

COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE SESSION MINUTES
LSD 2025-16
August 19, 2025

The County Council of Cecil County met in Legislative Session at the County Administration Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elk Room, Elkton, MD. The following members of the Council were present:

Al Miller, Council President
Rebecca Hamilton, Council Member
Donna Culberson, Council Member
Dawn Branch, Council Member

NOTE: The recording with transcription of this meeting is available on the County website at www.ccgov.org/council.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the County Council of Cecil County of August 19, 2025, was called to order by Council President Miller at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Council Manager Henson called the roll and noted that four members were present.

OPENING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Pastor Steve Hokuf of North East Baptist Church offered the Opening Prayer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Councilwoman Branch, the Council moved to approve the agenda of August 19, 2025. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Bill No. 2025-09 – Amendment – Cecil County Code – Chapter A385 – Purchase of Development Rights Program and Fund

President Miller opened the Public Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

An Act to amend the Cecil County Code, Chapter A385, Purchase of Development Rights Program and Fund – by adding a new Section C to Section A385-2, Funding, for the purpose of developing a new funding source for the County Purchase of Development Rights Program and County Purchase of Development Rights Fund, for the purpose of providing an additional funding source to assist landowners wishing to retain their properties in agricultural use.

Introduced and ordered posted on August 5, 2025; Public Hearing Scheduled on August 19, 2025; and consideration scheduled on September 2, 2025.

Director of Land Use and Development Services (LUDS) Stephen O'Connor stated the purpose of Bill 2025-09 was to add a funding source from fees associated with ground-mounted solar sites in agricultural and other designated priority preservation areas.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried if the fees are based upon the acreage of the site or the power transmission of the solar array. Director O'Connor stated fees are based upon appraised value of acreage used for the proposed array.

President Miller verified that a proposed array with an output of less than 1 megawatt (MW) falls within County regulations. Director O'Connor answered in the affirmative.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried if Bill No. 2025-09 applied to all ground-mounted solar projects regardless of MW output. Director O'Connor answered in the affirmative, provided that the properties were located within the specific areas designated in Bill No. 2025-09.

President Miller queried those in attendance for comments in opposition of Bill No. 2025-09.

Mr. Sean Brimm spoke in opposition of Bill No. 2025-09.

President Miller queried those in attendance for comments in support of Bill No. 2025-09.

Mr. Robert Peoples spoke in favor of Bill No. 2025-09.

Hearing no additional comments, President Miller closed the Public Hearing at 7:18 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Councilwoman Branch, seconded by Councilwoman Culberson, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Legislative Session of August 5, 2025. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Sean Brimm spoke about Closed Sessions and the economy.

Ms. Michelle Ravert spoke in favor of abolishing at-large voting and implementation of voting by Councilmanic Districts.

PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Branch stated she attended the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Summer Conference from August 13th-16th, stating that the conference is an excellent opportunity to network with peers. Councilwoman Branch noted that local government officials expressed concerns regarding the State Government increasingly removing regulatory control from local jurisdictions.

Councilwoman Hamilton thanked the audience for their attendance and comments.

Councilwoman Hamilton echoed Councilwoman Branch's assessment of the MACo Conference, stating that she attended sessions regarding nuclear energy, immigration, housing and Blueprint.

Councilwoman Culberson stated she attended MACo sessions including solar energy and AI in Education. She noted that she is not opposed to solar energy, nor is she opposed to placement of arrays within Cecil County. She expressed her concerns regarding potential impacts on soils as well as concerns regarding questions about eminent domain by the State of Maryland for placement of solar arrays.

Councilwoman Culberson stated she spoke with a representative of an Eastern Shore County who stated solar array developers inadvertently disturbed a family burial plot. She related a second situation in which a developer encountered a large amount of gravel, requiring removal and backfill of the site. She expressed concerns about potential materials used when backfilling is required. Councilwoman Culberson expressed concerns regarding waste material and disposal once an array is decommissioned.

Councilwoman Culberson provided Emergency Services intel for the week ending August 16th, stating that responders handled 252 calls, 10 of which were mental-health related; 33 domestic calls, 13 of which were physical; 3 overdoses, none of which resulted in fatalities. She stated that overdose data is trending in a positive direction, noting that the last 5 weeks have seen a steady decline.

President Miller thanked those in attendance for participating in the meeting.

President Miller stated that the MACo Conference was successful, adding his concerns that the Public Service Commission is not taking any responsibility for potential liability regarding solar array development and construction.

President Miller commended Administrator Schneckenburger for his participation and support of Cecil County during a meeting regarding the Conowingo Dam.

President Miller stated he attended a meeting of the Farm Bureau on August 18th, adding that farmers have a strong voice through the Bureau.

President Miller stated he will attend the Cecil County Soil Conservation Agricultural Conservation Legislative Tour on August 27th.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 50-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 50-2025 – Appointment – Commission on Veterans Affairs – Shawn Branch
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A Resolution to confirm the appointment of Shawn Branch to fill the vacancy left by Elisabeth Cortese, to a term which expires October 1, 2027, to the Commission on Veterans Affairs. Introduced and ordered posted on August 19, 2025; scheduled for consideration on September 2, 2025.

Administrator Schneckenburger stated Mr. Branch was nominated to the Commission on Veterans Affairs to fill a vacancy left by a member's relocation out of state.

Councilwoman Branch stated that, for purposes of transparency, she and Mr. Branch were formerly married, adding that Mr. Branch is well-qualified to serve the Commission on Veteran Affairs due to his extensive military and civil service experience.

Resolution No. 51-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 51-2025 – Appointment – Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board – Dale DeWeese and Steven Pearson

A Resolution to confirm the recommendation from the Governor of Maryland the appointment of Dale DeWeese, to a term which expires June 2, 2028 and Steven Pearson, to a term which expires on June 2, 2029, to the Cecil County Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board.

Introduced and ordered posted on August 19, 2025; scheduled for consideration on September 2, 2025.

Director Schneckenburger stated that applications for the Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board are submitted to and approved by the Governor of Maryland.

Resolution No. 52-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 52-2025 – Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Office of Economic Development – Upper Shore Regional Council – Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Grant

A Resolution to amend the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for Cecil County, Maryland, for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2026, in order to provide a total of \$100,000.00 to the Special Revenue Other Grants Fund, Office of Economic Development, in order to record the grant awarded from the Upper Shore Regional Council, for the purpose of supporting the Business Development Specialist position in Cecil County.

Introduced and order posted on August 19, 2025; consideration scheduled on September 2, 2025.

Administrator Schneckenburger stated Resolution No. 52-2025 provided for receipt and use of a grant from Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC).

Resolution No. 53-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 53-2025 – Approval – Application – Enterprise Zone Expansion

A Resolution to expand the existing Cecil County Enterprise Zone by 80.605 acres, more or less.

Introduced and ordered posted on August 19, 2025; Public Hearing scheduled on September 2, 2025; and scheduled for consideration on September 16, 2025.

Administrator Schneckenburger stated Resolution 53-2025 resulted from a request by the Town of Elkton to expand the Enterprise Zone for inclusion of properties on Belle Hill Road and Maloney Road.

Resolution No. 54-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 54-2025 – Budget Amendment – Capital Improvement Program – Improve Irishtown Road/MD272 Intersection.

A Resolution to amend the Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance for Cecil County, Maryland, for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2026, in order to appropriate a total of \$1,335,000 expenditure authority from Bonds to Improve Irishtown Road/MD272 Intersection Project, to the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget. Project cost in FY26-FY27 is \$2,000,000 with a developer contributing \$665,000 towards the project construction cost.

Introduced and ordered posted on August 19, 2025; Consideration scheduled on September 16, 2025.

Public Works Director Scott Flanigan stated Resolution No. 54-2025 provided funding for required improvements to the intersection of Irishtown Road and MD272 pursuant to the construction of the North East Middle / High School Project and development of approximately 700 residences at Chesapeake Club.

Director Flanigan stated traffic impact studies affirmed the need to improve the intersection with signalization, lengthening of the existing left turn lane from southbound MD272 to Irishtown Road and addition of a right turn lane from Irishtown Road to northbound MD272.

Director Flanigan stated the County's portion of the project will be funded by existing bond funding reallocated to the project from completed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Projects. He stated that the Planning Commission is required to hear the CIP, which will be presented at the September 15th meeting and subsequently presented for Council's consideration on September 16th.

Councilwoman Culberson stated she received a message from a citizen expressing concerns that the project will require removal of the memorial at the VFW. Administrator Schneckenburger stated the monument will not be removed.

Councilwoman Hamilton questioned the status of the developer's agreement to fund 1/3 of the cost of the project. Administrator Schneckenburger stated if the Chesapeake Club residential development does not occur, the developer will not be required to fund 1/3 of the cost of the project. Director Hamm added that if the development does occur, the developer's cost share will be guaranteed by surety via a Bond or Letter of Credit.

Consideration of Resolutions

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 49-2025 – Appointment – Board of Appeals – Mark Saunders, Donald Harmer, Jr., Norman Anderson and Jennifer Callaghan.

A Resolution to confirm the reappointment by the County Executive of Mark Saunders and the appointment of Donald Harmer, Jr. to terms which expire August 15, 2027 and to confirm the reappointment of Norman Anderson and the appointment of Jennifer Callaghan as the Alternate to terms which expire August 15, 2028, to the Cecil County Board of Appeals.

Introduced and order posted on August 5, 2025; Consideration scheduled on August 19, 2025.

Director Schneckenburger stated Administration had no additional comments.

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to approve Resolution No. 49-2025, which was seconded by Councilwoman Branch.

Roll Call Vote: Hamilton – Y, Culberson – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Absent, Miller – Y

The motion was approved 4-0.

CALL FOR FINAL READING OF BILLS

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

BILL NO. 2025-08 – Bond Authorization – General Obligation Project Bonds

An Act authorizing and empowering Cecil County, Maryland (the "County"), to borrow from time to time not more than Fifty-Six Million Dollars (\$56,000,000) for the purpose of financing the costs of certain public facilities within the County described herein, and to effect such borrowing by the issuance and sale of its general obligation bonds in one or more series from time to time; empowering the County Executive to execute and deliver one or more Executive Orders prior to issuing the bonds in order to fix, prescribe and determine the details of the bonds and the issuance and sale thereof; empowering and directing the County to levy ad valorem taxes in rate and amount sufficient to provide funds for the payment of the maturing principal of and interest on the bonds; exempting the bonds from the provisions of Sections 19-205 and 19-206 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, or successor provision; authorizing the County to issue and sell bond anticipation notes in one or more series pursuant to the authority of Sections 19-211 through 19-223 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, or successor provision, prior to and in anticipation of the sale of the bonds; providing that the County may issue and sell all or any portion of the bonds, the interest on which is excludable from gross income for federal income tax purposes; authorizing the County to issue bonds for the purpose of refunding any bonds issued pursuant to this Act in one or more series pursuant to the authority of Section 19-207 of the Local

Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, or successor provision; and relating generally to the issuance and sale of such bonds.

Introduced and order posted on July 1, 2025; Public Hearing scheduled on August 5, 2025; and Consideration scheduled on August 19, 2025.

Administrator Schneckenburger stated Administration had no additional comments.

Councilwoman Branch made a motion to approve Bill No. 2025-08, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton.

Roll Call Vote: Hamilton – Y, Culberson – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Absent, Miller – Y

The motion was approved 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Cecil County Schools Budget Amendments #137 and #138

Councilwoman Hamilton made a motion to approve Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendments #137 and #138. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson.

Roll call vote: Hamilton – Y, Culberson – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Absent, Miller – Y

The motion was approved 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Councilwoman Branch and approved by all present, President Miller adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Council President Miller announced that the next Council Legislative Session is scheduled on Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building. The legislative session will be livestreamed at the County's webpage at www.ccgov.org/council. The recording and transcription will be uploaded to the County's website as soon as possible.

Approved:



Al Miller, Council President

Attest:



L. Michelle Henson, Council Manager