



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

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
Tuesday, May 6, 2025; 4:30 pm

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Shannon Berry, Assistant to City Clerk; Chief Ternent; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Chief Adams, Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services;

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

I. FOLLOW-UP PRESENTATION ON THE FY26 BUDGET

Ken Tressler updated changes made to the budget since the last presentation that amounted to a decrease in General Funds surplus from \$460 to \$405K. With over 800-line items in the General Fund Balance it is not unusual to see changes in short periods of time

Budget Highlights for FY26:

- Water rate increase of 20% and trash 73%, no sewer or property tax increase at this time.
- MPA increase of \$289K, and \$19.6 of 19.5 million has been spent in ARPA Funds.

Personnel Costs for FY26:

- COLA increase of 3%, health insurance increase of 9.6%.
- Three new positions added and there are currently nine vacant positions.

Capital Equipment:

- New Fire Truck that was budgeted in FY25 and a new Street Sweeper.
- For the Water and Sewer fund, significant projects include a \$45 million WFP upgrade and \$91 million in sewer projects forecasted between now and 2030, grants are secured to fund these projects but still leaves a debt of \$41 million.

Governmental/Non-Major Governmental Funds FY26:

- Unassigned Surplus balance is \$405K.
- Property tax revenue of \$700K and a \$400K decrease in interest, as ARPA funds are spent, less interest is earned.
- CDBG expenditures of \$782K.
- Police grants and various equipment, roofing and façade projects.
- Street improvements totaling \$1.2 million.

General Fund FY26:

- The Fund balance will be \$10 million leaving a cushion of \$2.5 million which will increase the bond rating from A+ to AA-
- Assigned Fund Balance is sitting at \$3.5 million.
- The forecast shows a balance of over 25% from 2026-2030.
- Payment in lieu of taxes for FY26 is \$2.6 million, if all projects are completed that amount will increase to almost \$5 million.

Proprietary Funds FY26:

- Rate increases will leave the sewer fund with a negative balance
- Water funds maintain \$2.5 million

- Trash fund balance will increase with the contract bid a 3% increase could be expected in FY27/28
- Water rate increases of 20%, average out to around \$5 monthly to city customers, using 3K gallons monthly. Trash increases will be \$10/monthly.

Rate Comparisons (Water):

- A significant increase in interest and principal will take place if grants are not secured. Increases in principle will go from \$1.5 million to over \$3 million and interest payments from \$364K to \$2.8 million.
- \$91 million of sewer projects in 5 years is significant. One project that was initially going to be \$50 million with 87.5% of state funding is now looking at \$65 million due to lack of increased funding from the State of MD.
- MPA will pay off some debt and the general fund assistance will decline. In FY30 a decrease from \$289K to \$158K is expected.

II. REVIEW OF POTENTIAL CITY SEAL DESIGNS

Mr. Silka began the discussion of redesign of the City logo and spoke of an artist that piqued his interest on a design he did for the CBIZ building. A small committee from the City engaged Brent Nelson to discuss renderings for a new design. The design will feature the church steeples as a focal point and tell the story of Cumberland. It should also be scalable and visually appealing when displayed on a pin. Mr. Silka shared three greyscale designs from Brent with the Council members. A consensus on a logo was reached, and the design will be colorized for review in about two weeks.

III. DISCUSSION ON AN ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

Mr. Silka has brought to attention an issue regarding the sourcing of live Christmas trees. The recommendation is purchasing an artificial pre-lit tree instead. The tree should be between 25 and 30 feet in height and would cost approximately \$30,000. One important consideration behind this recommendation is the safety of tree removal. Last year, wet conditions posed challenges in getting the necessary equipment ready for the removal process. All Councilmembers agreed to look in to the purchase.

IV. UPDATE ON CITY-WIDE CLEAN UP DAY

City spring clean-up day is scheduled for May 10, 2025 from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM. There will be three neighborhood dumpsters at Braddock Middle School, Constitution Park (Long field), and the parking lot of Tilghman & School Streets. Volunteers will be needed for roadside clean-up, QR codes are available on the website for registration.

V. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Mr. Silka updated Council of the addition of City Administrator updates at meetings for matters not relating to the Agenda.

VI. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF MAY 6, 2025

Mr. Silka reviewed the Orders on the Agenda:

Order 27,704 is for extending the current tolling agreement with CSX to pause time for court filings.

Order 27,708 the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing is the 3rd presentation from Ochoa Urban Collaborative.

Councilman Cioni inquired about Order 27,705. Mr. Silka explained that it involves residents who complete renovations within the HPC guidelines to receive a tax credit.

Order 27,716 regarding electricity bids, prices are only valid for the day they are released. As the price is expected to rise by 3-6% from current rates, this will allow Mr. Silka to evaluate the rate and lock in a price.

Order 27,714 was factored in to the project.

VII. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

- The events committee met and discussed the Memorial Day Parade, Pride Festival, Plein Air event, Hog Raley and the Car show
- Day of Sharing and Caring is May 16, 2025
- Parks and Recreational Board discussed Pickleball, concerts in the park will start soon. The camera system is approved and in progress. Trails are completed and more signs are being installed. Work at Cavanaugh field continues as well as the Skatepark. New roofs will be installed on the Pavilions and Gazebos in the next budget. The pool will be open Memorial Day weekend.
- The NAACP will be hosting a celebration on Pine Ave on May 26, 2025
- The ENOUGH project was held Friday at the Mason Sports complex and Saturday at Smith Park. A program sponsored by Governor Moore to end childhood poverty.
- Roget Lantz day was held Saturday and was well attended. A card with over 400 signatures along with a Proclamation and a citation from the Governor was presented to Roger.
- The Allegany and Garrett Titles ribbon cutting will take place this Thursday at 10:00 AM, at 164 Baltimore Street.
- Mayor Morriss mentioned that residents would like to see the tennis courts at the Mason Sports Complex be used for Pickleball. Councilman Cioni advised that is being looked in to. Also, citizen concerns were noted of the cracks on the tennis courts in the park.
- This week is National Municipal Clerks Week and we are all appreciative for everything Allison Layton does for the City.
- This week is also National Teachers Week and have much appreciation for what they do for our children.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on May 20, 2025

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Closed Session Minutes

City Hall, 57 N. Liberty Street, Cumberland, MD 21502

2nd Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, May 6, 2025; 4:00 p.m.

On May 6, 2025, The Mayor and City Council of Cumberland will meet in public session beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of City Hall on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to discuss matters relating to employee compensation and to receive an update on Police Collective Bargaining. Authority to close the session is provided by Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i) and (9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

MOTION: Motion to enter into Closed Session was made by Council Member Furstenberg seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

PRESENT: Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members Richard Cioni, Jimmy Furstenberg, Eugene Frazier and Brian Lepley

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Shannon Berry, Assistant to the City Clerk; City Solicitor, Michael Cohen;