

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

December 3, 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 Dawn Branch; David Culver, Council Manager; Christine Palmer, Council Assistant, members of the administration and members of the public.

Call to Order

Vice President Meffley 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 October 15, 2024, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Appointment of President

Council Vice President Meffley turned the meeting over to David Culver, Council Manager, for consideration of the Council President position. Councilman Meffley made a motion to nominate Councilman Miller to be President of Council for the upcoming term of 2024 to 2026 and was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson. With no further nominations, Council voted to close the nominations.

Councilman Miller noted that he believes it is critical to have experience leadership for the role of Council President and he has that experience.

Roll Call Vote on motion to elect Councilman Miller as President of Council for the next term: Meffley – Y, Hamilton – Y, Miller – Y, Culberson – Y, Branch – Y

The motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0 to elect Councilman Miller as President of Council for the next term of 2024-2026.

Appointment of Vice President

Council Manager Culver asked for considerations for the Council Vice President position. Councilman Miller made a motion to nominate Councilman Meffley to be Vice President of Council for the upcoming term of 2024 to 2026 and was seconded by Councilwoman Branch. With no further nominations, Council voted to close the nominations.

Roll Call Vote on motion to elect Councilman Meffley as Vice President of Council for the next term: Meffley – Y, Hamilton – N, Miller – Y, Culberson – N, Branch – Y,

The motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 2 to elect Councilman Meffley as Vice President of Council for the next term of 2024-2026.

Council Manager Culver turned the meeting back over to President Miller.

Council Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Other Liaisons

President Miller reviewed the Council Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Other Liaisons for the 2024 to 2026 term. Council Manager Culver will revise the list and send to Council.

2025 Council Legislative Calendar

Council Manager Culver reviewed the proposed 2025 Council Legislative Calendar that was presented. Council Members had no objections to the calendar as presented.

Review of Council Departmental Budget FY26

Council Manager Culver reviewed the FY26 Council Budget request and noted that it is going to remain basically the same as FY25 except for postage and travel costs that will need to be increased. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the budget for a Council Attorney and Manager

Culver noted it would be the same and with Council permission he would solicit proposals for this contract. Manager Culver also noted that Council rules should be revised as it pertains on how to manage the contract for the Council Attorney. Council agreed and noted they would discuss further at a future meeting. Council Members had no objections to the budget as presented being submitted.

Review of Legislative Agenda

a. Introduction of Resolutions

1. Resolution 56-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Sheriff Office-Warrant Apprehension

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted this is an annual grant to the Sheriff's office and helps offset overtime costs and new equipment.

2. Resolution 57-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Department of Information Technology – State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted this grant is for Information Technology to help with cyber security with Emergency Management and the 911 system. Vice President Meffley inquired if this is for a complete upgrade to the 911 system and Director Schneckenburger noted that it was not, but was for upgrades in the cyber security of the system.

3. Resolution 58-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – General Fund Balance – Department of Economic Development - Economic Development Study

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted this request is being made as part of the transition with the County Executive to help create a strategic plan for Economic Development. He noted that the last study was done in 2013 and the data needs to be updated to reflect the current economic conditions in the Cecil County market area. He also noted that this study was being requested by the new Director of Economic Development, Sandra Edwards and EDC Chair Mike Ratchford. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired as to the scope and expectation of the study and Director Schneckenburger noted the scope will be developed with the EDC and that they expect the study to identify the best method in which to grow the County's economy. Vice President Meffley inquired if this study would examine the potential of the new Belvidere Road interchange, Bainbridge, the economic impacts of events like 5 Star and new businesses impacts on the local economy like Great Wolf Lodge and Director Schneckenburger noted it will cover those subjects. Councilwoman Culberson inquired how will Council be made aware of the study and progress and Director Schneckenburger noted that once the RFP is completed and the contracted signed that Council would be given periodic updates. Vice President Meffley inquired if local companies will participate in the bidding process and Director Schneckenburger noted he hopes they will participate. Council Manager Culver noted he will work with the administration on scheduling updates on the progress of the study.

4. Resolution 59-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – General Fund Balance – Development of a new County Website

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted this amendment will be for the County to upgrade the website to provide more data, better customer service and be compliant with all applicable regulations. President Miller and Vice President Meffley both noted that the biggest complaint they receive is on the DLUDS site, permitting and the difficulty to navigate the site. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the recent updates to the site and Director Schneckenburger noted the entire site needs to be updated. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if \$50,000 will be enough funding and will the update be done by internal staff or an outside consultant. Director Schneckenburger noted they believe the funding will be sufficient and this will be contracted to an outside consultant. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if this could be deferred until the next budget cycle and Director Schneckenburger noted that the current site has issues and should be updated as soon as possible. Councilwoman Hamilton also inquired if the new website would rebrand the County and make each page consistent and Director Schneckenburger noted that was the goal.

b. New Business

1. Appointments

a. County Administrator – Daniel E. Schneckenburger

County Executive Adam Streight reviewed Daniel E. Schneckenburger's experience and qualifications for this position. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on Director Schneckenburger previous time in this position, any previous ethical issues in this position and the reason he resigned. Director Schneckenburger noted he resigned and as per his non-disclosure agreement he is not at liberty of discussing the reasons why he left the position. Vice President Meffley inquired that since he left the position what changes does he feel are necessary and Director Schneckenburger noted that the County needs to maintain a strong financial position and will need to refocus on providing excellent customer service. Councilwoman Branch requested that he describe the strengths he brings to this position and Director Schneckenburger noted his understanding of County government, his previous experience as an elected official and understanding the various roles of the Departments. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on what weakness does he see in County government and how will he address these issues and Director Schneckenburger noted the need to update the strategic plan to match the County Executive priorities, to better fund public safety and education and to focus on providing better constituent services. President Miller noted that he hopes the focus on constituent services becomes the first priority and making it easier for businesses in the County.

b. County Attorney – Keith A. Baynes

County Executive Adam Streight reviewed Keith A. Baynes's experience and qualifications for this position. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on Attorney Baynes status as a judge and Attorney Baynes noted he retired, as per the State statute at age 70 for a judge, was appointed as a senior judge but has since resigned from that position. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if he has any open or pending cases and Attorney Baynes indicated they have all been reassigned. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if he would be involved in any County cases he initially heard but has since been appealed and Attorney Baynes noted that once appealed he is no longer involved. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the handling of County employees in the Courthouse during Covid and Attorney Baynes noted that both State and County employees are in the Court system and they had to follow different rules based on the employment status. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired on a contempt order to the County Executive's Office during Covid and Attorney Baynes noted he did not recall any order during that time. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired on a court order on salary increases for County employees in the Court system and Attorney Baynes noted that he would request additional salary for employees during the budget cycle but did not have the authority as a judge to issue a court order to increase pay. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired why he was interested in this position and Attorney Baynes noted his time on the bench, his previous time as a Town and County Attorney and that he is always looking for new challenges. Councilwoman Hamilton asked County Executive Streight on his impression of Attorney Baynes, and he noted his experience, impeccable reputation and his knowledge of Cecil County. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if Attorney Baynes has been briefed on the pending cases and his impression of the Legal Department staff and Attorney Baynes noted he understands the County has approximately 50 pending cases and was working with Justin Hill in the Legal Department on the status. Attorney Baynes also noted he looks forward to meeting and getting to know the entire staff. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired how he handled cases that he may have a conflict of interest and Attorney Baynes noted his professional ethics and when he would recuse himself from a case. Vice President Meffley noted that he knew Attorney Baynes for many years and recalled how he brought people together on issues when he was attorney for Chesapeake City.

c. Director of Human Resources – Sally Kilby Dulin

County Executive Adam Streight reviewed Sally Kilby Dulin's experience and qualifications for this position. Councilwoman Culberson, Vice President Meffley and Councilwoman Branch all noted they were impressed by her resume. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on why she would like to come back and how does she propose to bring stability to the workforce. Director Dulin noted she enjoyed working for Cecil County and that the County is supportive of its employees and works to assist them with human resources issues. She noted she is going to reach out to the employees to see what issues they are having and how we can enhance our programs to assist them. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on her experience in human resources and various certifications and Director Dulin noted her background and that she is always working on certifications to make her a better director. President Miller noted that he is pleased she is returning to this role.

d. Director of Economic Development – Sandra Edwards

County Executive Adam Streight reviewed Sandra Edwards's experience and qualifications for this position. Vice President Meffley inquired why she was now interested in this position and Director Edwards noted she felt it was the right opportunity with two vacant positions and new County Executive to reshape this Department. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on what weakness exist in this office and how will she address this issue. Director Edwards noted the data is outdated and the proposed study will help them target the business community better and they will become more proactive and not reactive. Councilwoman Branch noted the strategic plan should help focus this Department. President Miller noted the importance of the Fair Hill Races returning and Director Edwards agreed this is a priority.

e. Director of Emergence Services – Patrick Campbell

County Executive Adam Streight reviewed Patrick Campbell experience and qualifications for this position. President Miller and Vice President Meffley both noted they received many positive comments on Director Campbell. Vice President Meffley also noted the severe storms several years ago that caused the bridges to close and inquired if emergency plans have been updated to address this issue and Director Campbell noted that the State has worked on plans in the event this happens again. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on what the key issues he will be working on and Director Campbell noted updating the strategic plan, keeping strong relationship with the volunteers, focusing on emergency drills, improved training and equipment testing, continuing education with employees, building strong ties with the adjacent communities and working on strong communications with our constituents.

2. Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #128

President Miller noted that the Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #128 is for \$512,543. Council inquired if the Board of Education had anyone in attendance to review the budget amendment and Council Manager Culver noted he did not receive any questions on the amendments for the BOE.

3. Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #129

President Miller noted that the Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #129 is for \$1,275,342. After discussion Council noted that they will table these two amendments and request an update from the Board of Education.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He noted the upcoming MACO conference, pictures for the Council and the calendar of events. He reminded Council to RSVP to events as soon as possible.

Council Member Items

Council members deferred comments to the Legislative Session of December 3, 2024.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice President Meffley. Council President Miller adjourned the work session at 6:21 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, December 10, 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.ccgov.org/council.

Approved:



Al Miller
Council President



David M. Culver
Council Manager