

COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY

WORK SESSION MINUTES

February 24, 2026

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

4:30 P.M.

NOTE: The recording and transcription of this meeting are available on the County website at www.cecilcountymd.gov

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Al Miller, Donna Culberson and Dawn Branch; Council Manager L. Michelle Henson; Council Assistant Christine Palmer; members of the Administration and members of the public.

Call to Order

President Miller called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and announced that there were four 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 February 17, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations

Andrew Ondish, Deputy Director of Finance

Monthly Review of County Contracts – January 2026

Deputy Director of Finance Andrew Ondish provided the Monthly Review of County Contracts in excess of \$100,000 for January 2026, pursuant to County Charter Section 516.

Deputy Director Ondish reviewed expenses incurred during the month of January 2026, including contracted services under Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and equipment. A copy of the report was reviewed and placed in the record of the minutes.

Councilwoman Branch, referring to expenses related to Dell Marketing LP, queried the schedule for computer replacement. Deputy Director Ondish stated that computers are scheduled for replacement every 5 years.

Vice President Meffley queried if projects are generally awarded to the lowest bidder. Deputy Director Ondish responded in the negative, stating that factors such as the business being located within Cecil County and whether the business has previously worked for the County are considered.

President Miller stated he was happy to see multiple bids for County projects.

Deputy Director Ondish stated that the County's Asphalt Overlay Project is currently out to bid. He stated the large amount of snow this winter will likely result in a budget amendment to replenish accounts associated with snow removal.

Deputy Director Ondish stated that the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) notified the County of a calculation error by SDAT which increased the County's expense by approximately \$278,000. He stated this reconciliation will be presented as a Budget Amendment.

State Legislative Update

President Miller stated that he invited Dr. Carl Roberts, Chair of the County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) Government Relations Committee (GRC) to provide an overview of the GRC's Legislative priorities. GRC Executive Director Jack Schammel, GRC Government Relations Liaison Jessica Worley, and GRC Board Member Don Harmer were also in attendance.

Discussion – Cecil County Chamber of Commerce, Government Relations Committee – Dr. Carl Roberts

Executive Director Jack Schammel stated the GRC polled members to identify legislative priorities prior to the start of the 2026 Legislative Session. He stated that members identified the 3 key

areas as Fiscal Responsibility, Energy and a Business-friendly Environment. A copy of the GRC 2026 Legislative Priorities was reviewed and placed in the record of the minutes.

GRC Chair Roberts stated that the GRC is becoming more direct in its messaging to the State Legislature, including calls to reduce State expenditures vs. shifting costs to Counties. He stated the annual Cecil Night in Annapolis has evolved from a social event, adding that the recent Cecil Day in Annapolis event was the Chamber's most successful to date. He commended Government Relations Liaison Jessica Worley for coordinating both events.

Government Relations Liaison Worley approximated attendance at 130-150 for the Cecil Day event. She stated that the Speaker of the House commented on the number of attendees, as did the County's Delegation. She noted that non-Cecil Delegates, including Delegates Feldman, Smith and Frazier-Hildago addressed the attendees during Cecil Day.

Government Relations Liaison Worley stated that the Cecil Night event is a great networking opportunity.

GRC Chair Roberts expressed appreciation that Speaker of the House Joseline Pena-Melnyk addressed the attendees during Cecil Day, adding that the County's Delegation expressed appreciation for her willingness to remain non-partisan. GRC Chair Roberts reiterated the importance of remaining non-partisan.

GRC Chair Roberts stated that the GRC meets each Thursday morning, adding that the February 19th meeting agenda included a review of bills that the GRC has been following. He noted that the GRC does not take a position on each piece of legislation.

GRC Board Member Don Harmer stated that there are currently 3 pending Budget Bills. He stated the emphasis is on cost sharing / cost shifting of costs associated with several legal cases. He stated his opinion that the State will continue to increase shifting costs to Counties.

GRC Chair Roberts noted that bills affecting prevailing wage will result in pitting employers against employees. Regarding HB1229, which proposes an increase in minimum wage, he stated that while it is important for workers to earn fair wages, many businesses may be unable to afford mandated higher wages which could result in layoffs.

GRC Chair Roberts stated he and Director of Finance Raymond Hamm are members of the Bainbridge Development Corporation (Bainbridge), adding that the GRC and Bainbridge support SB0026/HB1190 which will provide for construction of an onsite generation plant that would provide electricity for a specific project.

GRC Board Member Harmer stated that several statewide bills will have local effects, including HB1303 which would permit sales of beer and wine in grocery and convenience stores, service stations and pharmacies.

President Miller queried if the County Liquor Board would retain control of permitting sales of beer and wine in grocery and convenience stores, service stations and pharmacies. GRC Board Member Harmer answered in the affirmative.

Vice President Meffley queried the status of HB0664. GRC Board Member Harmer stated that HB0664 provided for a change in the allocation of licenses, resulting in permitting of restaurants to serve alcohol.

Dr. Carl Roberts stated his next comments were those of a private citizen and removed himself from the GRC Board members. Dr. Roberts expressed concerns that the County's Delegate from District 35B proposed bills without advising Council. Dr. Roberts returned to his role as GRC Chair.

GRC Chair Roberts stated his expectation that HB0815 regarding elimination of at-large voting would be withdrawn.

GRC Chair Roberts stated his expectation that HB0887 regarding disbursement of Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) funds would be withdrawn.

Councilwoman Branch, referring to HB0815, stated that the original bill eliminating at-large voting in the State of Maryland was submitted by Del. Long. She asked if Del. Long's bill would go to hearing. GRC Chair Roberts expressed his expectation that the bill would be voted down. Councilwoman Culberson stated that Council does not support elimination of at-large voting.

President Miller expressed support for SB0683 which provides incentives for keeping solar energy stations from agricultural land.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated the GRC is a useful avenue to vet bills that can affect Cecil County. He noted that affordability of proposed legislation should be considered by lawmakers during bill hearings.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated he will testify in support of SB0026/HB1190 on March 3rd, noting the important impact this legislation will have on economic development.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger noted that the County must prepare for costs that will be passed down to from the State.

President Miller commended the GRC for Cecil Day and Cecil Night events. He stated the Cecil Day event provided the opportunity to engage in a direct conversation with Sen. Feldman, Chair of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, regarding placement of solar arrays on agricultural land.

President Miller expressed appreciation to the GRC for their support and hard work.

GRC Chair Roberts stated that the weekly GRC meetings are open to everyone who wishes to attend.

President Miller requested a moment of silence in memory of former Liquor Board Chair Steve Miller, who recently passed. President Miller noted that Mr. Miller invested much of his time in community service.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Henson stated the report was included in the Council's meeting packet.

Council Member Items

Councilwoman Culberson stated that the Town of Port Deposit will host the Fire and Ice event on Saturday, February 28th from 4:30 pm until 7:30 pm.

Vice President Meffley stated that traveled to Annapolis on February 19th to testify in opposition of HB0887. He stated that the County Executive, Director of Administration and representatives from the Town of Perryville also testified in opposition to the bill. He noted that the bill's sponsor left the room prior to testimony.

President Miller offered congratulations to students from the Cecil County School of Technology Heavy Equipment Repair Group for earning top honors at the 2026 SkillsUSA Region 2 competition on February 21st.

Adjournment

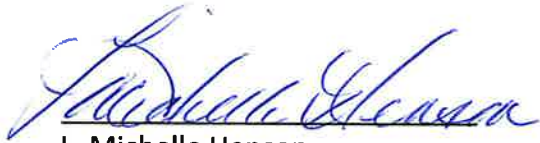
President Miller requested a motion to adjourn the Work Session.

Councilwoman Branch made motion to adjourn the Work Session, which was seconded by Councilwoman Culberson.

President Miller adjourned the work session at 5:26 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 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.cecilcountymd.gov

Approved:



L. Michelle Henson
Council Manager



Al Miller, Council President