

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

June 11, 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: Robert Meffley, Rebecca Hamilton, Al Miller, Donna Culberson and Jackie Gregory; David Culver, Council Manager; Terry Hale and Christine Palmer, Council Assistants, members of the administration and members of the public.

Call to Order

President Gregory called the meeting to order at 5:23 pm and announced that there were five Council Members present which constitute a quorum. She noted the Board of Health Meeting preceded this Work Session.

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 June 4, 2024, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation

- a. Chris Locke – SL24: Unlocke the Light Foundation/Sean's House

Chris Locke noted his background and past residency in Cecil County and the life of his son, Sean Locke. He noted that suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for ages 10 to 24 and the number of deaths has been increasing. He noted that while males account for the majority of these deaths, the number of females committing suicide have been dramatically increasing. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on why this may be occurring, and Mr. Locke noted, that while he is not a mental health professional, his research into this issue indicated that, besides the diagnosed mental health issue, social media, covid impacts and drug use seem to be adding to the problem with the increase in females committing suicide. He also noted that this is the first generation of children that grew up in this social media era and this is having an adverse effect on mental health.

Mr. Locke also noted the many myths of mental health and stated they need to be broken and discussed so people can have a better understanding of how to help others with mental health issues. He noted that Sean Locke participated in many sports, graduated from the University of Delaware and began his professional career but tragically committed suicide on July 18, 2018. Mr. Locke noted after Sean's passing, he began to learn more about mental health and the effect it has on youth. After having a fund raiser for mental health awareness, he began the SL24: Unlocke the Light Foundation in late 2018. The goal was to educate, assist and support youths that are having mental health crises. In 2020, Mr. Locke noted his company converted the last house Sean lived in while attending the University of Delaware and dedicated it as Sean's House. Sean's House is open year-round, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week and offers crises support, peer support and support groups for both the youths and parents. Sean's House serves the regional area and young adults from the University of Delaware, the local Community Colleges, including Cecil Community, the high or middle schools or anyone who may need this service. Sean's House is a

walk-in, no or low pressure facility that allows the young adults to interact with peers and will get them immediate assistance. He noted that the peer support volunteers go through an eight-week training course, and many have experienced the same mental health issues. Mr. Locke also noted that they recently started Sean's Room which is a safe space in several local high schools that offer these students the same peer support during school hours.

Mr. Locke noted that people should know the signs of depression, start the conversation and create action plans. He noted the ALGEE Method that is Access for Risk, Listen Non-Judgmentally, Give Reassurance, Encourage Professional Help and Encourage Self-Help. Mr. Locke noted that since 2020, over 28,500 youths visited Sean's House, over 4,100 peer sessions have been conducted, over 120 active suicide crises were averted and over 62,000 people educated by the SL24: Unlocked the Light Foundation. Mr. Locke noted that Sean's House has worked with numerous youths from Cecil County. President Gregory thanked Mr. Locke for the presentation and information and noted the need to expand these youth services. Councilwoman Culberson also thanked Mr. Locke and noted the number of youths served is astonishing. Vice President Meffley inquired if the University of Delaware or other educational institutions were assisting in funding and Mr. Locke noted they do not, and this is all being done with private funding. Councilman Miller inquired on the fund-raising events and Mr. Locke noted they do several including a basketball tournament in February. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the assistance offered to older generations and Mr. Locke noted they do not turn anyone away and recently assisted a 60-year-old gentleman. President Gregory requested that Council be notified of upcoming events so they can assist in letting the public know of this service and Mr. Locke indicated he would do so.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He also noted that Sheriff Adams would present the Sheriff's Office Annual Report at the June 25 Work Session.

Council Member Items

Councilwoman Hamilton noted the importance of mental health care, especially in young children and adults.

Vice President Meffley noted MRDC just brought on a mental health specialist. He also noted he attended the Cecil College GED graduation and that 10 people received a GED. He also attended the Chesapeake City 5K Event on June 8. He also noted this past week he researched issues with the Earleville Post Office, assisted some constituents with right of way issues and assisted several consistent with various permit issues.

Councilman Miller noted he attended Sunfest in Rising Sun on June 1, and it was highly successful. He also thanked Mr. Locke for the presentation and the work they are doing with the youth.

Councilwoman Culberson noted the intel numbers for the previous week. She also noted the importance of mental health care.

President Gregory noted the North East Celebration this past weekend. She noted that the annual Wade In will be at Elk Neck State Park on June 15 and encouraged everybody to participate. She also congratulated Morgan Miller on her new position as State Librarian for Maryland and said that she will be missed by the Cecil County Libraries.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 5:59 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, June 18 at 4:30 pm in the Elk Room of the County Administrative Building. The session will be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage at www.ccgove.org/council.



David M. Culver
Council Manager

Approved:



Jackie Gregory, Council President