

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

June 25, 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 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 Councilman Miller, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council Work Session of June 18, 2024, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations

a. Cecil County Sheriff's Office 2023 Annual Report

Sheriff Scott Adams introduced Jenn Heitz, Crime Analyst with the Sheriff's Office and reviewed the Cecil County Sheriff's Office 2023 Annual Report. Analyst Heitz noted the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) was replaced in 2021 with the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIRBS) in order to better classify crimes and account for each offense instead of the UCR hierarchy reporting. Sheriff Adams noted that most of the statistics they will be reviewing are only for the Sheriff's Office. He also noted that because of State law changes some crimes are classified differently, as well as some of the juvenile criminal justice reforms that also will be reflected in the numbers. Sheriff Adams noted Cecil County overall crime trends have been decreasing but some crime classifications have been increasing. Analyst Heitz noted this in forcible rape and the way it is now defined to be more inclusive. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if this increase was mostly juvenile, and Analyst Heitz noted it is higher with both juvenile and adults. President Gregory inquired if this was higher because of other agencies reporting rapes and Sheriff Adams noted they are normally the agency that will refer victims to them for assistance. President Gregory also inquired if the report reflects crimes or conviction of crimes and Analyst Heitz noted it is on total crimes reported. Vice President Meffley inquired on the impact of Covid and Sheriff Adams noted that while theft and other type of crimes were lower during Covid, some crimes, such as domestic violence, increased. Analyst Heitz also noted car theft did increase this past year. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if this was mostly juveniles and Sheriff Adams noted more juveniles were involved in this crime. Councilwoman Hamilton also inquired on the juvenile reform changes and the change in the definition of rape and Analyst Heitz noted that the definition change did increase the number of charges. Sheriff Adams noted juvenile crime has been increasing because of the leniency if the State law, but the Sheriff's Association is working with the State on changes to these reforms. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired on the conviction rates and Analyst Heitz noted it is about 67%, which is higher than the State average. Sheriff Adams noted that some crimes are not prosecuted by the States Attorney, the person is found innocent, or the crime simply was never solved so no charges could be brought.

Sheriff Adams reviewed the 5 patrol districts for the Sheriff's Office and noted 40,878 calls for service were received in 2023 for all police departments. Sheriff Adams reviewed the accomplishments of the Traffic Unit, K-9 Unit, the use of the body worn cameras, the Criminal Investigation Unit, the Child Advocacy Center, the Crisis Intervention Unit, the sex offender registry, the Crime Analysis and Crime Scene Technician, the Cecil County Drug Task Force Unit and Street Level Crime Unit and the School Resources Unit. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the Drug Task Force and the decrease in crimes and Sheriff Adams noted the Task Force has been transitioning to the Street Level Crime Unit and the arrests by this unit has drastically increased. President Gregory inquired on interagency cooperation and Sheriff Adams noted it is very strong,

but different policing methods are now being employed for drug offenses since the legalization of cannabis. Sheriff Adams noted that the Drug Task Force did just make a major drug bust and details will be forth coming. Analyst Heitz noted that drug overdose and deaths have been decreasing and Councilwoman Culberson congratulated the Sheriff's Office and all the agencies that have been working on this issue.

Sheriff Adams also reviewed the Administrative Services Division including fleet management, Quartermaster, officer training which exceeds the mandate 18 hours per year and include the new VirTra training software, the Court Security Unit, the Civil Process Unit, the Community Resources Unit, Central Records and expungement, Small Unmanned Aircraft System Unit and the Honor Guard. Vice President Meffley inquired if the body cameras provided a live feed and Sheriff Adams noted they do have that capability, but it is not often used. Councilman Miller thanked the Sheriff's Office for all these services and inquired on the distribution of calls between the Maryland State Police and the Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Adams noted it is usually every other call. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the sworn officer staffing levels and Sheriff Adams noted they are currently short 13 sworn officers but have several pending transfers and hoping to send 3 people to the next training academy. President Gregory inquired how this compares to other agencies and did the pay increase help and Sheriff Adams noted the pay increases do help and most agencies are experiencing the same vacancy rate. President Gregory inquired on the population at the detention center and Sheriff Adams noted it is still lower due to pre-trial monitoring and reviewed the tiers of pre-trial monitoring. President Gregory also inquired if new positions were created in the FY25 Budget and Sheriff Adams noted no new positions, but they did reclassify several positions. President Gregory inquired on the fewer calls for crisis intervention and Sheriff Adams noted they were surprised by this trending lower, but it may just be a statistical anomaly at this period of time. Councilwoman Hamilton also inquired on the number of 911 hang ups and Analyst Heitz noted that the android phones did have a programming error that account for many of these calls. President Gregory also inquired on the vacancies at the detention center and Sheriff Adams noted it is currently 19 positions. Councilwoman Hamilton and President Gregory both inquired on car theft and catalytic converters theft and Sheriff Adams noted car theft have increased but converter theft has drastically decreased. President Gregory thanked Sheriff Adams and Analyst Heitz on the presentation.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He also reminded Council on upcoming events.

Council Member Items

Vice President Meffley noted he attended the VLOSAP Meeting on June 25 and they discussed the cost of the program and a potential request to increase the funeral expenses allocation for firefighters. He also attended the FOP Golf event and stated it was well attended. He also noted he gave a deposition on a pending case against Cecil County.

Councilwoman Hamilton encouraged everybody to attend the July 3rd Salute to the Veterans Event at the North East Park.

Councilman Miller noted that he did not have any updates to report.

Councilwoman Culberson noted that on August 8 the 22nd Annual Healthy 55+ Expo will be at the Elkton High School. She also reviewed the intel numbers for last week and noted that so far this year Cecil County has had 13 weeks with no fatal overdoses and thanked all the agencies who work on this issue.

President Gregory noted she attended the Drug Court graduation on June 14 and noted that this program is very valuable. She also noted the Maryland opened a Department of Veterans Affairs office in Cecil County and this is the 7th location in the State.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice President Meffley. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 5:50 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, July 2 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