college revenue comes from the state, county and student tuitions and fees.

Mr. Mills stated that college enrollment decreased during the pandemic nationwide. He explained that the college's base budget is \$1.6M, and \$397,450 in reductions. He stated that the state funding assumes a 3% increase and stated that the college is requesting an increase of 6% from the county over the previous year.

Mr. Whiteford explained the college's net budget increase of \$851,041, which includes reallocation of funds and an increase in tuition rates and fees. He reviewed comparative budget statistics for the previous three fiscal years.

Council questions and comments ensued. Dr. Bolt stated that the county was unwilling to waive \$200,000 in permit fees on their capital projects. She announced that college graduation will be face to face because of the decrease in COVID rates. She stated that the college will offer child summer camp this year. She also stated that 50% of college classes are being conducted face to face. She also stated that additional scholarships are available through generous donors and the college foundation. She stated that she hopes to fill vacant positions

as demand increases. She also explained that the college is offering a discount for students who take classes digitally instead of attending class. She also clarified that the college receives \$7.3M currently from the Cade formula but would receive \$8.5M if the Cade formula was fully funded.

Delmarva Power

Jeff Emmons, Sr, External Affairs Specialist, stated that he serves Harford and Cecil County in the former position of Linda Burris. He provided a handout about Delmarva and summarized their improvements in equipment, tree trimming, and response to outages. He stated that Delmarva currently has 1,600 solar customers in Cecil County.

Council questions and comments ensued. Mr. Emmons can assist the public with billing questions and outages.

State Legislative Update

Vice President Gregory, MACo legislative committee representation, reviewed State legislation that had been discussed by the committee.

She reviewed legislation that had been discussed by MACo.

She reviewed HB 794 Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council, which was supported by MACo with amendment to ensure there is county representation on the Council. After discussion, Councilman Coutz made a motion, seconded by Councilman Miller, to send a letter of support for HB 794 and amendment. The motion was approved.

She reviewed HB 1102/SB 799 Community College Tuition and Residency Waivers – Funding House, which was supported by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed SB 640 Primary and Secondary Education – Maintenance of Effort Requirements – Alterations, which was supported by MACo with amendment. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 1033 Environment and Energy – Investment in Overburdened Communities House, which was opposed by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 1061 Local Government – Condominium and Homeowners Associations – Repair and Rehabilitation Funds, which was supported by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 1003/SB 749 Public Safety – 311 Systems – Nonemergency Information, which was supported by MACo with amendment. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 1109/SB 751 First Responders and Emergency Responders – Definition – 311-Dispatchers Included, which was supported by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed SB 881 Criminal Law – False Statements – Emergency or Commission of Crime (Anti-swatting Act of 2002), which was supported by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 1087 Opioid Restitution Fund – State – Subdivision Agreement and Grant Program, which was supported by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 837 Cannabis Reform, which MACo took no position but sent a letter of information. The Council took no position.

She reviewed SB 692 Cannabis – Legalization and Regulation (Cannabis Legalization and Reparations for the War on Drugs Act, which MACo took no position but sent a letter of information. The Council took no position.

She reviewed SB 833 Cannabis – Legalization and Regulations, which MACo took no position but sent a letter of information. The Council took no position.

She reviewed SB 777 Public Information Act – Records Relating to Police Misconduct - Fees, which was opposed by MACo. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 1011/SB 704, Conditions of Pretrial Release – Home Detention Monitoring – Alterations and Extension, which was supported by MACo. The Council agreed by consensus to send a letter of support.

She reviewed HB 1019/SB 838, Transportation – Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Service – County Funding, which was supported by MACo. The Council agreed by consensus to send a letter of support.

She reviewed HB 1187/SB 726, Transportation – Highway User Revenue – Revenue and Distribution, which was supported by MACo. The Council agreed by consensus to send a letter of support.

Vice President Gregory also reviewed legislation that she suggested that the Council may wish to consider taking a position.

She reviewed HB 1174/SB 327, Public Safety - Permit to Carry, Wear, or Transport a Handgun – Qualifications, which she recommended to support. Councilman Coutz made a motion, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson to send a letter of support. The motion was approved unanimously.

She reviewed HB 1172, Election Law – Absentee Ballot Envelopes – Party Affiliation. The Council took no action.

She reviewed SB 669, Pregnant Persons Freedom Act of 2022. The Council took no action.

She reviewed HB 114, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program. Councilwoman Culberson made a motion, seconded by Vice President Gregory, to send a letter of opposition to this legislation. The motion was approved unanimously.

She reviewed SB 265/HB 559, Probation Before Judgment – Probation Agreements – Probation Not Deportation. Councilwoman Culberson made a motion, seconded by Vice President Gregory, to send a letter of opposition to this legislation. The motion was approved unanimously.

She reviewed HB 99, Election Law – Absentee Ballots – Signature Requirements and Verification. Culberson made a motion, seconded by Vice President Gregory, to send a letter of support. The motion was approved unanimously.

She reviewed HB 113, Elections – In-Person Voting – Proof of Identify. Culberson made a motion, seconded by Vice President Gregory, to send a letter of support. The motion was approved unanimously.

She reviewed HB 196, Public Schools and County Boards of Education – Publication of School Library Catalogs. The Council took no action.

Councilman Miller reviewed the following legislation for the Council's consideration.

He reviewed HB 1031/SB 791, Natural Resources – Land Conservation – Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act). The Council agreed by consensus to send a letter of support.

He reviewed HB 1070, Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use. The Council agreed by consensus to send a letter of support.

He reviewed HB 1018/SB 781, Public Safety and Behavioral Health Improvement Act. The Council agreed by consensus to send a letter of support.

Councilman Coutz asked the Council to review SB 273 Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibition and Requirements (George "Walter" Taylor Act). He provided Council Members with a letter from Robert Phillips, chairman, Legislative Committee of the Maryland State Firemen's Association, written to Senator Paul Pinsky, chair of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Ms. Phillips states his organization support SB 273 as written, but opposes an amendment regarding the definition of PFAS is too narrow and will not fully protect firefighters. The Council agreed to oppose the proposed amendment, but Councilman Coutz will be checking on the materials use in firefighting gear.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey announced that the Governor's budget includes funding for a study of the reuse of sediment stored behind the Conowingo Dam. The report on the pilot project to identify dredge area sediments will be published by summer. The Cecil County Health Department will be conducting a survey of youth homelessness in March and April.

Council Member Items

Councilman Coutz and Councilman Miller attended the Warm your Heart soup contest that was sponsored by the Elkton Alliance. He attended the North East VFW Post volunteer appreciation dinner. He reported on the Sheriff's Office intel statistics and cited that drug overdose numbers are outpacing 2021.

Councilman Miller announced that it was Future Farmers of American week. He made a presentation to the North East Rotary about the biodigester process used at Kilby's Farm. He attended the CASA fun day and commented on the large turnout. He attended the Rising Sun High School Boosters Club and commented on several school projects.

Vice President Gregory attended Winter Nights Cecil Lights in North East and enjoyed a wagon ride through the town, which was funded by the Upper Shore Regional Council. She stated that the State Board of Education will be deciding on whether to discontinue students wearing masks in the classroom.

Adjournment

Councilman Coutz made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson. Vice President Gregory adjourned the session at 5:46 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, March 1 at 4:30 pm in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building.

Approved:


James Massey
Council Manager


Jackie Gregory, Vice President