

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

March 26, 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, 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

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 Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Vice President Meffley, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of March 19, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Presentations

- a. Charter Review Commission

President Gregory introduced Robert Gorman, Chairman of the Charter review Commission. Chairman Gorman thanked the Council, his fellow Commissioners and the Council staff. Chairman Gorman noted that the Commission met monthly, reviewed other County Charters, solicited input from current and former officials and reviewed each Section of the Charter. He then reviewed the report format and noted that the memo and marked up Charter was provided to guide Council through the proposals. He also noted that the Commission would return to any future meeting to answer any questions.

Councilman Miller inquired if the Council was expanded, would it be starting in 2028 and Chairman Gorman noted it would so that the new Districts could be established and get the new Council members and Council President on the correct election schedule. Councilman Miller also noted that a pay increase for Council and the County Executive was recommended in the report and Chairman Gorman noted it was and the amount proposed is based on the Consumer Price Index since the Charter was enacted. President Gregory noted this would allow the voters to decide instead of the Compensation Committee and a Council vote and Chairman Gorman agreed. Councilman Miller also noted term limits and Chairman Gorman noted it was discussed at numerous meetings and the Commission felt this should be a recommendation. Vice President Meffley inquired on the Council expansion and Chairman Gorman noted it was discussed to give more representation in the County. Councilwoman Hamilton also inquired on the expanded Council, the need and population per District and Chairman Gorman noted that this would be based on growth, representation by in district voting and that each District would have roughly the same population as required by law. Vice President Meffley noted that in district voting would be better than at large voting to ensure the district representative is who the people of that district elected. Councilman Miller noted that the report proposes a legislative break in August and

Chairman Gorman noted that it was recommended to allow Council and the public time off from the legislative process. Councilwoman Hamilton noted that recommendation on removing items (b) and (c) in Section 516 that was just passed, and it was noted that these sections were unnecessary since an amendment to the Bill noted that Council would review the bids after they were rewarded and not before like originally proposed thus making these sections moot. Councilwoman Hamilton also noted that Section 213 was being proposed so Council could mimic the County Executive leadership staff and Chairman Gorman noted that was the intention. Councilman Miller and President Gregory thanked the Commission for the report.

b. Flood Awareness Month - Flood Program Update

Director of Land Use and Development Services Stephen O'Conner noted that April is Flood Awareness Month. Director O'Conner noted that the 5-year community review was completed and our new rating is higher, going from a 7 to a 6 on the 1 to 10 scale. Director O'Conner introduced Aaron Harding, Planning and Zoning Chief, who noted that they continue to monitor all permits for compliance with the flood program regulations for new construction as well as substantial improvements to properties located in the flood plain. He also reviewed the updated provisions of the regulations as well as the various flood zones. Chief Harding noted that in 2023 the program was amended and reviewed the new maps and flood zones. He also noted FEMA and MDE completed its review of the program and MDE also completed its community assistant visits. Chief Harding noted the number of permits that have been reviewed over the past year. He also reviewed the Nuisance Flooding Plan, the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Floodplain Workshops that were done.

Councilwoman Culberson inquired how the Nuisance Flooding Plan worked and Chief Harding reviewed how nuisance flooding properties were identified. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the municipalities were included in the plan and Director O'Connor noted that the municipalities participated and adopted the plan. Vice President Meffley inquired as to how does a constituent participate in the grants for raising property out of the flood zone and Chief Harding noted they should contact the Planning and Zoning Division to discuss. Vice President Meffley also inquired on the bulkheading of property and Chief Harding noted this request would go to MDE but is generally not permitted. Councilman Miller inquired on the rating scale and how that helps with insurance and Chief Harding noted we went from a 7 to a 6 which is an improvement and lower the rates. Chief Harding also noted that a 1 is the best a community can achieve but does not believe any community has this rating in America.

c. Monthly Review of County Contacts (Section 516)

Director of Finance Shon McCollum reviewed the contracts over \$100,000 for January and February. Director McCollum noted that two contracts in January were for Public Works, one for Deaver Road repair and one for the Washington Street sewage break. Director McCollum noted three contracts over \$100,000 were awarded in February, one for the EMS Station 2 engineering, one for the Landfill Gas Study and one for the Public Safety Gun Range. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the gun range and EMS station were still scheduled to be built on the land purchased in North East on Route 40 and Director McCollum noted that they were. Councilman Miller inquired if the ARPA funds were being used for that project and Director McCollum noted that they are being used. Vice President Meffley inquired if the gas study at the landfill was to find a reuse of the gas generated and Director Steven Overbay noted this was to study the feasibility and market for the

gas. Councilman Miller noted it would be good to find a market for the gas and Director McCollum noted that would be the second phase of the study.

Legislative Update

President Gregory noted that MACo had its wrap up Legislative Meeting on March 20 and that they would be testifying on bills that crossed over from each body. She noted that MACo is concerned on the future solar regulations removing local zoning authority, the decrease in Highway User Revenue and the decline in state taxes. She also reviewed the status of several pieces of legislation including HB1336/SB1077 - Public Schools - Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures - School Security Employees that did not cross over, HB1390 - Public Schools - Public School Construction - Funding and Administration, which did move to the Senate, HB1426/SB1102 Education - Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Alterations that also crossed over. Vice President Meffley noted this bill would also help MRDC. President Gregory also noted HB0576/SB0453 - Mental Health - Emergency Evaluation and Involuntary Admission Procedures and Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs did crossover and HB0002/SB0138 - Property Taxes - Authority of Counties to Establish a Subclass and Set a Special Rate for Vacant and Abandoned Property was moving through both Chambers. Councilwoman Culberson noted HB0558 - Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework – Established did cross over and encouraged everybody who opposes this bill to notify the Senate. Vice President Meffley noted that HB0725/SB0317 - Oysters, Striped Bass, and Crabs - Commercial Authorizations - Suspensions and Revocations did not pass either Chamber.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He also noted the Council Budget Meetings will begin on April 2.

Council Member Items

Vice President Meffley inquired if the Finance Department could provide an update on the last bond sale and projects funded during his budget presentation or at a future Work Session and Director Shon McCollum noted he already provided that information prior to the bond sale and it was not be necessary to provide again during the budget sessions. Vice President Meffley again inquired if it could be discussed and reflected in this year budget presentation and Director McCollum noted that it was not part of the FY25 budget. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if the bond sale could be discussed as part of the CIP Budget with Public Works. Vice President Meffley noted that the bond sale results should be noted, and President Gregory noted that the expenditures of the funds should be noted. Councilman Miller inquired when did the County sell the bonds and why was Council not notified and Director McCollum noted that he has no obligation to notify Council of the bond sale. Director Steve Overbay noted he would get the information for Council.

Vice President Meffley noted he attended the Farm Bureau banquet on March 23. He also attended the ribbon cutting at Hart Printing and they do custom printing on cans. He also noted he attended the Department of Social Services Meeting. He also attended the ribbon cutting at Prime Sports at the Big Elk Mall on March 22. He also attended the tour of the former colored school and Elkton Community Center tour with Governor Wes Moore on March 22.

Councilman Miller noted he attended the Farm Bureau banquet on March 23 and congratulated Chris Hahn of Greenfield Farm for being named Outstanding Farm Operation of the Year.

Councilwoman Culberson noted she attended the Perryville Fire Company 100th Anniversary Banquet along with President Gregory and County Executive Hornberger.

Councilwoman Hamilton noted on March 19 she attended the Parks and Recreation Meeting and that they have over 40 programs and over 1,000 participants this spring. She also noted the Health Department outreach meeting in Elkton will be on March 27 and WILMAPCO will be holding a local circulation plan on this date also the Elkton library. She also wished everybody a Good Friday and Happy Easter.

President Gregory noted she attended the CHEP Meeting on March 21 and noted the great work they do with veterans. She also visited with Governor Moore at Elkton Community Center, Judy Center and Voices of Hope on March 22. She was also at the Maryland National Guard Bravo Company welcome home with Governor Moore on March 23. She noted she attended the Farm Bureau Banquet and the Perryville Fire Company 100th Anniversary Banquet on March 23. She also attended the CASA vigil on March 23 for Kyleigh Nicole Treadway who tragically died in a house fire on December 25.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice President Meffley. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 5:07 pm.

Next County Council Work Session - TBD

A Council Budget Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 4:30 PM in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton, MD 21921.

Public Hearing on FY 2025 County Budget is scheduled for Thursday, May 23, 2024 in the Elk Room of the County Administrative Building, Elk Room, 200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Elkton, MD. 21921

Approved:


Jackie Gregory, Council President


David M. Culver
Council Manager