

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE SESSION MINUTES
LSD 2023-23
December 19, 2023**

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:

Jackie Gregory, Council President
Robert Meffley, Vice President
Rebecca Hamilton, Council Member
Al Miller, Council Member
Donna Culberson, 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 December 19, 2023, was called to order by Council President Gregory at 7:11 p.m. President Gregory announced that the Legislative Session was starting at 7:11 since the Roundtable Discussion with the Board of Education that preceded this meeting did not end until 7:00.

OPENING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Shawn Johnson from New Life Church in Port Deposit gave the opening prayer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton, the Council moved to approve the legislative agenda of December 19, 2023. The motion was approved 5 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Bill 2023-10 – Supplemental Appropriation – Amendment to the 2024 Capital Improvement Program – Replacement of Wheatley Road Bridge

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted this was a funded FY23 CIP project, project number 52695, but needed additional funding since the bids came in higher than expected. This bill would add this project back to the FY24 CIP Budget and add the additional funding needed.

No other comments were made for the Public Hearing

Bill 2023-11 - Amendment – Zoning Ordinance – Cannabis – Definitions, Permissible Uses, Home Occupation, Prohibited Signs and General Loading Specifications

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted this legislation is in response to the State's legalization of cannabis and this bill should provide safeguards for the cultivation, processing and sales of cannabis in Cecil County.

Grant Handley, Assistant Town Administrator for the Town of North East, requested that Council amend 164(c)(11)(d) to note that the separation of these facilities from churches, schools and parks also consider these facilities if they are in the corporate limits and not to end the measurement at the corporate limits.

Kyle Gamble, who stated he is applying for a social equity license, noted concern on the prohibition of growing cannabis in the NAR and SAR District. He also noted his concerns on the required size of the growing facilities, the need for greenhouses, limits in the BI District on arterial and collector road access, the micro license requirements and incubator spaces. He noted that the social equity licenses are for disadvantaged persons that may not have the capital needed for the required facilities.

Collin McGilbride, who noted he is applying for a social equity license, noted that the prohibition of selling apparel and other items in 164(c)(7) is too restrictive and may prevent people who are applying for the social equity license from succeeding. He also noted this may have an adverse effect on people who have medical cannabis approval from purchasing the proper devices for the medication.

Rich Wesley noted placing dispensaries in industrial areas may be a disadvantage for medical cannabis user since they may not have access to transportation to get to these sites. He noted easy access is critical for the medical cannabis user.

Harold McCanick noted he objected to any laws that allow the use of cannabis.

Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the sale of accessory items at the current dispensaries would be allowed to continue once this bill becomes effective and Stephan O'Conner noted the dispensary in the County jurisdiction would become non-conforming and the dispensary in the Town of Elkton would be regulated as per the Town Code.

No other comments were made for the Public Hearing.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion made by Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Culberson the Council moved to approve the minutes of the legislative session of December 5, 2023. The motion was approved 5 to 0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sean Brimm of Elkton spoke on education funding issues.

Phyllis Kilby of Colora spoke on education funding issues and the Library buttons for Council.

Matt Berkheiser from Cherry Hill Middle spoke on education funding issues.

Gemma Brand from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.

Ellie Jones from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.

Olivia Kornak from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.
Maddie Maners from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.
Caroline Warner from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.
Lillian Rongstad from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.
Alley Shuler from Rising Sun Middle School spoke on education funding issues.
Jordan Seguin of Elkton spoke on education funding issues.
Harold McCanick of Elk Neck congratulated Executive Hornberger on being MACO Treasurer.
Audie Ash of Elkton spoke on education funding issues.

PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Culberson noted the intel numbers for the past week were not yet available. She also noted that she virtually attended the Commission on Aging meeting. She also congratulated the Leeds and Charleston Elementary Schools on successful concerts and apologize for not being able to attend this year. She also wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilman Miller thanked the students for attending and speaking at the meeting. He noted that he attended the Leeds and Charleston Elementary Schools concerts and they were great events. He also attended the Rising Sun High School chorus and congratulated them on a great performance. He also toured Cecil Manor Elementary School and noted the need for this facility to be updated. He also wished everyone a safe and Merry Christmas.

Councilwoman Hamilton noted she attended the Cecil County Chorus event in Cecilton and noted they are always seeking new members. She also attended the Newark Quartet Show at the Elkton Library. She also wished everyone a Merry Christmas

Vice President Meffley also thanked the students in attendance and noted they were very well spoken. He noted he attended the Leeds Elementary School concert and it was also well done. He noted he met with the Commander of the Aberdeen Proving Grounds and discussed the dredging of the Conowingo Dam and the potential use of the spoils at APG for bulkhead projects. He also visited Bay View Elementary School and noted the need for paraprofessionals. He also thanked the BOE for the presentation today at the Roundtable discussion.

President Gregory also thanked the BOE for today's Roundtable discussion and the students who spoke at the meeting. She also noted that the County, like every other jurisdiction, routinely bonds large projects and that the bonds costs are budgeted accordingly. She also noted the tax refund was from the fund balance and was not bonded. She also discussed the FY24 School Budget and the request for a press release as part of the budget. She also noted that Council does not support any cuts in school programs and is seeking better transparency in the school budget to ensure the money is being appropriated in a manner to best serve the children. She also wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Council Manager Culver stated for the record:

Resolution 65-2023 - Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Cecil County Liquor Board – Inspection and Enforcement Activities

A Resolution to amend the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for Cecil County, Maryland for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, in order to provide a total of \$12,000 to the Special Revenue Other Grants Fund- Cecil County Liquor Board, to record the grant awarded from the Cecil County Drug-Free Communities Coalition (DFC), for the purpose of supporting inspection and enforcement activities of the Cecil County Liquor Board.

Introduced, read for the first time, order posted on December 19, 2023 and scheduled for consideration on January 2, 2024.

Director of Administration Steven Overbay noted that this grant was from the Cecil County Drug Free Communities Coalition and will help with enforcement of the liquor laws.

Resolution 66-2023 - Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Community Services – Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program Grant

A Resolution to amend the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for Cecil County, Maryland for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, in order to provide a total of \$982,806.00 to the Special Revenue Other Grants Fund, Fund 198, Department 536, to record an Office of Justice Programs grant awarded from the United States Department of Justice for staffing support, contracted trauma therapy services for children, family members and public safety personnel, equipment, and other targeted services to address opioid, stimulant and substance use in the community.

Introduced, read for the first time, order posted on December 19, 2023 and scheduled for consideration on January 2, 2024.

Director of Community Services David Trolio noted that this is a Department of Justice grant to help with the youth diversion program. The funds will be used for staffing support, contracted trauma therapy services for children, family members and public safety personnel, equipment, and other targeted services to address opioid, stimulant and substance use in the community. He noted that this is a 3-year grant and that Cecil County currently has two other 3 year grants for his program that will be expiring. Councilman Miller thanked the Community Services staff for finding these grants and Director Trolio noted that Mark Smith in his office did the grant work.

Resolution 67-2023 - Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Community Services – Human Services Division – Domestic Violence Rape Crisis Program/The Bridge

A Resolution to amend the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for Cecil County, Maryland for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, in order to provide a total of \$86,667.00 to the Community Services Grants Fund – Department of Community Services, Human Services Division, to record an Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance Grant.

Introduced, read for the first time, order posted on December 19, 2023 and scheduled for consideration on January 2, 2024.

Director of Community Services David Trolio noted that this is for two programs, \$50,000 for the rape crises center and \$36,667 for emergency transitional housing for people that have pets. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired how the transition pet shelter works and Director Triolo noted this helps people find shelters that are pet friendly.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 64-2023- Supplemental Appropriation – General Fund - State’s Attorney Office – Fund Vacant Positions and to provide Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

A Resolution to amend the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for Cecil County, Maryland for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, in order to provide a total of \$333,000 from the General Fund to the State’s Attorney Office to fund three vacant positions (Line Assistant State Attorney, General Felony Prosecutor and DC DV Prosecutor - \$198,000) and to provide a Cost-of-Living Adjustment - \$135,000. These positions will add fundamental strength to the office and reduce case backlog. The COLA is needed to keep compensation competitive before the \$10K salary enhancement. Without the COLA, the enhancement would have been insufficient to compete with other jurisdictions.

Introduced, read for the first time, order posted on December 5, 2023 and scheduled for consideration on December 19, 2023.

Director of Administration Steve Overbay thanked the State’s Attorney James Dellmyer for his service. He noted that the funds will fill three vacant positions and cover a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for these positions. This will bring the State’s Attorney Office to full staffing and assist with the backlog of cases.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve Resolution 64-2023, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson.

Roll call vote: Hamilton – Y, Miller -Y, Culberson – Y, Meffley – Y, Gregory- Y
The motion was approved 5 to 0.

NEW BUSINESS

Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #118

President Gregory noted that the Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #118 is for \$528,026 and was discussed at the last BOE Meeting.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #118 in the amount of \$528,026. The motion was seconded by Vice President Meffley. The motion was approved 3 to 2 (ayes - Miller, Culberson, Meffley nays - Hamilton, Gregory).

ADJOURNMENT

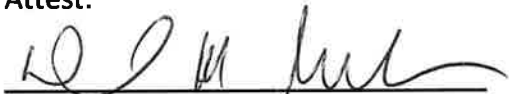
On motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Vice President Meffley, President Gregory adjourned the meeting at 8:34 pm.

Council President Gregory announced that the next Council Legislative Session is scheduled on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, 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:


Jackie Gregory
Council President

Attest:


David M. Culver
Council Manager