

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

February 20, 2024

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

Call to Order

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

Revised Agenda

President Gregory asked for a motion to amend the agenda to move New Business to the first agenda item and to approve the revised agenda. On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Vice President Meffley, Council moved to revise the agenda to move New Business to the first agenda item and accept the revised agenda. The motion passed 5 to 0.

New Business

1. Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #120

President Gregory noted that the Cecil County Public Schools Budget Amendment #120 is for \$292,850 and was discussed at the last BOE Meeting. Denise Sopa from the Board of Education reviewed the requested Budget Amendment and noted this amendment included school activities fees, safe school grants, drug education, BEPAC grants and changes to restricted federal funds for Title IV programs. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the changes in the personnel services and Ms. Sopa noted this is due to the changes in the Susquehanna Workforce accounting and twilight school services. Councilwoman Hamilton also inquired on capital costs and Ms. Sopa noted they are for engineering and inspection services. Councilwoman Culberson requested some examples of these capital cost services and Ms. Sopa noted it would be for the engineering design of HVAC systems or construction plans for the schools. President Gregory inquired if the grants for school safety are budgeted and how are these grants allocated and Ms. Sopa noted they are not budgeted until received and are for camera and communication upgrades in the schools. Ms. Sopa noted that the projects are chosen based upon the grant funding received and added to the budget.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Vice President Meffley, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council Work Session of February 13, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Review of Legislative Agenda

a. Introduction of Bills

1. Bill 2024-04 – Amendment - Building Construction – Building Code

Director of Administration Steven Overbay introduced Director of Land Use and Development Services Stephen O'Connor who noted that Bills 2024-04 through 2024-09 are all related to the adoption on the 2021 International Building Codes (IBC) and mandated by the State. He noted that this adoption cycle is later than normal because of delays in the 2021 review by the State because of Covid issues and the ability to meet. Vice President Meffley inquired on major changes to construction and Permits and Inspection Division Chief William Funk noted no major changes were made but some minor changes, like basement vapor barriers, were increased. Vice President Meffley also inquired on the changes to agricultural buildings and Chief Funk noted that these changes were previously made, and it effects permits when the building is being occupied. Councilman Miller also noted issues with agricultural permits, noted the change from the Health Department to the Division of Water and Sewer for septic and well permits and inquired if the changes were done in house or by a committee. Chief Funk noted they were done in house, but the State reviews the changes and receives input from all the jurisdictions. Vice President Meffley inquired when a deck needs a permit for repairs and Chief Funk noted when the deck has structural changes it needs a permit but when it is only cosmetic or minor repairs, like replacing boards, no permit is required.

2. Bill 2024-05 - County Code Adoption – Swimming Pools and Spas

Director O'Connor noted this will be a new section of code and Chief Funk noted the IBC recently moved this to be a stand-alone code just for pools and spas instead of being incorporated into the IBC building code. Vice President Meffley inquired on the bottom drains, the hazards associated with them and the design safeguards and Chief Funk noted the anti-suction features to prevent people begin caught in the drains. Vice President Meffley also inquired on the inspection of these drains and Chief Funk noted they are reviewed during the permit process.

3. Bill 2024-06 – Amendment – HVAC Standards

Director O'Connor noted this bill only addresses the HVAC system. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the only change in Code was the date of the IBC and Director O'Connor noted it was the only change. Vice President Meffley noted that a HVAC Board should be established like the Plumbing Board to review issues.

4. Bill 2024-07 - Amendment — Energy Conservation Standards

Director O'Connor noted the only change in this section of code was the date from 2018 to 2021.

5. Bill 2024-08 – Amendment – Plumbing Code

Director O'Connor noted this is also updating the Code from 2018 to 2021. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if all the codes are updated every 3 years and Chief Funk noted that is the current IBC cycle and this was delayed because of Covid, but the 2024 IBC is being reviewed.

Councilman Miller inquired if a committee is reviewing the 2024 IBC and Chief Funk noted that it is being reviewed at the State level and he participates in the review process. Vice President Meffley noted that the IBC review is done by building officials across the world.

6. Bill 2024-09 – Amendment – Electrical Standards

Director O'Connor noted this section has the most revisions because of changes at the State level on licensing procedures for electricians. Vice President Meffley inquired if local electricians were part of the review and Chief Funk noted this was also reviewed at the State level.

b. Introduction of Resolutions

1. Resolution 11-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Unassigned General Fund Balance – Roads Division – Department of Public Works – Snow Removal

Director of Administration Steve Overbay noted this budget amendment is to replenish the snow removal account because of the number of snow events this year. He noted \$200,000 would be for additional salt purchases and \$100,000 would be for contractors. He noted any unspent funds would go back to the fund balance. Vice President Meffley inquired on the cost of the contractors so far and Deputy Director of Public Works Rob Ritter noted \$112,801. Vice President Meffley inquired if this included county employee costs and Deputy Director Ritter noted it was just for contractors. Councilman Miller inquired on the original budget for snow removal and Director Overbay noted \$300,000. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the salt supply and Deputy Director Ritter noted they already purchased additional salt and it would be stored if not used this season. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired on the amount of salt purchased in previous years and Director Overbay noted that salt is purchased and stored from year to year if not used.

2. Resolution 12-2024 - Appointment – Public Safety Pension Plan Board of Trustees – Matthew Carr

Director of Administration Steve Overbay noted Mr. Carr is being reappointed as the representative of the Detention Center at the Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Adams concurs with this reappointment. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the role of the Pension Board and Director Overbay noted this board reviews the pension plan for our public safety employees and may make recommendations in the investments and benefits. He also noted this fund is 94% funded, which is one of the highest funded plans in the State.

c. Consideration of Resolutions

1. Resolution 09-2024 - Supplemental Appropriation – Fund Balance – Roads Division – Department of Public Works – Asphalt Overlay

Director of Administration Steve Overbay noted that this \$3 million would supplement the existing budget of \$750,000. He also noted the challenges in road repairs because of the decrease in the Highway User Fund from the State. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired of the process of review to determine what roads would need the overlay and Director Overbay noted the roads are reviewed and the priority list is established. Councilman Miller also inquired on the road widths and safety concerns and Director Overbay noted that is also taken into consideration.

2. Resolution 10-2024 - Appointment— Administrative Charging Committee – John Ronald Stricklett

Director of Administration Steve Overbay noted that Mr. Stricklett is on the Police Accountability Board but is resigning to be appointed to the Administrative Charging Committee to fill the term of Rodney W. Heinze who resigned. Vice President Meffley noted that he is highly qualified for this appointment. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if Mr. Stricklett already resigned from the PAB and when will this appointment, if passed, would take effect and it was noted it would be effective upon passage and the PAB would need another appointment to fill Mr. Stricklett's position.

d. Call for Final Reading of Bills

1. Bill 2024-01 - Establishment – Commission on Veterans Affairs

President Gregory noted this bill would create the Veteran Commission and would help assist our veterans. She also asked Council Manager Culver for an update on the bill. Manager Culver noted he spoke to Robert Brown in Harford County on how that Board is organized. Manager Culver noted Mr. Brown offered to speak to the Commission once it is formed and that they are also interested in partnership with Cecil and Baltimore County to help our veterans in this region. Manager Culver also noted that the program has grown in Harford as they became more involved in the veteran issues but the initial function for the Board was done with minimal staff involvement.

2. Bill 2024-02 - Amendment – Zoning Ordinance – Critical Area – Definitions, and Official Critical Area Maps

Director of Land Use Stephen O'Connor noted that this would update the Zoning Ordinance to match the new Maryland Critical Area Commission maps.

3. Bill 2024-03 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – Mary Ann Thompson and James K. MacDonald, and Meulenberg Enterprises, LLC

Director of Land Use Stephen O'Connor noted that these two farms located at 360 Joseph Biggs Highway and 2159 Principio Road that are requesting to sell the development rights to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) program. As part of this easement sale, the properties must have a public hearing and be part of an agricultural district. Director O'Connor noted that these two farms are first time participants in the program and this bill will serve as the needed public hearing for the application.

State Legislative Update

President Gregory inquired if Councilmembers had any updates to provide or bills to consider.

Vice President Meffley noted HB 0725 on commercial fishing license and DNR ability to suspend and revoke a license if the holder is charged with a crime even if the holder is found innocent of any criminal wrongdoing. This bill would prohibit DNR from revoking the license if the holder is found innocent and Council agreed to send a letter of support.

Councilwoman Culberson noted HB 0785/SB 0738 on the Freedom to Read Act had its hearings. She noted the hearing on HB 1027 on alternative school options is upcoming and Council agreed to send a letter of support on this bill. She also gave an update on HB 0558 on health care education in schools.

Councilwoman Hamilton gave an update on HB 0944 on outdoor seating at restaurants in Cecil and Harford County and Council agreed to continue to watch this bill.

Councilwoman Culberson also gave an update on HB 0553/SB 0438 on parental rights and Council agreed to send a letter of support.

Vice President Meffley also inquired on HB 1221/SB 0788 on battery storage and solar array training and President Gregory noted MACo is supporting this with amendments.

President Gregory gave the MACo update on bills that were discussed. She noted we did send a letter of support on HB 0899/SB 0691 on higher education grants and loans for firefighters and EMS recruitment and retention along with MACo.

President Gregory also reviewed the list of bills from Sheriff Scott Adams and the Sheriff's Association. She noted SB 0094 on juvenile law changes for intake and probation for minors and Council agreed to send a letter of support. She also noted SB 0120 on juvenile law for parental consent for custodial interrogation and HB 0576/SB 0453 for mental health emergency evaluations and Council agreed to send letter of support on both of these bills. She also reviewed HB 1031/SB 0801 on the mandated correctional services medication assisted treatment and the State paying for this program and Council agreed to send a letter of support.

President Gregory also noted we did send a letter of opposition to HB 1407 which prohibits counties from establishing zoning regulations for renewable sources generating systems. She also reviewed SB 0906 that required counties to inventory all commercial buildings for conversion for residential use and Council agreed to watch this bill also.

Councilwoman Hamilton requested that Councilmembers send the bill number, synopsis and suggested position on the bill prior to the meeting to give adequate time to review any position Council may take.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He also reminded Councilmembers to send invitations to the office so everybody can be notified and to reply as soon as possible to events.

Council Member Items

Councilmembers deferred comments to the Legislative Session of February 20, 2024.

President Gregory announced that no further items are on the February 20, 2024 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 5:45 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 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