

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES**

February 6, 2024

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: Bob Meffley, Rebecca Hamilton, Al Miller, Donna Culberson, Jackie Gregory; David Culver, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, members of the administration and members of the public.

Call to Order

President Gregory called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and announced that there were five Council Members present which constitute a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Vice President Meffley, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council Work Session of January 30, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 5 to 0.

On a motion made by Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Culberson, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council Closed Session of January 30, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 5 to 0.

**CLOSED SESSION
JANUARY 30, 2024
6:31 P.M.**

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Rebecca Hamilton, Al Miller and Jackie Gregory; David Culver, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, also: Andrew Ondish, Philadelphia Road Consulting, LLC.

Council President Gregory asked for a motion to recess the work session and to go into a closed session. Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to go into closed session, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton.

Roll Call Vote

Hamilton - Y, Miller - Y, Culberson - Y, Meffley - Y, Gregory – Y

The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Council Manager Culver stated for the record:

Pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions §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.

Council President Gregory recessed the work session at 6:30 pm and opened the closed session at 6:31 pm.

Council had a discussion of the FY24 Council Budget. The Council consensus was to enter this contact with Andrew Ondish of Philadelphia Road LLC to assist with financial matters.

Vice President Meffley made a motion to adjourn the Closed Session and reconvene the Work Session, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton.

Roll Call Vote

Hamilton - Y, Miller - Y, Culberson - Y, Meffley - Y, Gregory - Y

The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0

President Gregory adjourned the closed session at 7:00 pm.

Presentations

a. Office of Tourism – Sandy Turner

Sandy Turner, Tourism Manager, noted a dramatic increase in grant funding for advertising in the past 18 months for a total of \$700,000. She noted \$250,000 was from 5 Star at Fair Hill advertising, \$290,000 for Maryland Tourism Marketing Grant, \$112,000 from EDA Competitive DMO Grant for Freedom Project, \$54,000 for Maryland Tourism Marketing and \$11,000 for Winter Lights and Cecil Nights. Manager Turner also reviewed the various brochures, billboards, transit bus advertisements and the Destination Maryland magazine that had the Turkey Point Lighthouse on the cover. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the Freedom Project locations and Manager Turner noted the three locations, Elk Neck Park and Turkey Point Lighthouse, C&D Canal and the ferry landing in Perryville near Rodgers Tavern. Councilman Miller inquired if surveys were being done at the 5 Star event to determine where people traveled from, and Manager Turner noted they did in the past to find out where they were from and where did they stay and will try to do more surveys in the future. Vice President Meffley noted the advertising for the 5 Star event was much better this year and Ms. Turner noted the additional advertising funding and partnership with the 5 Star organizers was a huge factor in this success. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on what type of tourism conferences do they attend and are they focused on travel agents or potential tourist. Manager Turner noted they are regional and most conferences or shows focus on potential visitors, not travel agents, such as the AAA Conference. She also noted that many tourists come from the Philadelphia-Lancaster region and the Pittsburgh region to our area and they do try to attend events in this region to help promote Cecil County. President Gregory inquired on the feedback from the Towns on Cecil Nights Winter Lights and Manager Turner noted this event is growing each year and the Towns have been enthusiastic partners. She noted this program began as a one-year event to help business after the Covid pandemic, but the Towns requested that the event be continued and it has grown exponentially. She also noted other partners in the program like the Cecil County Fair Board loaning a wagon for tours of the Towns.

b. FY24 2nd Quarter Financial Review

Shon McCollum, Director of Finance presented the FY24 2nd Quarter Financial Review. He noted overall the County is right on target for the FY24 budget. He noted revenues are coming in on

target and expenditures are at 49% for the year. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if the discounts listed in the report was for the \$20 million tax refund and Director McCollum noted that it was for that program. Councilman Miller noted that it did not exceed \$20 million, and Director McCollum noted it was about \$19 million and any remain funds would revert to the fund balance.

Review of Legislative Agenda

a. Public Hearings

1. Bill 2024-01 - Establishment – Commission on Veterans

President Gregory noted that several counties have this type of Commission and noted how this commission functions in Harford County. This Commission would be made up of veteran organizations and would help veterans by providing information, outreach and assistance in all matters relating to the well-being of our veterans. Councilman Miller again inquired if they were going to be compensated and noted the bill allows for this commission to be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses associated with their duties. President Gregory noted that they would not be compensated but would be entitled for reimbursement and that this is the same language and procedure for other commissions. County Attorney Lawrence Scott noted the funding is part of the budget and all requests are reviewed prior to payments. Director of Community Services David Trolio noted that his office will staff this Commission and that many of the programs they offer will fit into the mission of this Commission.

2. Bill 2024-02 - Amendment – Zoning Ordinance – Critical Area – Definitions, and Official Critical Area Maps

Director of Land Use Stephen O'Connor noted that this would update the Zoning Ordinance to match the new Maryland Critical Area Commission maps. He noted that the maps would become the official maps for Cecil County for the Critical Areas. He noted this was part of the Critical Area legislation that was passed by the Council last year and the Critical Area Commission has now officially adopted these maps. He also noted the Planning Board recommended approval of this change.

3. Bill 2024-03 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – Mary Ann Thompson and James K. MacDonald, and Meulenberg Enterprises, LLC

Director of Land Use Stephen O'Connor noted that these two farms located at 360 Joseph Biggs Highway and 2159 Principio Road that are requesting to sell the development rights to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) program. As part of this easement sale, the properties must have a public hearing and be part of an agricultural district. Director O'Connor noted that these two farms are first time participants in the program and this bill will serve as the needed public hearing for the application.

b. Introduction of Resolution

1. Resolution 09-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Fund Balance – Roads Division – Department of Public Works – Asphalt Overlay

Deputy Director of Public Works Rob Ritter noted that this \$3 million would supplement the existing budget of \$750,000. He noted that Oldfield Point, Irishtown, Old Elk Neck, Ebenezer

Church and McGrady Road are scheduled and Liberty Grove is an alternative if funding allows for overlay and another \$450,000 is allocated for patching and crack sealing at various locations.

2. Resolution 10-2024 - Appointment— Administrative Charging Committee – John Ronald Stricklett

County Attorney Lawrence Scott noted that Mr. Stricklett is on the Police Accountability Board but is resigning to be appointed to the Administrative Charging Board to fill the term of Rodney W. Heinze who resigned. Attorney Scott noted that Mr. Stricklett has already been through the state mandated training. He also noted that an appointment to replace Mr. Stricklett on the PAB will be forthcoming. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if Mr. Stricklett already resigned from the PAB and Attorney Scott noted he did already submit his letter. Vice President Meffley inquired if the replacement for the PAB was already selected and Attorney Scott noted that they have not selected anyone yet but expects that decision to be forthcoming. Vice President Meffley inquired if they had any alternates for the PAB and Attorney Scott noted they do not, however, all PAB members attended the state mandated training so any member could serve on the ACC.

c. Consideration of Resolutions

1. Resolution 06-2024 - Budget Amendment - Fund Balance - Department of Emergency Services – Purchase of Used Ambulance

Director of Finance Shon McCollum noted that this resolution would allow Emergency Services to purchase a used ambulance from the Chesapeake City Fire Company for \$25,000. The ambulance is six years old and has approximately 54,000 miles.

2. Resolution 07-2024 - Appointment—Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board – Nathan Stewart, Melissa Kinsler, and Robert Muller

County Attorney Lawrence Scott noted that this board consists of 15 members and the three on this resolution are replacing members who are no longer able to serve. He noted Nathan Stewart will represent the paramedic union, Melissa Kinsler is a nurse and Robert Muller is the Fireman's Association representative. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if each one of these appointees is new to the Board and Attorney Scott noted they were all new.

3. Resolution 08-2024- Tax Credit - Historic Property – Schoolhouse known as Town Point School

Director of Land Use Stephen O'Connor noted that this property owner is applying for the tax credit for this historical property at 19 Port Herman Road in Chesapeake City. He noted that this house is part of the historic district and that the owner has done repairs to the façade of the house which qualifies them for this credit.

State Legislative Update

President Gregory inquired if Councilmembers had any updates to provide or bills to consider.

Councilwoman Culberson noted SB0381- Fairness in Girls Sports will have a hearing on February 7. She also requested a letter of opposition be sent on SB0018 – Health Occupations – Pharmacists –

Administration of vaccines that would allow a minor to get vaccinated without parental permission. Council agreed to send a letter of opposition.

President Gregory gave the MACo update on bills that were discussed. SB0532/HB0468 creates a Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety and Council agreed to send a letter of support. She also noted several bills on apprenticeship programs including HB0597/SB0470 - Growing Apprenticeships and the Public Safety Workforce (GAPS) Act. She noted this is one of the Governor's initiatives and MACo is supporting. She also discussed HB0142 – Election Law - Polling Places - Establishing Voter Identity and HB0202 – Election Law - Absentee Ballots - Signature Requirements and Verification and Council agreed to send letters of support for all discussed bills.

Councilman Miller noted he and the Farm Bureau were watching SB0056/HB0163 Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction – Grants, Fund, and Surcharge. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the Farm Bureau were reviewing HB0805/SB0537 Cannabis - Licensee Locations – Restrictions and SB0783 Renewable Energy – Net Energy Metering Aggregation, Solar Renewable Energy Credits, and Taxes on Solar Energy Generating Systems and Councilman Miller noted he would inquire on the Farm Bureau position and report back.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet.

Council Member Items

Councilmembers deferred comments to the Legislative Session of February 6, 2024.

President Gregory announced that no further items are on the February 6, 2024 Work Session agenda

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 5:27 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 4:30 pm in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building. The session will also be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage at www.ccgov.org/council.

Approved:


Jackie Gregory, Council President


David M. Culver
Council Manager