



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, April 15, 2025; 4:45 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, Mark Gandolfi, Comptroller; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Melinda Kelleher, Executive Director of the DDC; Brooke Cassell, Director of Public Works; Devin Burke, Superintendent of Streets; Eric Bonner, Police Lieutenant; Chris Ratliff, Fire Marshall

Media: Kathy Cornwell, WCBC and Theresa McMinn, Cumberland Times News

Public: Chris Meyers, Tim Iman

I. DISCUSSION ON SPECIAL EVENT REQUESTS FOR BALTIMORE STREET

Mr. Silka noted during staff meetings that guidelines were needed for closing Baltimore Street for special events. Those responsible for reviewing event permits were present. Currently, when a permit application is received, its impact on each department is assessed in an event meeting.

The Downtown Development Commission (DDC) represents the local business community and organizes events within the special taxing district, which are then presented to the Events Committee. Although the number of events in Downtown continues to grow, staff resources have not increased, making it difficult to manage overtime for these events. While the Police Department can cover overtime hours, the Public Works Department is only available to provide support in emergencies.

For the \$150 permit, eight hours of overtime are included, and any additional time will incur extra charges to the applicant. When approving permits, several logistics are considered, including the type of event and whether a street closure is necessary. The permit ordinance outlines ten requirements that must be met when submitting a permit application. These requirements assist city staff in identifying

Melinda Kelleher provided an update on several upcoming events. The "Friday After Five" event is scheduled for June, the Tree Lighting, and the Winter Festival. These events will necessitate street closures. Although there are many volunteers available, assistance from the Street Department will still be required for these events, which are funded by the Special Taxing District.

Mike Cohen stated that if an event is hosted by the DDC or the City on a day when they are already closed, it creates a situation where City staff is needed. This is different from events that the DDC or the City does not sponsor.

Mr. Silka suggested a proposed policy with the ideas discussed, all Councilmembers agreed.

II. INITIAL FY26 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mark Gandolfi introduced himself and distributed the FY26 Budget Presentation. He began by noting that the value of homes is improving, and this is the fourth year in a row that the assessable property tax base has increased. A \$710K increase is recommended to keep the current amount and yield a \$460K unassigned balance. A 20% water/utility rate increase and a 73% trash rate increase are also recommended.

The MPA still requires \$280K in general fund assistance, but will decrease in FY28 when a note is satisfied. For FY26, there are no allocated ARPA funds; \$19.5 million of \$ 19.6 million has been spent, leaving a balance of \$144K to spend before 12/31/26.

Personnel Costs FY26:

- A Cost-of-Living increase of 3% is recommended due to the 2.8% increase in inflation.
- Health Insurance increase to \$5.1 Million
- Three new positions have been added that include an HR Associate, a Community Revitalization Manager, and a Public Relations Associate
- Part-time staffing increase of 1,948 hours

Capital Equipment Costs FY26:

- The new Fire truck from FY25 is expected to arrive next year, and five additional replacement vehicles are included for the Police Department
- A new slide for the Constitution Park pool is included, and a new street sweeper for the Street Department

Capital Expenditures; Ongoing Projects:

- Cumberland Street Bridge is anticipating \$5 million in progress
- Paving projects – significant ones are in process, and Fayette Street, Cumberland Street Bridge, and Washington Street Bridge to follow
- HVAC for the Public Safety Building will need replacement in the next five years.
- The New Filter building has \$3 million allotted for replacements
- Shades Lane water line replacement

- Future replacements include Polk Street to Piedmont Avenue, and Braddock Road
- The completion of Evitts Creek Phase IV is to be expected
- Future projects include the Dingle, West Side storm improvement

City Debt Service Requirements:

- Total for FY26 is \$7.2 Million, comparable to \$7 Million for FY25, and expected debt is manageable
- Trends for FY26-34 show that we are managing the debt

Proprietary Funds FY26:

- With no rate increases in the Water fund, a reduction of \$1.7 million would leave a balance of \$778K, one month of cash flow.
- The Sewer Department has a surplus of \$12.6 million in cash, so no increase is needed
- Trash is down \$1 Million and will use \$1.3 Million, leaving a negative balance
- A 20% rate increase for the Water Fund would allow maintaining three months of cash reserves. The recommendation is to increase by a minimum of 20%, which will keep funding stable, and projections for FY27 show an 18% increase.
- A 73% increase for the Trash fund maintains over one month of cash flow, with no employees affected by the trash funds and very minimal expenses, which amount is acceptable. No anticipated trash increases until possibly FY28

Rate Comparisons for Water:

- The current water rate per household is \$25.38; a 20% increase would amount to an average of \$5.07 for an average total of \$30.45. Compared to surrounding areas at that rate, Frostburg is currently at \$27, LaVale is \$29, and Allegany County is in the \$50 range. Losing AES last year dramatically affected the increase.

Rate Comparisons for Trash:

- The current rate is \$16.50; a proposed increase of 73% will raise the average to \$28.55 and cover the new contract. Surrounding area comparisons show that Frostburg will go to \$18, Allegany County uses Burgemier at \$31, Knobley Mountain Hauling at \$29, and Waste Management at \$23 plus a \$12 setup fee. These comparisons show that our rates reflect the market.

Governmental Funds FY26

- \$460K deficit allows for continued operations
- Policy grants, Central Avenue Legacy Project, Choose Cumberland Relocation, Façade improvements
- Finishing Baltimore Street, continued progress on the Fayette Street Bridge
- Cumberland Street Bridge is expected to begin and make significant progress
- The Skatepark is on track to finish in 2026
- Engineering has assigned \$400K to the Rolling Mill pedestrian and pavement markings that include traffic lights and pedestrian modifications for increased traffic
- Paving for several City streets, including Shades Lane, Maryland Ave, Cecelia Street, and Wempe Drive, are among several to be completed.

For FY25, a \$212K unassigned surplus was budgeted and is currently trending with a \$603K surplus. FY26 shows \$29 million in revenue. Hotel/Motel tax is generating about \$453K annually from area events. ARPA allowed us to exceed a General Fund balance of 25% by \$2.7 million going into FY26.

III. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF APRIL 15, 2025

Mr. Silka reviewed the agenda and advised that Order 27,703 would be removed until we are prepared to accept the donation.

Order 27,702 refers to a three-year contract for bulk trash removal.

Order 27,699 refers to bids from two companies for City paving projects for \$150K

Two orders are awaiting building permit fees

Ordinance 4008 refers to timelines and expectations for a new business.

IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

The Director of Public Works, Brooke Cassell and Street Superintendent Devin Burke did a great job with the Queen City clean-up project.

The Fair Housing event will be held at Allegany College on April 22, 2025, from 9:00 AM- 2:00 PM, registration deadline is April 18, 2025. Last year, \$40K was raised, and this year's goal is \$50K.

The groundbreaking at Chipotle took place last week. The Chefs of Steel competition between Allegany College and the Western Maryland Food Bank was held at the Culinaire Café.

May 16, 2025, is the Day of Sharing and Caring.

The Greater Cumberland Committee received a positive review from Northrop Grumman for their work with colleges for workforce development.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on May 6, 2025

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Closed Session Minutes

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

2nd Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, April 15, 2025; 4:00 p.m.

On April 15, 2025, the Mayor and City Council met in public session beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of City Hall, for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to discuss matters relating to departmental reorganization and employee compensation. Authority to close the session is provided by Section 3-305(b)(1)(i) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Persons in attendance included Mayor Raymond Morriss;

MOTION: Motion to enter into Closed Session was made by Council Member Frazier 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;