

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

October 1, 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; Christine Palmer, 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 Councilwoman Hamilton, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of September 24, 2024, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Legislative Agenda

a. Public Hearings

1. Bill 2024-20 Public Safety Pension Plan – Amendment 9 – Domestic Relations Order and Disability Determination

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that the Pension Board identified these issues with the pension plan as it relates to disability payments and divorce settlements. He noted that this was examined by the pension consultants and will have no fiscal impact.

2. Bill 2024-21 - Establishment – Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this amendment is part of the State Cannabis Act that requires counties to outline how the funds will be spent.

3. Bill 2024-22 - Supplemental Appropriation – Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 - Fiscal Year 2029 Capital Improvement Program – Child Advocacy Center.

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this amendment will coincide with Resolution 43-2024 which is the grant funding for this project. He noted this project will add 800 square feet to the center, allow the roof to be replaced and also add an emergency generator.

4. Bill 2024-23 - Supplemental Appropriation - Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 – Fiscal Year 2029 Capital Improvement Program – ARPA Funding
Project Number 55041 - Holloway Beach Sewer Project
Project Number 50051 - Paramedic Station 2 Project
Project Number 50052 - Paramedic Station 4 Project
Project Number 51030 - Public Safety Training Center Project
Project Number 52594 - Oldfield Point Road Project
Project Number 55064 - Elkton West Sanitary Sewer Project

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this Bill will move ARPA and bond funding between various projects to ensure the ARPA funds are spent in accordance with the deadlines established for the program. The Holloway Beach Project will move \$2,100,000 million to the Public Safety Training Center, and \$300,000 each to Paramedic Station 2 and 4. County bond funding of \$1,700,000 from Oldfield Point Road and \$1,000,000 for Elkton West Sewer project will be moved to Holloway Beach project. He noted Holloway Beach is behind schedule due to easements being required and that the Oldfield Point project also needed right of way dedication.

Vice President Meffley inquired if the fund balance included the ARPA funds and Director of Finance Shon McCollum noted that it is not and the fund balance and CIP funds are two separate

funds. Vice President Meffley inquired if the APRA funds are assigned fund balance and Director McCollum noted they are not.

b. Introduction of Resolutions

1. Resolution 49-2024 - Support of the Maryland Two Fifty Commission

Councilwoman Hamilton noted that Governor Wes Moore created the Maryland Two Fifty Commission to help promote the upcoming anniversary of the founding of the United States. She noted that during the MACO Summer Conference she was approached by members of the Two Fifty Commission requesting a resolution of support and designating a Council member or other volunteers to help promote this event locally. She noted that she would volunteer to serve in this capacity and this resolution notes our support and her appointment for Council. President Gregory thanked Councilwoman Hamilton for volunteering and noted this will be a great time to celebrate the founding of the United States.

2. Resolution 50-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Tourism – Winter Lights Cecil Nights

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this is the 5th year for this event and for the first time all eight municipalities will be participating. He also noted the grant was increased to \$15,000 this year from Upper Shore Regional Council and thanked them for the support they have given to this event. Director Overbay noted that each town would be allocated \$2,000 to spend on eligible event items such as lights, carriage rides, snow machines and so forth.

Councilwoman Culberson inquired on who would provide the difference from the grant and the allocation and Director Overbay noted the Tourism Office would provide the additional \$1,000 to make up the difference in the grant and would also do the promotions for the event.

Councilwoman Culberson inquired how the grant funds are distributed and Director Overbay noted that the towns are reimbursed once the expenditures are invoices and verified. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the dates for the events and Director Overbay noted it is January through February but would verify the exact dates. Councilman Miller noted this is a great event and is glad this grant resolution is coming in early for this event as well as the resolution for Operation Green Lights for Veterans.

3. Resolution 51-2024 - Operation Green Light for Veterans

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this is an annual event that encourages people to use green lights on buildings and in homes to honor our veterans from November 4 to 11, 2024.

4. Resolution 52-2024 - Appointment—Planning Commission- Christopher Walker, Robb Carey, and Christopher Bannon II

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that the Planning Commission serves a valuable role in reviewing plans and making recommendations to Council. He noted these individuals are well qualified to serve on the Commission.

Vice President Meffley inquired if the alternate, James Perry, was notified he was not being reappointed and Director Overbay noted he did not speak with him but it was his understanding the Director of Land Use did notify him of this change.

5. Resolution 53-2024 - Appointment—Board of Appeals – Scott Williams, Gabriele Coutz, Michael Linkous and Willard Whiteman

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that, like the Planning Commission, the Board of Appeals plays a valuable role in the development process and hears appeals of decisions, special exceptions and variance requests. He noted Michael Linkous was being reappointed Willard Whiteman, who is on the BOA, is being reappointed as the alternative. He noted the other individuals are new appointments.

Vice President Meffley noted that Will Whiteman has been on the Board for 8 years and is experienced in matters before the BOA and should remain a member, not an alternate. Director

Overbay agreed that Mr. Whiteman is a valuable member of this Board and noted that the alternate is frequently needed to make a quorum for the meeting. He also noted the alternate is given the same materials and can participate in meetings, ask questions and vote, when needed, for a quorum. Director Overbay noted the County Executive still wants Mr. Whiteman on the Board, but that other people have also expressed an interest in serving. Vice President Meffley opined that Mr. Whiteman should be made a full member and one of the other candidates be named the alternate to help them gain experience. Director Overbay noted that the appointments can be done in different ways and this allows for new members while keeping the institutional memory of Mr. Whiteman available. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if this is a five-member Board and Mr. Overbay noted it was and this resolution will fill all open positions. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the terms and it was noted they are staggered and the dates were based on the last appointment resolution. Councilman Miller inquired if the Board was having trouble with getting a quorum and Director Overbay noted they were, but these appointments should help resolve this issue.

6. Resolution 54-2024 - Appointment—Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board- Clay Stubbs and Brandon Van Bibber

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this Board reviews all agricultural preservation applications and make recommendations. He noted both candidates are new and well qualified. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if these appointments would make this a full Board and Director Overbay noted this would fill all vacancies on this Board.

7. Resolution 55-2024 - Approval – Maryland 5 Star Multi-Year Contract

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this is a multi-year agreement that is in the same format that the previous administration utilized to continue the 5 Star Event, but this agreement is also allocating additional funding to the Sport & Entertainment Corporation of Maryland (S&E) to potentially bring back the Fair Hill Races. Director Overbay noted this provides the stability in funding for the events and allows them to expand sponsorships, commit to dates and reserve the needed venues. He noted that the \$100,000 was being committed this fiscal year for the Fair Hill Races and the \$2,850,000 funding over the next five year will be a combination of Video Lottery Funds and general funds. Director Overbay also introduced Jeff Newman from S&E to answer any questions. Mr. Newman noted that he is one of the events promoter and this resolution will provide stability to the event. He noted that they have had preliminary discussion with DNR on the Fair Hill Races and believe they may be able to host the event this upcoming Spring. Mr. Newman also discussed the costs of the 5 Star and Fair Hill Races and the economic impact they have to this area.

Vice President Meffley inquired as to what is in the contract with S&E and Mr. Newman noted the payment structure. He also noted that it is estimated that the 5 Star generates about \$12,000,000 of expenditures in the Cecil County region. He noted that approximately 17,000 room nights are booked during this event in this area, including the 5 Star reservation of 700 room nights at the Great Wolf Lodge. He noted it is hard to determine the exact spending in Cecil County. He also noted that the 5 Star is one 1 of 7 events of this type worldwide. Director Overbay also noted the agreement makes Cecil County a sponsor and that our inclusion brings more stability to the event. Vice President Meffley noted the 5 Star is an excellent event, however, the Fair Hill Races are just as important and how does that get implemented. Mr. Newman noted that they will work with DNR on available dates once funds are committed and would begin seeking sponsors. He noted that DNR would like to have the Fair Hill Races in 2025. He also noted S&E is a non-profit and all proceeds they receive are invested back into the events. Councilman Miller inquired on the previous agreement with 5 Star and did the event meet the 3-year benchmarks and Mr. Newman noted it did meet the benchmarks to continue. Councilman Miller inquired if the contract is completed and if the \$100,000 for the Fair Hill Races has been allocated and Mr. Newman noted not until the resolution is passed will the funds be allocated. He also noted the funds will only spend if they have the Fair Hill Races. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the 5 Star funding has been allocated and Director Overbay noted that it was included in the FY25 budget. Councilman Miller noted the history of the Fair Hill track and issues with the turf for the Fair Hill Races and Mr. Newman noted that would need to be resolved and that DNR and 5 Star are both committed to getting the track fixed for racing. Councilman Miller inquired who at DNR has been contacted and Mr. Newman noted discussions with Secretary Kurtz and his staff. President Gregory inquired what did DNR need to commit to the Fair Hill Races and Mr. Newman noted commitment of funding and

a business plan to run the event. He also noted that DNR will need to commit to fix the track and turf. Councilman Miller noted Cecil County has track and turf experts, noted how the track was historically designed to have tight turns and also inquired on who will pay for the changes. Mr. Newman noted DNR would most likely fund the improvements. Councilwoman Culberson noted she supported getting the Fair Hill Races along with the 5 Star Event and inquired on the metrics used to track the economic impacts. Director Overbay noted the various tools used by the Economic Development Office including credit card data for the area during the event. He also noted that Cecil County is shown on TV and other media advertisements prior to and during the event and that the State does try to gauge impact of these events also since it covers several Maryland counties. Mr. Newman noted the grant is an investment and that the growth of the 5 Star will help local business grow also. President Gregory noted that the Fair Hill Races in 2025 would be a benefit locally and Mr. Newman noted that is the goal. Councilman Miller opined that the Fair Hill Races will have better attendance than the 5 Star. Councilwoman Hamilton thanked the administration, DNR and S&E on the success and continuation of the 5 Star and for trying to bring back the Fair Hill Races.

c. Consideration of Resolutions

1. Resolution 40-2024- An authorization to provide a loan to the Cecil County Public Schools to complete construction of the North East Middle/High School Complex.

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this is the companion resolution to Bill 2024-19 and will provide the mechanism for the payback of State funds for this project to the Board of Education (BOE) and Cecil County. He noted the MOU with the School Board has been signed and was sent to Council. He also thanked the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) for its help during this process.

2. Resolution 46-2024 - Appointment – County Executive - Cecil County Ethics Commission – Francis D. Peterson, Jr. and Andrew Goins

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that Mr. Peterson and Mr. Goins are reappointments and will serve three-year terms. He also noted Mr. Goins was being named Chair.

3. Resolution 47-2024 - Appointment—Commission on Veterans Affairs

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted this is the new Commission that Council created to assist our veterans. He noted the Commission has 9 members including 2 Councilmembers, 4 members who are both veterans and members of veteran groups and 3 are members from the general public that have experience in veteran's affairs.

3. Resolution 48-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Casino Local Impact Fund – Route 40 Revitalization Grant Program

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted the three-year Video Lottery Terminal funding allocated \$500,000 each year to the Route 40 Revitalization Grant to assist business in improving property along Route 40. He noted that several projects from FY24 are nearing completion, but the invoices have not been received so this resolution will move those funds to FY25.

Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the criteria for the grant funds and Director Overbay reviewed Community Services involvement in reviewing the applications and the criteria for approval that also includes matching funds from the businesses. Vice President Meffley inquired who inspects the work to ensure compliance with the application and Director Overbay noted that all applicants must get any required permit, if needed, and they must provide documentation that the project is completed.

d. Call for Final Reading of Bills

1. Bill 2024-18- Amendment – Ethics – Chapter 39, Section 39-4, Membership; Terms and Section 39-5, Chairman

President Gregory noted that this bill is being introduced to amend the County Code to match Charter Section 607 which was amended in 2022 as part of the General Election.

2. Bill 2024-19 - An amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 – Fiscal Year 2029 Capital Improvement Program – Accelerate North East Middle/High School Complex Construction – PR# 71273.

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this project is currently funded in the CIP, however, based on funding issues with the State, the project would take longer and could create safety issues with phasing of the two schools and construction on one school while the other is occupied. Director Overbay noted this Bill, along with Resolution 40-2024, would allow this project to be completed by FY27 and would save eight to ten million dollars in construction costs, have less impact on the community because of the shorten construction timeline and also allow students from the High and Middle school to be moved into the new facility at the same time thus preventing any safety concerns of students attending school at an active construction site.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He noted the upcoming MDOT and MACO visits.

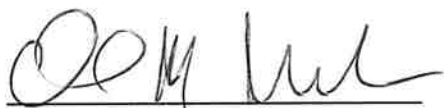
Council Member Items

Councilmembers deferred comments to the Legislative Session of October 1, 2024.

Adjournment

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

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 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