

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
December 3, 2019**

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Jackie Gregory, William Coutz, Al Miller, and George Patchell; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant; John Downs, Council Attorney; members of the press; and members of the public.

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

9:00 A.M. –Council President Meffley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and determined a quorum.

NOTE: The video and audio recording with transcription of this meeting is available on the County website www.ccgov.org.

CLOSED SESSION

November 26, 2019

9:30 A.M.

On motion made by Vice President Gregory, seconded by Councilman Coutz, the Council moved to convene in closed session, pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions § 3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; or (ii) any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; and (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Y, Miller-Y, Patchell-Y, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y
The motion was carried unanimously.

Present: Council Members: President Meffley, Vice President Gregory, Councilman Coutz, Councilman Miller and Councilman Patchell; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant; and Lisa Blackson, Acting Council Attorney.

The Council discussed Council Member and County Executive compensation and allowances; and sought legal advice from legal counsel. The Council requested that the Compensation Review Commission meet to review their recommendations.

The Council discussed employment and assignment of Council Attorney. The Council approved John Downs to continue as a Council Attorney. The Council also approved the release of the Closed Session minutes of January 24, 2017.

On motion made by Councilman Miller, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to conclude the closed session at 10:28 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of November 26, 2019, as presented. Motion was approved unanimously.

On a motion made by Vice President Gregory, seconded by Councilman Coutz, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council closed session of November 26, 2019, as presented. Motion was approved unanimously.

Proposed State Legislation – Employers of Ex-Offenders

Senator Robert Cassilly and Delegate Andrew Cassilly made a presentation on legislation that they plan to re-introduce on Employers of Ex-Offenders – Liability for Negligent Hiring as Inadequate Supervision – Immunity. Senator Cassilly stated that employers who hire ex-offenders can be held responsible for negligently hiring or failing to adequately supervise an employee who is an ex-offender. This legislation limits the employers of manufacturing, shipping and receiving, warehousing, construction of new structures and rehabilitation or demolition of unoccupied structures. He stated that currently ex-offenders have difficulty finding employment because of their criminal record.

Delegate Cassilly stated that there has been a trend to provide job training to inmates so that they have been given job skills. He also stated that ex-offenders who become employed are very loyal to their employers and often are high performers. He asked the Council for a letter of support for this legislation to be introduced in 2020 session of the General Assembly.

Council questions and comments ensued.

Delegate Cassilly stated that he has accepted an appointment as a senior advisor to Governor Hogan and will be resigning his Delegate seat.

Choptank Electric Cooperative – Legislative Briefing

Matthew Tefteau, Government Affairs, Manager; introduced Valerie Connelly, Vice President of Government Affairs and Public Relations; and John Burke, Cecil County Representative on the Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors.

Mr. Burke stated that Choptank is a not-for-profit cooperative started in 1938 to bring electricity to homes and farms on the eastern shore. He stated that Choptank has grown to serving over 54,000 customers in nine counties, including Cecil County. He stated that Choptank has over 6,000 miles of power lines and over 650 miles of middle-mile fiber. He stated that the cooperative would like to provide high speed broadband to areas not serviced.

Ms. Connelly explained that legislation is needed to address local need for internet access by Choptank. She stated that the proposed legislation would allow their electric cooperative on the eastern shore to become a member regulated cooperative to relieve regulatory and economic hurdles to incentivize broadband services to homes. She stated that 36% of Maryland residents lack broadband access. She stated that there are 8,590 residents in Cecil County who do not have

any broadband access. She explained that the need for broadband access will increase because of small business growth, large businesses moving in, and for medical teleservice. She said that current regulations do not allow the use of electric lines for broadband. She also stated that the federal government will be providing \$20M grant next year for broadband expansion in rural areas of the nation.

Mr. Teffeau asked the Council for a letter of support for this legislation, which is being sponsored by Senator Hershey in the State Senate and Delegate Sample-Hughes in the House.

Council questions and comments ensued.

2020 Council Calendar

Council Manager Massey presented the proposed 2020 Council calendar and explained the scheduling during the primary and general elections. He stated that he has asked the Council Attorney to review the Charter to determine if the Council can meet on the second Tuesday in December 2020 in legislative session.

Councilman Coutz made a motion to approve the 2020 Council calendar, which was seconded by Vice President Gregory and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Review of Legislative Agenda

A public hearing will be held tonight for Rezoning Case #2019-03 as requested by Wood Family Properties, LLC. Eric Sennstrom, Director of Land Use and Development Services, provided a synopsis stating that the staff and Planning Commission had recommended approval based on a mistake in the zoning map. There were no Council questions or comments.

A public hearing for Resolution No. 64-2019 Surplus Property – Booth Street Maintenance Building – Town of Elkton, is scheduled at tonight's session. Al Wein, Director of Administration, provided a synopsis of the legislation. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 70-2019 Appointment – Electrical Examiners Board – Joshua Huegel, will be introduced at tonight's session. There were no comments from the administration and no Council questions or comments.

Rebecca Anderson, Budget Manager, provided introductory comments on Resolution No. 71-2019 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Domestic Violence Department – Sex Trafficking, which will be introduced at tonight's session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Rebecca Anderson, Budget Manager, provided introductory comments on Resolution No. 72-2019 Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Roads Department – Central Yard LED Lighting, which will be introduced at tonight's session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Rebecca Anderson, Budget Manager, provided introductory comments on Resolution No. 73-2019

Supplemental Appropriation – Grant Funds – Roads Maintenance Department – Road Damage, which will be introduced at tonight’s session. Several Council Members commended the administration for their success with DelDOT’s compensation.

Resolution No. 66-2019 Appointments—Commission on Aging – Wilma L. Fitzner, Carol King, Julie Graham, Jamie McCloskey, and Mark Hill, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 67-2019 Appointment—Human Services Agency – John W. Donohue, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 68-2019 Appointment – Building Board of Appeals – Douglas Day, David Strouss, and Christopher Pearce, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 69-2019 Appointment – Library Board of Trustees – Joanne Morton, will be considered for approval at tonight’s session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Council Manager Report

Mr. Massey updated Council Members about the upcoming meetings and events.

Council Member Items

Councilman Patchell stated that he attended the high school football game between Elkton and Middletown. He commended the players and coaches for a great game. Although Elkton lost, he praised the team for their superior performance.

Councilman Miller stated that he will be attending Winter Extravaganza in Rising Sun and 4-H auction at Walls Activity Hall on Saturday. He attended the Sheriff’s Gala and congratulated Brian Bravo as Deputy of the Year and Sgt. Richard Gronk as Correction Officer of the Year.

Councilman Coutz commended the VFW Posts at North East and Elkton for preparing Thanksgiving dinners for the veterans as well as first responders.

Vice President Gregory attended the Tree Lighting at the Town of North East and commented on all the activities held. She also attended the Sheriff’s Office awards banquet and commented on the opportunity to show appreciation for law enforcement. She stated that she was participating in the VFW cookie drive that will send cookies to overseas veterans.

Council President Meffley attended the Sheriff’s Office banquet to honor the deputy and correction officer of the year. He also attended the Elkton High School football game against Middletown. He attended the Census Committee and commented on plans to reach out in the community to encourage residents to participate in the 2020 Census. He attended the manufacturing program at the School of Technology where they are proposing career training in machinists, architecture and engineering.

Adjournment

Vice President Gregory made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Councilman Coutz and approved by unanimous consent. Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 9:59 a.m.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at 9am in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley
Council President