

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
July 26, 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, Al Miller, and Donna Culberson; 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 five Council Members present, which constitutes 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 July 5, 2022, as presented. The motion approved unanimously.

Review of Legislative Agenda

Council President Meffley led a review of tonight's legislative agenda.

A public hearing will be held for Bill No. 2022-09 Fire Companies Volunteer-Emergency Services Expenses-Reimbursement. Steve Overbay, Acting Director of Administration, presented a letter from the County Executive that made several suggestions and her concern that residents could be reluctant to call 911 for emergencies because of their inability to pay. Her suggestions included addressing the liability for charges, uninsured portion of the charge, clarification of the right to seek reimbursement, a countywide published list of fees, and a two-year sunset clause.

At the request of Councilman Coutz, Charles Widdoes, President of the Cecil County Firemen's Association, presented a letter requesting that Section C. of the Bill be removed and stated that this request was approved by the Chief's Committee and Firemen's Association. Robert Muller, First Vice President of the Singerly Fire Company, was also invited to address the Council. He stated that Howard County has a paid fire service, a fire tax on residents, and policies that are incompatible for Cecil County. He stated that Cecil County has written policy defining the billing for medical services, dated February 22, 2005.

Council questions and comments ensued. Mr. Muller clarified that if two fire companies respond to an emergency, the billing is assigned to the company within the region of the location of the response. He also clarified that currently each fire company provides their own list of services. Mr. Muller explained that fire companies have different fees based on their

individual operations, equipment size, and distances. He also stated that fire companies could consider countywide fees for service at the maximum that is charged by Singerly Fire Company.

Wayne Tome, Director of Emergency Services, was asked to discuss the fees charged by Water Witch Fire Company in Port Deposit. He stated that Port Deposit sets levels in \$100 increments. Mr. Muller stated that Singerly sets fees between \$750 to \$3,000, depending on the complexity of services. Mr. Widdoes stated that electric cars will result in more expensive fees and concerns for the health of responders. Mr. Muller noted that hazardous materials must also be considered when setting fees. He clarified that all fire companies use a third party to bill for services.

Vice President Gregory presented a list of amendments to be considered, which includes a countywide uniform fee schedule for services, providing information about insurance coverage to the fire company, assigning insurance benefits to fire company, clarifying that emergency service will be provided regardless of ability to pay, and not requiring resident to pay out-of-pocket expenses for service.

Council President Meffley asked Mr. Muller and Mr. Widdoes to review the County Executive's letter and provide feedback to the Council.

Bill No. 2022-11 Taxation – Tax Credit – Sworn Officers, will be introduced at tonight's session. James Appel, Finance Director, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 46-2022 Approval – Franchise Agreement – Breezeline, will be introduced at tonight's session. Dave Warnick, Information Technology Director, and David Black, GIS Coordinator, provided comments. Mr. Black clarified that Breezeline is the new name for Armstrong Cable. Mr. Black stated that the franchise agreement term was ten years, the county will receive 5% of their gross revenue, and that Breezeline will provide line extensions for areas of twenty houses per mile at no cost. Mr. Black clarified that Breezeline serves the Chesapeake City, Perryville, and Port Deposit areas.

Resolution No. 47-2022 Supplemental Appropriation – Fund Balance – Information Technology – Broadband Expansion – Matching Funds, will be introduced at tonight's session. David Warnick, Information Technology Director, provided comments. He explained that the County has received \$12.8M grant that requires a county match of \$888,438. Mr. Appel stated that the County's matching funds will come from the fund balance.

Resolution No. 48-2022 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Parks and Recreation – Rising Sun High School – Turf Field, will be introduced at tonight's session. Mr. Overbay and Clyde VanDyke provided comments. Councilman Miller clarified that the project will begin next summer.

Resolution No. 42-2022 Supplemental Appropriation – Parks and Recreation – Program and Salaries Expenses, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. Steve Overbay, Acting Director of Administration, provided comments. He explained that \$200,000 will be used for a Recreation Coordinator at \$69,000 plus benefits, Maintenance 1 Worker at \$47,000 plus benefits, and grass maintenance equipment at \$20,000. James Appel, Finance Director, stated that the funds were coming from the department’s revenue generated and not from the fund balance.

Resolution No. 43-2022 Supplemental Appropriation – Grants Funds –Information Technology – Broadband Expansion – Neighborhood Connect, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. Dave Warnick, Information Technology Director, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 44-2022 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Information Technology – Broadband Expansion – Connected Communities, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. Dave Warnick, Information Technology Director, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Bill No. 2022-07 Supplemental Appropriation – Fund Balance – Courthouse – Parking Lot Capital Project, will be considered for final approval at tonight’s session. Steve Overbay, Acting Director of Administration, and Scott Flanigan, Public Works Director, provided comments. Mr. Flanigan clarified that the project will start this fall so that it can be completed by Thanksgiving.

Bill No. 2022-08 Establishment - Police Accountability Board, will be considered for final approval at tonight’s session. Steve Overbay, Acting Director of Administration, provided comments. Suggested amendments that the administration and Council discussed were read.

Council President Meffley stated that he was concerned about the stipend. Council Members discussed whether there should be a stipend at all, the amount, and how the budget would be set without an established amount. After discussion, Council Members agreed by consensus to revise the text as follows:

On Page 10, lines 253-254, delete in its entirety and insert the following:

“B. May include a quarterly stipend as County Executive deems appropriate, with Council approval”.

Under New Business, Cecil County Public Schools – Budget Amendment #100, in the amount of \$7,297,467 for June 2022, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey reported that the Cecil County Consolidated Transportation Plan meeting has been confirmed by the Maryland Department of Transportation to be held on Friday, September 16, 2022 at 10am in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building.

Members of the Cecil County Delegation and representatives of Cecil County municipalities will be invited to attend.

Council Member Items

Council Members Items were postponed until tonight's legislative session.

Adjournment

Councilman Coutz made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson. Council President Meffley adjourned the session at 6:27 pm.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley, Council President