

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
May 24, 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: Robert Meffley, Jackie Gregory, William Coutz, and Al Miller; Donna Culberson connected by videoconference; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant; members of the administration, and members of the public.

Call to Order

Council President Meffley called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm, and announced that there were four Council Members present, and one Council Member connected by videoconference, which constitute a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of May 10, 2022, as presented. The motion approved unanimously.

FY 2023 Budget Deliberation

Council President Meffley asked each Council Member for their suggestions on the proposed FY 2023 county budget.

Councilman Coutz stated that the budget was balanced but voiced concern that some services are underfunded, which will hurt services to the county.

Vice President Gregory stated that she supported the lean budget and the property and income tax cuts.

Councilwoman Culberson supported the budget as proposed and did not find any areas that could be further reduced. She stated her concern for the school system's mental health services but said that there were funds in other agencies that could be utilized to support the school's program.

Councilman Miller voiced concern that the reduction in the county employee's health benefit could result in reduced insurance benefits. He stated that he was concerned that none of the school's small capital projects were funded and that funding for paraprofessional and support staff was underfunded. He commented that Cecil County should fund the school systems more than maintenance of effort.

President Meffley stated that it is a lean budget and most departments could use more funding. He stated that he had worked with the administration regarding concerns about the Board of Education funding, and that the administration had agreed to provide \$240,000 after July 1, 2022, to fund their small capital projects request. He stated that the small capital projects represented several projects that will renovate entrances for safety and security. He also stated that he hoped that additional supplemental appropriations may be found as the final revenue and expenses in the FY 2022 budget are finalized. Councilman Miller and Councilman Coutz voiced their approval of this additional funding. James Appel, Finance Director, reminded the Council that all supplemental appropriations would require Council approval.

Council President Meffley polled all Council Members on their support of the proposed FY 2023 budget. All five Council Members agreed to support the budget as proposed.

Councilwoman Culberson commented on the reduction in cost of county employee health benefits, which could be attributed to renegotiating the contract, reduced employee medical costs, and medical cost reductions. Councilman Miller verified that the actual county employee health insurance offers the same benefits as previously offered at a lower cost.

Council President Meffley thanked Andrew Ondish, budget analyst, for his guidance, reports, and his responses to Council questions. Mr. Ondish provided a summary that supported the adoption of the budget as is, but commented that the total revenue exceeded total expenses, which could have been allocated. He also stated that the taxpayers will appreciate the tax cuts. He also discussed why health insurance costs fluctuate. He stated that the County can provide additional supplemental appropriation to the school system for their small capital projects but cannot dictate how to spend them.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey reminded Council Members of the agricultural tour of the southern area of Cecil County being held on May 31.

Council Member Items

Councilman Coutz commented on the public budget hearing and the comments in support of more funding for the schools and those who supported the budget as proposed. He attended the Elkton Fishing Rodeo, Youth Prevention Rally, North East VFW golf tournament, and Water Witch Fire Company awards banquet. He reported on statistics from the Sheriff's Office intel meeting regarding the number of overdoses.

Vice President Gregory attended the Economic Development Summit, Elk Neck Elementary School Cecil Citizens program, viewing of locally filed "Cream of the Crop" movie, and the Water Witch Fire Company awards banquet.

Councilwoman Culberson attended the Elk Neck Elementary School Cecil Citizens program and the Economic Development Summit.

Councilman Miller thanked the audience who attended the budget public hearing held at the Elkton High School. He attended the Elkton Fishing Rodeo, Scottish Games at Fair Hill, and his 50th Rising Sun High School class reunion. He thanked Mike Brandon from the Paris Foundation, who spoke at Ebenezer United Methodist Church.

Council President Meffley attended the Water Witch Fire Company awards banquet, Elkton Fishing Rodeo, Scottish Games at Fair Hill, and Cecil Leadership Academy graduation. He congratulated Councilman Coutz for his graduation. He attended a dinner at Quarters One at Aberdeen Proving Ground as a guest of General Robert Edmonson.

Adjournment

Vice President Gregory made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilman Coutz. Council President Meffley adjourned the session at 5:04 pm.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley, Council President