

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
September 15, 2020**

The County Council of Cecil County met in work session in an online virtual meeting because of the current health crisis and based on the Governor's orders to avoid public meetings. Council Members and presenters participated in this meeting; the public observed the meeting by connecting online at www.ccgov.org/council and selecting "livestream".

The following members of the Council were present:

Robert Meffley, Council President
Al Miller, Council Member
Jackie Gregory, Vice President
William H. Coutz, Council Member
George Patchell, Council Member

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

Call to Order

The meeting of the County Council of Cecil County of September 15, 2020 was called to order by Council President Meffley at 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call of Council Members

Council President Meffley asked for a roll call of attending Council Members. The Council Manager called the roll and recorded the following Council Members in attendance:

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Present, Miller-Present, Patchell-Present, Gregory-Present, Meffley-Present.

Council President Meffley announced that there were five Council Members present, which constitute a quorum.

Suspension of Rules

Councilman Coutz made a motion to suspend the rules to allow Council Members who are connected to participate and vote in this work session, because of the current health crisis and orders by the Governor to avoid public meetings. The motion was seconded by Vice President Gregory.

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Y, Miller-Y, Patchell-Y, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y

The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Vice President Gregory, seconded by Councilman Coutz, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of September 1, 2020, as presented. Motion was approved unanimously.

Public Schools Update

Dr. Jeff Lawson, School Superintendent, introduced Dr. Carolyn Teigland, Associate Superintendent, Education Services, and Dr. Robert Buckley, Associate Superintendent, Administration.

Dr. Lawson stated that CCPS brought 5% of their students, about 1,000, back to school on September 8, while virtual instruction began on September 1. He stated that the schools have partnered with the Health Department in assessing health conditions, based on COVID data rates of infection. He stated that they will reassess on October 12 to determine if additional students can be invited to school. Students with a history of low attendance are targeted for face to face instruction.

Dr. Teigland explained the teaching schedule and the commitment to aligning the curriculum with State standards for college readiness. She stated that all teachers were provided with instructions on online learning platforms during the summer.

Dr. Lawson and Dr. Buckley addressed the challenges in transportation of students and the difficulty of condensing bus routes. He explained that the school system was obligated to bus contractor contracts so there could be no savings in reducing the bus routes. They explained the health precaution implemented for students and bus drivers.

Dr. Lawson explained that 1,000 meals are distributed to students who attend school as well as to 3,800 meals distributed throughout the county because of relaxed USDA guidelines during this pandemic.

Vice President Gregory commented in support of CCPS success in operating the schools safely and providing good instruction.

Coronavirus Update

Lauren Levy, Health Officer, introduced Laurie Humphries, Deputy Health Officer for Operations, and Dr. Henry Taylor, Deputy Health Officer for Clinical Services.

Ms. Levy stated that Maryland has over 117,000 COVID cases and 3,700 deaths as of today. In Cecil County, there are 946 confirmed cases and 41 deaths. The seven-day positivity rate is 5.7%. She stated that these rates are showing a slight upward trend, which is of concern. She stated that we must get the message out to the public to remain vigilant. The statistics show that the highest number of cases are among the 20-29 and 50-59 age groups. The deaths tend to be predominately in older populations. Women are statistically more likely to die than men.

She emphasized the importance of wearing a mask, social distance, hand hygiene, avoiding large gatherings, cleaning and disinfecting. Dr. Taylor discussed the risk of being in a crowded bar,

restaurant or facility without a mask. She stated that our public is experiencing COVID fatigue and have become less careful in protecting themselves.

Mr. Levy stated that contact tracing will continue to be an important tool for reducing the spread of COVID. There have been over 1,300 contacts made during the last six months. Mr. Levy stated that the county is moving into phase two of the community testing plan to offer free testing to anyone who requests. Testing continues to be offered at the VEIP station through September 29. Beginning October 1, testing will be held at the Health Department parking lot. Union Hospital will also continue to offer testing. She stated that two mobile units will be used to provide more testing events in outlying areas.

She stated that her office will continue to emphasize the importance of wearing masks. She described several videos that have been produced by the Youth Empowerment Source and youth leaders from Drug Free Cecil. Her office is providing weekly reports of the latest metrics for the county. Outreach is also being conducted to county nursing homes, assisted living facilities. Councilman Miller clarified that wearing masks outside can be just as important because it reduces the risk from free moving air. Ms. Levy stated that her office has sent information to faith leaders to remind them of the importance of distancing and the risk of spreading the virus through singing and shouting.

Council President Meffley clarified that the largest number of cases are in Elkton, North East, Charlestown, and Rising Sun.

Councilman Patchell clarified that it was Ms. Levy's opinion that actual competition in high risk sports is unwise at this time, such as football, wrestling, and basketball. She suggested that activities such as skill building and practicing instead of actual competition can reduce risk.

Review of Legislative Agenda

A public hearing will be held for Rezoning Case #2020-04 929 West Pulaski Hwy, LLC at tonight's session. Bryan Lightner, Planner, offered to answer questions. There were no Council questions or comments.

A public hearing will be held for Bill No. 2020-10 Supplemental Appropriation and Budget Transfer-Roads and Bridges Capital Projects-Mechanics Valley Road Over CSX Bridge Project at tonight's session. Rebecca Anderson, Deputy Finance Director, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

A public hearing will be held on Resolution No. 47-2020 Approval-Application-Enterprise Zone Expansion will be held at tonight's session. Sandra Edwards, Economic Development Manager, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 61-2020 Appointment-Board of Parks and Recreation-Megan Coleman, will be introduced at tonight's session. There were no introductory comments from the administration. There were no Council questions or comments.

Resolution No. 52-2020 Approval- Nuisance Flooding Plan, will be considered for approval at tonight's session. Steve O'Connor, Zoning Administrator, provided comments. Councilman Coutz clarified that this was not binding legislation and there have been no changes to the 100 year floodplain.

Resolution No. 60-2020 Approval- Grant Application-Community Development Block Grant- COVID Funding, will be considered for approval at tonight's session. Dave Trolio, Community Services Director, provided comments. There were no Council questions or comments.

Under New Business, Cecil County Public Schools – Budget Amendment #78 in the amount of \$11,088,394 for July and August 2020 will be considered for approval at tonight's session. There were no Council questions or comments.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey reminded Council Members of the Upper Shore Regional Council meeting on September 16, Cecil Cares Day on October 3, and information about the dates of early voting for the 2020 General Election.

Council Member Items

Councilman Coutz, Councilman Patchell and Council President Meffley will save his comments until the legislative session.

Councilman Miller reminded the public that there are only fifteen days to respond to the 2020 Census. He stated that the current rate of response was 65.1%.

Vice President Gregory congratulated Mrs. Jones from Elkton Middle School as one of seven finalists for Maryland State Teacher of the Year.

Adjournment

Council President Meffley asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Coutz made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Councilman Miller. Motion was approved unanimously. Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 5:36 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 4:30pm, which is planned as a virtual meeting because of the current health crisis. The session will be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage. Members of the public who do not have broadband access should contact the Council Office for instructions to be connected via telephone.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley
Council President