

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

February 27, 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: Robert Meffley, 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 four Council Members present and one absent, 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 20, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 4 to 0, with 1 absent.

Presentations

a. **Christiana Care**

Sarah Stowens introduced herself as the State Policy and Advocacy Manager for Christiana Care. She noted the new Chief Medical Officer will start on March 18, 2024 and that she would bring him to meet with Council at a future meeting. Manager Stowens noted that Christiana Care has been doing social drivers during health screenings this past quarter and noted 15% of the people screened had financial, health or food insecurities and that they are working with them on assistance. She also noted that they have continued to work on the Behavioral Health Strategic Plan and the partnership with Sheppard Pratt. Manager Stowens noted that Christiana Care continues to do community outreach and has partnered with Cecil County government, the Health Department and Social Services as well as being a member of the Cecil Chamber. She also noted Christiana Care is a member of the Medical Health Association in Maryland, has met with the Eastern Shore delegation and has joined in statewide health conversations. Manager Stowens noted that Christiana Care is reviewing all State legislation and focusing on bills that strengthen Maryland's health care workers, ensure better access to care, improves hospital throughput and creates a sustainable hospital and health care system.

Manager Stowens noted HB 425/SB 359 would allow Maryland to join the APRN Compact that would allow the reciprocity on nurses license as a APRN to work in other states with this one license. This compact would require 7 States to join and currently 4 States have joined, including Delaware. If passed by Maryland and two other states this would allow nurses to work at the Christiana Care campuses in Delaware and Maryland. President Gregory inquired on the status of the bill and Manager Stowens noted it had a House hearing and was generally well received. Vice President Meffley inquired on what is required to get the APRN license and if it was required to get promoted in the hospital system and Manager Stowens noted it was one year of work, which is 2080 hours, or additional training and does not affect promotions but allows nurses to work in

various states without getting that states license and this is an optional certification. Manager Stowens also noted HB 354 which is the Maryland Pathway to Nursing Act and that this would help create community college programs for nursing. She also noted HB 547/SB 1158 which is the Sacred Places Safety Act and would help health care employees with workplace violence since up to 50% of this type of violence occurs in healthcare facilities.

Manager Stowens also noted the hospital throughput program including funding for the Maryland 988 Coalition which is the phone system to assist with mental health issues. The 988 system would use a surcharge on phone lines like the 911 system currently utilizes. She also noted the Task Force that is trying to find ways to reduce emergency department wait times. Manager Stowens noted for hospital sustainability they are working on the 340B program that allows nonprofits to purchase prescriptions at a lower cost and use those funds saved for community programs. Councilwoman Culberson asked for the impact of the staffing ratio bill and Manager Stowens noted they are still reviewing the impacts and would let Council know of the Christiana Care position. She noted this would mandate a staffing ratio per floor of the hospital and that it could cause staffing and safety issues. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired on Medicare partners being added to Cecil County now that Humana left and Manager Stowens noted only one provider currently is available but negotiations are always ongoing with providers. Councilman Miller commented on wait times in the emergency department for walk in versus ambulance service and Manager Stowens noted the average walk-in wait time is an hour and a half, but ambulance services is quicker based on triage needs. Vice President Meffley inquired on the procedures for walk-ins to the emergency department that do not have insurance and Manager Stowens noted medical services are provided first and they will work with the person on getting insurance, either Medicaid or private. President Gregory inquired on people using the emergency room as the primary medical service and Manager Stowens noted some people do this because they do not have a primary doctor and some have the perception everything is an emergency. Manager Stowens noted health literacy is critical for people using the emergency departments.

State Legislative Update

Councilwoman Culberson noted HB 704 and HB 675 both promote primary and secondary education and various education savings account programs. Councilman Miller noted the College Savings program issues and Vice President Meffley noted these programs are needed. Council agreed to send a letter of support. She also noted HB 1257/SB 917 - Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools – Establishment and Council agreed to watch this legislation. She also reviewed HB 971/SB 851 - Public Schools - Interscholastic Athletics - Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification and Council agreed to send a letter of opposition. She also reviewed HB 1400/SB 1032 - Public Schools - Student Use of Force – Authorization and Council agreed to watch this bill. She reviewed HB 1430 - Education - Public Schools - Parents' Rights (Education Bill of Rights for Families Act) and Council agreed to send a letter of support. She also noted SB 979/HB 1297 - Education - Artificial Intelligence - Guidelines and Pilot Program and Council agreed to watch this legislation. She also reviewed SB 1090/HB 1167 - Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program – Established and Council agreed to watch this bill. Councilwoman Culberson lastly noted SB 927/HB 758 - Criminal Law - Crime of Violence - Second Degree Assault of a School Employee or Subcontractor (School Assault Reduction and Prevention Act) and Council agreed to send a letter of support.

Councilman Miller noted the Farm Bureau did discuss several bills and noted they support SB 0367/HB 048 Antlerless Deer Hunting, HB 1318 - Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge & Wasted Food

Reduction & Diversion Fund & Grant Program, HB 1025/SB 0841 Transportation – Motor Fuel Tax Rates and SB 0056/HB 0163 - Food Waster & Solid Waste Reduction – Grants - On Farm Organic Diversion & Composting Grant Program and noted no action was needed by Council. He noted the Farm Bureau will monitor SB 0956/HB 1153 PFAS Chemicals and oppose HB 1165/SB 0969 Stream & Watershed Restoration, HB 1101/SB 0653 Clean Water Justice Act and HB 1008 Fossil Fuel Trans Fee but noted no action was needed by Council. Councilwoman Culberson inquired how PFA's are getting on farms and Councilman Miller noted they are mostly air born from other sources. He also noted that agriculture only accounts for 4% of the greenhouse gasses generated in Maryland.

President Gregory noted Council did send a letter of support on SB 1064 that would authorize the liquor board inspectors to inspect cannabis facilities. She also noted several MACo positions on upcoming bills including opposition to HB 1435/SB 0783 – Brighter Tomorrow Act, and support of HB 362/SB 0362 – Budget Act and HB 1157/SB 0937 – Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program, which allow schools to hire teachers that are not yet certified but working on certification. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if these individuals are on a contract and President Gregory noted that was her understanding. Council agreed to send a letter of support.

Vice President Meffley also noted HB 1441- Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations for the head start program and pay issues and President Gregory noted that the mandate for 50% more teachers in early education is now a goal. Councilwoman Culberson also inquired if this would be applicable to in-home daycares, and it was noted it should if they meet the licensing requirements.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He also noted the presentation from the Commander at APG for March 5, 2024 was being postponed due to a scheduling conflict for the Commander. He also noted that MACo recently discussed the mistake by the State Assessment Office in mailing out property notices and that it is expected to be addressed in this session by the State Legislature and should not have an impact on the tax revenue. He noted Cecil County had the third highest number of notices not being sent.

Council Member Items

Councilwoman Culberson noted the intel numbers for the previous week.

Councilman Miller attended the BEPAC dinner on February 24 at Schaffers and noted the accomplishments of the organization.

Vice President Meffley noted he attended the Upper Shore Regional Council Meeting on February 21 and they discussed funding and grants. He also attended the ribbon cutting for the new Board of Realtors office on Pulaski Highway and noted the services they offer. He also attended the BEPAC Dinner as well as the Ice Splash on February 24 at the Wellwood in Charlestown and congratulated President Gregory on participating in this event. He also noted that the North East VFW will be having a soup challenge on February 29 and encouraged everybody to attend.

President Gregory noted she attended the Eastern Shore Delegation Meeting on February 23 and they discussed tourism and economic development. She noted Cecil County staff members Sandy Turner and Bill Sorenson spoke at the event. They also discussed the Whitsett Center and the progress being made on the building. Once completed, it will provide mental health assistance to

youths on the Eastern Shore. She also noted the North East VFW volunteer dinner on February 23 and noted Sheriff Scott Adams thanked them for delivering thanksgiving dinner to first responders who work on that day. She also attended the CHIP banquet on February 24 at the North East Banquet Hall. She also attended the Cecil College Spirt Week Kickoff on February 26 and the Arrow of Light Event for Cub Scouts becoming Boy Scouts at the Elkton Methodist Church on February 23.

President Gregory announced that no further items are on the February 27, 2024 Work Session agenda.

Adjournment

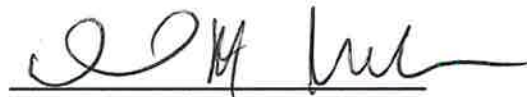
Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice President Meffley. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 5:54 pm.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 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

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