

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES**

February 14, 2023

**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, Rebecca Hamilton, Al Miller, Donna Culberson, and Jackie Gregory; David Culver, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, members of the administration and members of the public.

Call to Order

Council President Gregory 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 Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Culberson, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of February 7, 2023, as presented. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Presentations

a. PORT – Prevention and Overdose Response Team

John Donahue, Deputy Director of the Department of Emergency Services, gave an overview of the Prevention and Overdose Response Team (PORT) program. He noted that this program was started as the result of Emergency Services performing an assessment of services provided in drug addiction and the desire to provide a “one stop shopping” option to assist people with drug addiction. Deputy Director Donahue noted the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children presented this type of model and training for the program. He noted the mission was to create a response team that is a first responder-led program utilizing a multidisciplinary team to reduce repeated responses to the same individuals with substance use disorder, cooperate and coordinate with the many services in Cecil County to connect overdose victims and their families with the treatment and resources they need. The target population is the surviving overdose victims and their families as well as family members of fatal overdose victims and to place a particular focus to attempt to break the generational chain of drug abuse. Lt. Bill Adams, coordinator of the PORT program, discussed the various methods they utilize in prevention, recovery and the funding sources. Lt. Adams described the various information and assistance that is offered.

Councilwoman Culberson asked for clarification on overdose deaths between agencies and Lt. Adams said he would verify the numbers. Councilman Miller inquired how referrals are made and was informed by either paramedics or police officers to PORT or Mobile Crises. Councilwoman Culberson asked if the children were put into foster care or sent to other family members and was informed that it depends on the situation, but family is the first choice. Councilman Miller noted firefighters often report responding to the same house for drug issues and noted this program appears to be helping with the situation. Councilwoman Hamilton, Vice President Meffley and President Georgy all noted that the presentation and PORT program are fantastic and they support the PORT program along with the families in these situations.

b. Quarterly Financial Update

Director of Administration Steven Overbay introduced Antonio Prattico, Budget Manager for the Department of Finance to review the quarterly financial updates. Budget Manager Prattico noted that the overall revenues are down by 2.7 million from the same time last year mostly due to the reduction of recordation fees and charges for services. These fees mostly come from real estate settlements and permits. He did note property and personal taxes are coming in higher than budgeted. He noted that expenditures are on track to meet the budget numbers.

Councilman Miller questioned the debt service payments and was informed that it is based on the timing of the bond issuance and the interest rates. Vice President Meffley questioned the law enforcement expenditures for salary and was informed it was low due to the amount of vacant positions. Director Overbay noted that the report tries to highlight the greatest variances in Departments. He also noted the building permits are down, which affects the service charges and recordation numbers. Councilman Miller noted the difficulty in getting permits with the Health Department and Director Overbay noted that they are trying to hire positions to help with the backlog. Vice President Meffley opined that they should issue permits on approved lots to allow construction to begin while the Health Department is reviewing the septic system design and Director Overbay indicated they would see if that were permissible.

Legislative Update

President Gregory noted the following:

Local Bills -

HB 0835 Motor Vehicle Registration – Exception for Golf Carts – Town of Charlestown. Council will request additional information prior to decision.

SB 0396 Economic Development - Upper Shore Regional Council – Membership. Council will send letter of support.

Agricultural Bills

HB 0678 Sales and Use Tax - Electricity for Agricultural Purposes. Council will not take a position.

HB 0253 / SB0262 Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption. Council will not take a position.

HB 0712 Consumer Protection - Right to Repair - Farm Equipment. Council will not take a position.

General Bills

HB 0359 Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams and Sports – Designation Based on Sex (Save Women’s Sports Act). Council will send a letter of support.

HB 0842 Agricultural Land - Foreign Property Interests – Restrictions. Council will not take a position.

SB 0261 Motor Fuel Tax Rates - Consumer Price Index Adjustment – Repeal. Council will send a letter of support.

HB 0740/SB 0522 Education - Accountability and Implementation Board –Membership. Council will send a letter of support.

HB 0737 Alternative Education Options - Right to Learn and Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Programs (Right to Learn Act of 2023). Council will not take a position.

HB 1100 Battery Storage and Solar Arrays Safety Training Grant Program and Fund. Council will send a letter of support.

HB 1099 Electricity - Solar Energy Generating Stations - Fire Suppression. Council will not take a position.

HB 0430 - Police Immunity and Accountability Act. Council will send a letter of opposition.

MACo Supported

HB 0592/SB 0418 - Property Tax - Agricultural Land and Improvements – Assessment. Council agrees with MACo position.

HB 0788/SB 0414 - Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland. Council agrees with MACo position.

MACo Supported with amendments.

HB 0723/SB 0526 - Natural Resources - Forest Preservation and Retention. Council agrees with MACo position.

HB 0556/SB 0516 - Cannabis Reform. Council agrees with MACo position.

MACo Oppose

HB 0447- Local Elections- County Commissioner – District Voting. Council agrees with MACo position.

MACo No Position

HB 0549/SB 0555 Fair Wage Act of 2023. Council will review after amendments are made to bill.

Miscellaneous

HB 0849- School Bus Stops-Violations-Enforcement and Safety Measures. Council will send a letter of opposition.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the next Upper Shore Meeting is on February 15. He also noted that the Maryland U.S. Senators are having a meeting on the Chesapeake Bay Recreation Area on February 21 and 22. He also noted the Cecil Night with the Chamber in Annapolis on February 27 and the Rooted in our Community Meeting on March 4. He also noted the upcoming rezoning hearing and the hearings on upcoming bills. He also noted he will coordinate a date for the invitation Council received for a tour of Bainbridge.

Council Member Items

Councilman Miller noted he attended the Local Management Board Meeting on February 13. He also noted the Rooted in our Community Meeting on March 4 will be in person this year.

Councilwoman Culberson gave the intel report for the previous week. She also noted she attended the Department of Aging Meeting. She took a tour of the Fair Hill Nature Center and noted that it is a wonderful place to visit. She also noted she meet with Board of Education and discussed the upcoming budget.

Councilwoman Hamilton reviewed the various hearings that were occurring in Annapolis during the legislative session and encouraged people to participate in the meetings. She also noted that Allegany County schools hold a “Financial Fair” for its students and this is a great program that should be implemented statewide.

Vice President Meffley noted he attended the Town of Chesapeake City meeting and they discussed revisions to the town charter, sewer issues, monthly financials, reuse of the elementary school, changing the road directions to be one way in the Town, and the proposal for a ferry service between Chestertown, Chesapeake City and Annapolis. He also noted the towns Cardin 5K Trail Run on June 4th and the St. Patrick Day Parade on March 18.

President Gregory announced she attended the Eastern Shore Delegation meeting and Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks was the guest speaker. She also noted she testified in opposition to the gun bills in Annapolis. She also noted the interagency meeting on childcare.

Closed Session

Council Manager Culver announced that the County Council is entering a closed session pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions for §3-305:

(b) (1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individual.

On a motion made by Councilwoman Hamilton, seconded by Councilwoman Culberson, the Council moved to convene a closed session, pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions §3-305 (b)(1).

Roll Call Vote

Hamilton - Y, Miller - Y, Culberson - Y, Meffley - Y, Gregory – Y

The motion was approved unanimously by a vote of 5 to 0.

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Rebecca Hamilton, Al Miller, Donna Culberson and Jackie Gregory; David Culver, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant.

President Gregory recessed the work session at 6:17 pm

On a motion by Councilwoman Culberson, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton, President Gregory adjourned the closed session at 6:37 pm and reopened the Work Session.

Open Session

President Gregory announced Council was out of closed session.

Councilman Miller added to his weekly report that the County Executive Budget presentation was scheduled for February 16, 2023.

President Gregory announced that no further items are on the February 14, 2023 Work Session agenda.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice President Meffley. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 6:38 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 4:30 pm in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building. The session will also be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage at www.ccgov.org/council.

Approved:


Jackie Gregory, Council President


David M. Culver
Council Manager