

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

January 21, 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 Council 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 January 14, 2025, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Legislative Agenda

a. New Business

1. Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #131

Denise Sopa from the Board of Education noted that this Budget Amendment was for \$522,895. She reviewed the restricted local, state and federal revenues as well as the unrestricted revenue along with the grants and donations made to the various schools. She also noted the changes in funding for the Title II, Title III and Title IV programs. Vice President Meffley inquired on the Leeds Elementary water system upgrade and if the Gore settlement affected this and Ms. Sopa noted that the settlement did not affect Leeds Elementary. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the difference in the revenue source from the total and the subsequent pages and Ms. Sopa noted that the difference on the pages is because they are for the different funding sources. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the purpose of the various federal grant funds and Ms. Sopa noted that Title I generally deals with poverty, Title II with teacher performance, Title III for multi-language learners and Title IV for academic achievement. Councilwoman Hamilton also inquired on the reduction of these funds and Ms. Sopa noted that they will budget what is expected and these amendments reflect the actual grants. President Miller inquired on the budget being shown as 85% spent and Ms. Sopa confirmed that the percentage spent is based on actual expenditures and encumbrances for the year. Councilwoman Hamilton reviewed the difference amounts in the restricted and unrestricted funds and Ms. Sopa noted that the difference is based on the funding source.

b. Introduction of Resolutions

1. Resolution 03-2025 - Supplemental Appropriation - Grant Funds - Emergency Services - Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program

Deputy Director of Emergency Services John Donohue noted this grant is from Christiana Care and it will fund a paramedic position that would visit homes that had multiple calls for service to assist the family in providing the needed care to reduce calls. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if they would refer a person to another agency if they needed nursing home or other care and Deputy Director Donohue noted they would make referrals to assist the person and family. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if this position would be hired now or will it be added to the FY26 Budget and Director Donohue noted they would begin the hiring process but the person probably would not start until late in the FY25 Budget or early in the FY26 Budget Year. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the FY26 Budget would reflect this program and Director Donohue noted it would be reflected in the next budget.

2. Resolution 04-2025 - Appointment – Board of Parks and Recreation – Megan Coleman, Donald Harmer, Kristen Lehr and Bernard Brown

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted all of these individuals are being reappointed and are excellent board members.

3. Resolution 05-2025 - Appointment - Soil Conservation Board - Bruce Yerkes

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted Mr. Yerkes is a reappointment and that he has also been an excellent board member. President Miller concurred with that statement and thanked Mr. Yerkes for his service and making the Cecil Soil Conservation District the best in the State.

4. Resolution 06-2025 - Appointment – Board of Library Trustees – Shirley McCrary-Simmons, Joanne Morton, Jonathan Stauffer

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted these individuals were recommended by the Board of Library Trustees and that they serve staggered terms. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if they were all reappointments and Director Schneckenburger noted they were reappointments.

5. Resolution 07-2025 - Appointment - Local Government Justice Reinvestment Commission – Captain William Jolly

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted that Captain Jolly has been serving on this Commission, but no resolution was ever introduced. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if this is a State Commission and Director Schneckenburger noted it is and each County has one representative. Councilwoman Culberson inquired how long has he been serving and Director Schneckenburger noted about two years since 2022.

6. Resolution 08-2025 - Appointment – Public Safety Pension Plan Board of Trustees – Dan Schneckenburger, Patrick Campbell, and Sally Dulin

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted these appointments are based on the Code language on who shall serve on the Pension Board. Councilwoman Culberson noted that they serve as long as they are in that position and Director Schneckenburger concurred.

7. Resolution 09-2025 - Supplemental Appropriation – FY25 - General Fund Balance – Cecil County Public Schools – Small Capital Investment Projects

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted that the projects listed in the exhibit were based upon discussions with the Board of Education and reflect projects that have been deferred during the prior several budget cycles. Acting Director of Finance Andrew Ondish noted that they are being added so the BOE can bid the projects now so they can be done in the summer months.

Councilwoman Branch inquired on the work being done at Cherry Hill Middle and Acting Director Ondish noted this will complete several projects at that school. Councilwoman Culberson noted the chiller project at the School of Technology was already done and if these other chillers were in similar condition and Acting Director Ondish noted these chillers also need repair or replacement like the School of Technology project. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if these projects were in the FY25 Budget and why are they being added now and Acting Director Ondish noted they have been in the submitted budgets but not funded and this will allow them to be put out to bid so the work can be done in the summer. He also noted that since these are small cap projects this funding will not affect the maintenance of effort numbers. Councilwoman Branch noted the small cap projects have been deferred for years and this should help the BOE catch up on these projects. Vice President Meffley requested a breakdown of the projects so Council could better understand the costs since some of the project costs appear high. Acting Director Ondish noted these are estimates until the bids are received and any unspent funds go back to the general fund. Councilwoman Culberson noted the BOE Budget Amendment #131 did include \$300,000 in parking lot repairs and questioned if the \$300,000 in this amendment is for additional parking lot repairs or to reimburse the BOE for the work being authorized in the budget amendment and Acting Director Ondish noted he would verify the repairs. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the BOE could use its fund balance for these projects and request reimbursement in the FY26 Budget. She also agreed with Vice President Meffley that Council should be given a breakdown in project cost. Acting Director Ondish noted they would request the BOE to present these costs to Council.

c. Consideration of Resolutions

1. Resolution 02-2025 - Appointment - Bainbridge Development Corporation Board of Directors – Martha Barchowsky, Mario Gangemi, David Rudolph, Carl Roberts, James Reynolds, Raymond Hamm Jr, Joseph Brant, and Robert Ashby

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted these appointments were recommended by the Bainbridge Development Corporation, the Town of Port Deposit and the Maryland House of Delegates. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if they were all reappointments except Robert Ashby and Director Schneckenburger noted that was correct. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if these appointments are outlined in Code and Director Schneckenburger noted they are outlined in Code.

d. Call for Final Reading of Bills

1. Bill 2024-24 – Expedited Legislation – Public Safety Pension Plan- Amendment 10 – Deferred Retirement Option Plan

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger noted that the Sheriff's Office did answer the questions sent to them by Council. Councilwoman Culberson requested an overview of the pension plan and this program and Sheriff Adams noted how the plan function and the DROP Program is for members of the plan that have 25 years of service and pension eligible to remain on duty up to 5 years. He noted the pension is frozen and the contributions goes to a fund for the employee when they retire. Councilwoman Hamilton asked for confirmation on the pension being frozen at the time of entering DROP and the 8% contribution then going to another fund for the participant and Sheriff Adams noted that is correct. Councilwoman Culberson inquired why the DROP amendment sunsets the program in 5 years and Sheriff Adam noted that was a condition of the program being implemented by the previous administration. Councilwoman Culberson noted that provision should be removed in a future amendment and asked how the Cecil County plan is funded compared to other counties. Tom Vicente, Senior Consulting Actuary for Bolton, the actuary for the Sheriff's Office noted the Cecil County plan is better funded then many plans. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if the contribution percentage is adequate and Mr. Vicente noted that it is based on the overall plan. Councilwoman Culberson also inquire on recruitment and other tools the CCSO could use and Sheriff Adams noted many potential candidates do inquire about the pension and program and this should help overall recruitment. Councilwoman Branch inquired if this would help maintain the 13 or so officers eligible for retirement and Sheriff Adams noted this should help with retention and the average officer remains for three and half years. Vice President Meffley and Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the CCSO could hire once an officer enters Drop and Sheriff Adams noted he could not until the position is vacant but will work with administration on this issue. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if this would help with training for promotions and Sheriff Adams noted it would. Councilwoman Culberson inquired on the process to remove the sunset provision and Sheriff Adams noted it would need to go through the Pension Board and then back to Council as a bill. President Miller noted this is a good program and Cecil is only one of two counties that does not offer this and Vice President Meffley noted he supports this program.

Council Manager Report

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

Legislative Update

Councilwoman Hamilton report on the Legislative Session and the MACO Legislative Committee. She also noted HB0176 - Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health – Revisions appears to be an overstep by the State and recommended we send a letter of opposition and SB0355 - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Delay of Implementation, which would delay the FMLIA program for another year be supported. President Miller recommended that Council review these bills and decide at the next meeting on positions.

Councilwoman Culberson discussed HB0068 Public Schools - Children Suspected of a Crime of Violence - Prohibition on In-Person Attendance, HB0137-Public Schools - Children Charged with a Crime of Violence - Prohibition on In-Person Attendance and HB0282Public Schools - Sexually Explicit Materials - Prohibited in Libraries and Media Centers and recommended that we support these bills.

President Miller also noted the Farm Bureau had several bills he would send to Council for review and consideration.

Council Member Items

Council members deferred comments to the Legislative Session of January 21, 2025.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton. President Miller adjourned the work session at 5:46 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 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