

COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
March 22, 2022

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

4:30 P.M.

NOTE: The recording and transcription of this meeting are available on the County website at www.ccgov.org/council.

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Jackie Gregory, William Coutz, Al Miller, and Donna Culberson; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant; Charles MacLeod, Council Attorney; members of the administration, and members of the public.

Call to Order

Council President Meffley called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm, and announced that there were five Council Members present, which constitute a quorum.

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 March 15, 2022, as presented. The motion approved unanimously.

Update on Conowingo Dam

Dr. Charles Glass, Executive Director of the Maryland Environmental Services, introduced Marni Dolinar, Managing Director of Environmental Dredging and Restoration Group; and Jeff Tosi, Director of Government Affairs. He also introduced Matthew Rowe, Assistant Director of Water and Science Administration of the Maryland Department of the Environment. Ms. Dolinar reviewed the timeline for the Conowingo dredging pilot project, which issued a report on May 28, 2021. She stated that Dultra is the company that was awarded the contract to conduct the pilot project. She stated that the project found mostly sand in the northern portion, mostly silt and clay near the dam, and that the chemicals detected were under the State's acceptable level for arsenic, manganese, thallium and semi-volatile organic compounds.

Mr. Rowe summarized the pilot project that included sediment characterization, collecting the core, and determining possible end uses. He discussed that the Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan proposes to reduce 6M pounds of Nitrogen and 260,000 pounds of phosphorus from Conowingo infill and to identify most cost-effective practices. He estimates an annual cost of \$53.3M and suggested that pay for performance financial approach. He also discussed the Conowingo Settlement Agreement that obligates Exelon, now Constellation Energy, to spend \$200M over the next fifty years to restore the eco system. Council questions and comments ensued. Council President Meffley stated that Aberdeen Proving Ground officials are interested in use of sediment to stabilize the base's shoreline.

FY 2022 Budget Questions

Steve Overbay, Acting Director of Administration, reviewed the responses to Council questions provided by Lawrence Scott, County Attorney. He clarified that the bonds were refinanced for thirty years, instead of twenty years, at the advice of the bond counsel because of the low interest rate and as a match to the life of the assets. The total saved from bond refinancing was \$28.8M.

James Appel, Finance Director, clarified that the administration used \$3M from the fund balance to repave roads, which was approved in Resolution No. 04-2022. He explained that a portion of the bond savings amount is proposed to be used to cover salaries and fringes as authorized by Resolution No. 09-2022.

Mr. Appel reviewed the CARES Act grant of \$16.1M, of which \$2.7M was spent by the current administration and \$13.5M was spent by previous administration. He stated that the expense plan was developed and implemented by the previous administration.

Mr. Appel reviewed the American Rescue Plan Act grant funding. He stated that Cecil County has received \$9.98M grant, which has not been allocated or spent, pending ARPA rules and regulations that were just received. He stated that an additional ARPA grant of \$9.98M will be received in May 2022. He stated that the ARPA grants must be allocated by the end of 2024 and the funds must be spent by the end of 2026.

Charter Amendments

The Council reviewed the proposed charter amendment to the Ethics Commission. After review, the Council President polled Council Members who indicated their support for this amendment as proposed.

The Council reviewed the proposed charter amendment to establish a Board of Estimates. Steve Overbay, Acting Director of Administration, read a proposal from Lawrence Scott, County Attorney, to allow Council Members to review contracts on a weekly basis on Tuesdays between 2pm and 4pm; conduct a two-month pilot program to assess any issues; and include all real estate transactions.

Council discussion continued on the proposal. There was debate as to whether the Board would "approve" or "review" contracts, whether members should "vote" or "just review", and whether the amount of a threshold, such as \$100,000, should be included in the amendment. After discussion, consideration was tabled until the next work session.

State Legislative Update

Vice President Gregory discussed Delegate Jacobs' request for support of HB 778/SB 514 Transportation – Investment Program – MARC Rail Service (Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act), which includes the extension of MARC from Perryville to Newark. This Bill would redirect funding from MDOT projects to fund this proposal. Council President Meffley

polled Council Members for their support and determined that they did not have enough information to take a position.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey stated that the 2022 Primary Election has been postponed from June 28 to July 19 because the proposed redistricting plans have been challenged in the court. A revised Council schedule will be considered at the next work session.

Council Member Items

Councilwoman Culberson thanked the audience for attending. She encouraged the public to speak to her directly about their questions or concerns.

Councilman Miller attended the St. Patrick's Day parade in Chesapeake City and commented on the large participation. He attended the Farm Bureau meeting and reminded everyone that the Farm Bureau Spring Banquet will be held on Saturday night at Rising Sun Fire Hall.

Vice President Gregory participated in Cecilton Lions Club's annual Daffodil Day and commented that flowers are arranged and taken to homebound seniors and nursing homes. She participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Chesapeake City.

Councilman Coutz reported on statistics from the Sheriff's Intel meeting. Most service calls were down but there have been two shootings this week. He urged the public to support law enforcement. He stated that overdose numbers are lower than last year, but there are more overdose fatalities because of the use of fentanyl. He suggested another summit on overdose addictions is needed.

Council President Meffley was unable to attend last week's session because of illness. He participated in St. Patrick's Day parade in Chesapeake City. He attended the Cecil County Firemen's Association and stated that they are requested to raise the county's annual support of fire equipment from \$1M, which has not been increased in many years. He stated that he hoped that county officials would contact him directly before issuing a press release.

Adjournment

Vice President Gregory made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilman Coutz. Council President Meffley adjourned the session at 6:40 pm.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley, Council President