

COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
October 13, 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 October 13, 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 Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of October 6, 2020, as presented. Motion was approved unanimously.

Hemp Legislation

Ernie Beck, a resident of Earleville who is growing hemp, made a presentation to the Council about his concern about Baltimore County's local legislation that would require setbacks for growing hemp. Mr. Beck provided a history of his business and the current state regulations that he has met. He stated his concern that further restrictions on hemp production would violate the "Right to Farm" principle. He stated that hemp production can become a valuable commodity for the state agricultural economy and summarized a variety of items that can be made of hemp. Council questions and comments ensued.

2020 General Election Update

Ruie Lavoie, Election Director, updated the Council on the 2020 General Election. She stated that 20,000 Cecil County voters have requested ballots, and her office is up to date on processing their applications. Voters can return their ballots by mail or drop off at ballot boxes that are located any county high school or county administration building.

She stated that early voting will be held from October 26 to November 2, 7am to 8pm, at county high schools and the county administration building. Voters on Election Day, November 3, may vote at vote centers at any county high school or county administration building from 7am to 8pm. She stated that ballot canvassing will begin October 19 but no results will be released until election night.

She clarified that all former election judges were invited to work during this election, but some declined. New election judges were recruited and trained.

2021 Council Legislative Agenda

Councilman Coutz made a motion to approve the 2021 Council Legislative Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice President Gregory and approved unanimously.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey updated the Council on the closing of Hatem Bridge next week and the Bainbridge Development Corporation annual meeting.

Council Member Items

Vice President Gregory thanked the presenters for their reports. She reminded the audience that the last day to register to vote was today at 9pm.

Councilman Coutz congratulated Walt Morgan on his induction in the Harford Cecil Hall of Fame. He voiced his concern on the number of traffic accidents and fatalities in the county and suggested that the Council should meet with the Sheriff to discuss what can be done about this serious problem. He also thanked the speakers for their presentations.

Councilman Patchell agreed with Councilman Coutz on his concern for the number of traffic accidents and speeders on Route 40.

Councilman Miller announced that there was still time to participate in the 2020 Census until October 31. He stated that yesterday was National Farmers Day and that agriculture is the leading industry in Cecil County.

Council President Meffley commented on the Consolidated Transportation Plan meeting with the Maryland Department of Transportation, which will be held as a virtual meeting on Friday, October 16 at 11am. He said that he will bring up his concerns for Route 213 intersection with Elk Forest Road and the serious traffic conditions. He also stated that the County lacks an emergency plan when either Route 40 or I-95 are blocked and cause traffic congestion. He stated that we need to review and develop a plan for these emergency situations.


Adjournment

Council President Meffley asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Miller made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Councilman Coutz. Motion was approved unanimously. Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 6:46 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 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