

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

February 25, 2025

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

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

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Councilwoman Branch, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of February 18, 2025, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

9:00 am

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Rebecca Hamilton, Al Miller and Dawn Branch; Sally Dulin, Director of Human Resources; Christine Palmer, Council Assistant.

Council President Miller asked for a motion to continue the closed session from February 11, 2025. Councilwoman Branch made a motion to go into closed session, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson.

Roll Call Vote

Hamilton – Y, Culberson – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Y, Branch - Y

The motion was approved 5 to 0

Council Assistant Palmer 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 interviewed the applicants for the Council Manager Position. Council had discussions with the candidates and requested Director of Human Resources Sally Dulin to offer Lucinda Michelle Henson the position.

Councilwoman Hamilton made a motion to adjourn the Closed Session, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion was approved 5 to 0

President Miller adjourned the closed session at 1:06 pm.

Presentation

- a. Cecil County Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee Update

Cecil County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Megan McRay introduced the Government Relations Committee (GRC) Chairman Dr. Carl Roberts who will give an update on pending legislation at the State and how this impacts Cecil County. Dr. Roberts noted that Don Harmen,

Janice Palmer, Mike Ratchford and Jessica Worley will also present various legislation that affects the businesses in Cecil County. Dr. Roberts noted that he has been involved with the Chamber since 1996 and became chair of the GRC in 2013 when Joyce Bowlsbey was appointed to Council. He noted the GRC requires members to fill out a form on proposed State legislation in order for the GRC to consider if this will have an impact on businesses and if the GRC should take a position. Dr. Roberts noted many bills are monitored by the GRC before they take a position. He also noted that the State's deficit is driving much of the discussion and legislation in Annapolis. Dr. Roberts noted that the upcoming hearings on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) will be critical for everyone to follow as it discusses tax, spending and growth in the State budget.

Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the GRC lobbying efforts on preventing the Enterprise Zones being sunset in June and Dr. Roberts noted they are having ongoing contact with State legislators and hopes that this incentive is continued. Dr. Roberts also reviewed SB427 - Economic Development - Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act and its importance to attacking and growing high tech businesses.

Ms. Palmer gave an update on the FMLI Act and noted the bills to delay the effective date of this legislation for two years is going forward and this will allow the Department of Labor time to set up the payment and monitoring systems. President Miller noted this bill impacts all businesses, nonprofits and governments and they need time to understand the cost of this program. Mr. Harmer noted this cost will be split with the employees and business owners and could cause hardships on businesses since the employee who may take this leave position must be held until they return to work.

Mr. Harmer also reviewed the various bills on taxing tips and noted that direction from the federal government may be needed before any of these are voted upon. Vice President Meffley noted that many of the bills discussed will have an adverse impact on small businesses and he supports the efforts of the GRC.

Dr. Roberts and Ms. Worley again reviewed the process the GRC utilizes on the reviewing of the bills. Dr. Roberts noted this process helps the GRC to form an opinion on what position the GRC may take. He also noted that the GRC will call upon subject experts and State officials to present before the GRC and this helps them to educate the members on bills and budget issues. Dr. Roberts also emphasized that the State Chamber of Commerce takes similar positions on many of these bills and that they work closely during the session on testimony and correspondence. Dr. Roberts noted that in some cases it is better to wait to take a position on a bill to see how it progresses in the process.

Dr. Roberts also reviewed the Green Energy Bills and noted that the push for packaged nuclear plants and natural gas plants to help Maryland generate more power is also being discussed. Vice President Meffley noted that need to provide affordable energy is critical for economic growth.

Dr. Roberts also gave an update on the various bills on education, specifically on changes for the Blueprint funding and on community colleges. He noted that a strong education network is needed to educate and train both children and adults for the changing workforce. He also noted that the GRC works closely with Dr. Jeff Lawson and Dr. May Bolt on these issues. He also noted the GRC works closely with Sheriff Scott Adams on law enforcement issues that may impact businesses.

President Miller noted that the energy and education issues are critical for Maryland future but also noted that many bills that will have a negative effect on agriculture have been introduced. President Miller noted that one bill will allow the condemnation of land for regional transmission lines and other bills will allow solar farms on prime soils. He noted these need to be carefully reviewed and will adversely affect the agricultural community. Dr. Roberts agreed and noted the GRC is reviewing those bills and may take a position. Dr. Roberts also reviewed a recent bill that was introduced that would ban the production and products that utilize the "forever" chemical PFA and noted that, while it is unlikely to pass, would have a negative impact on many businesses in Cecil County, particularly W.L. Gore. Mr. Harmer also gave an update on the bills that would allow grocery stores to sell liquor and noted they are unlikely to pass. Director of Administration Dan Schneckeburger noted they will be testifying and sending correspondence on the BRFA, FMLI Act and Energy Bills. Dr. Roberts and Council also thanked Executive Director McRay on her tenure at the Chamber and wished her the best in her new role.

Council Manager Report

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

Legislative Update

President Miller thanked the GRC for a great presentation and inquired if Council had any other State legislation to review with the rest of Council that was not already addressed and Council noted they did not have any other issues to review.

Council Member Items

Councilwoman Culberson reviewed the intel numbers for the week and noted that unfortunately Cecil County did have one overdose death the previous week.

Vice President Meffley noted that the administration is working with the Maryland Department of the Environment on the outstanding septic permits and have an upcoming meeting on February 27.

Councilwoman Hamilton, Branch and President Miller noted they did not have any updates but thanked everybody for attending.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Branch made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson. President Miller adjourned the work session at 5:43 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 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