Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman James L. Furstenberg
Councilman Brian R. Lepley

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

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WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
Tuesday, October 7, 2025; 5:00 pm

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members: Richard J. "Rock" Cioni, Eugene Frazier, James Furstenberg, Brian Lepley.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Shannon Berry, Assistant to the City Clerk; Rich Reinhardt, Percy Public Affairs; Acting Chief Lieutenant Bonner; James Pyles, Chief of Police Candidate and Chief Adams

Media: Hannah Fout, WCBC, and Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times News

I. PRESENTATION FROM RICH REINHARDT WITH PERCY PUBLIC AFFAIRS (VIA ZOOM AT 5:00)

Rich began the discussion by updating on the budget and border estimate revenues, as well as the federal shutdown and its impact on the state of Maryland.

Board of Revenue Estimates (BRE) met on September 25, 2025, and approved the General Fund revenue of $26.67 billion for FY26, a 3.6% increase from FY25. Going into FY27, estimates are projected to be around $27.13 billion, representing

1.7% growth from FY26, which is a decline compared to the 4.1% growth seen during FY24-25.
Revenue sources contributing to this decline include the following data points presented at the board meeting:

1. Personal Income Tax: FY25 Maryland finished with $264 million above the estimate, a 7% gain. Unfortunately, the growth reduced to 5.3% in FY26 and continued to decline to the current 2.2% in FY27 in terms of wage growth. The first wave of federal job cuts led to a reduction in overall growth for Maryland.
2. Corporate Income Tax: Maryland experienced a $47 million decline for FY25, and prospects for the current fiscal year remain bleak. Collection drops are projected to reach $147 billion, a decrease of 4.5%. Further revenue declines of 2.4% are forecasted for FY27.

   Maryland is not typically known as a business-friendly state, but it is recognized as a state with a strong presence of medical institutions, federal employees, and higher education institutions.

3. Sales and Use Tax saw an increase in FY25 of $72 Million, 2.6% but a concerning reduction of nearly $35 Million is expected by the end of FY26.

   Revenues are falling short of the projections needed for a stable economy and a balanced budget that does not rely on additional revenue. The Department of Legislative Services was projecting deficits beginning FY27, which are expected to grow by nearly $3.6 billion by FY30. The Budget Reconciliation Financing Act (BRFA) is expected to raise about $1.3 billion per year starting in FY27; however, declining income and corporate revenues will offset any gains from the new fees and tax increases.

Based on the revenue outlooks for Maryland, some of the bills that were nixed may be coming back on the table in January. Another conversation from BRE was because of the federal passage of the bill reshaping personal and corporate tax flows, Maryland will continue to struggle maintaining positive gain on revenue already obtained. It is estimated that Maryland could loose $700K per day due to government shut down. More than 15K federal jobs have been lost since January. The labor market has slowly declined and is expected to weaken in 2026.

At a County level that could mean less state support. The outlook for MD combined with situation in DC is not looking good.

The guidelines the department of budget management have shared the last two years have been very clear cut on what they need to see for a state partnership. Project has to be shovel ready, have substantial investments outside of the state in order for the state to justify investing money.

II. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Silka provided an update on the second organized activity along the Virginia Avenue Corridor of Opportunity, which involved a walk with residents and business owners. The next step will be a seminar about the façade grant, scheduled for October 22, 2025, with the location to be confirmed. To ensure the process moves forward quickly, the initial focus will be on storefronts and small shops before expanding into neighborhoods. We are fortunate to have stakeholder support that we do not want to lose.

Halfway through the Citizens Local Government Academy (CLGA), the last class is held on October 30, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Taylor Layton distributed a handout and explained Order 27,866, adopting the Brand Guide. To revamp our website and social media, a brand guide has been created to show how we want to present ourselves to the community. The guide references our Mission, what we are “selling” to the community, and includes communication that is easy to understand with no complicated jargon.

III. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF OCTOBER 7, 2025

Mr. Silka updated of a few items on the agenda for review:

- Order #4 refers to a $600K study funded by an ARC grant and the Canal Place authority requesting $100K to cover the cost.
- Order #12 refers to police incentives for new hires
- Order #17 Walnut Island is near Clement St. and the Wiley Ford bridge

IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

- The Great Allegany Run took place this past weekend
- Leadership Rising this coming Thursday
- Halloween is coming in the park as well as the parade
- MML fall conference will be held at the Wisp next week

- Mr. Silka is hosting a visit with the City of Brunswick on Friday

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on October 21, 2025