



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, February 17, 2026; 5:00 pm

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Chief Adams; and Mark Gandolfi; Comptroller.

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

I. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (VIA ZOOM WITH JAMIE KENDRICK OF WOODVALLEY STRATEGIES)

Mr. Silka advised that the update is for the Mayor and City Council, and the public hearing will be held at the Planning Commission meeting on February 26, 2026.

Jamie initiated the discussion with a presentation, noting that the State requires a plan every ten years. Staff interviews for data collection and a review of the previous plan were conducted, along with a neighborhood analysis.

Accomplishments since 2013 include:

- Water and Sewer upgrades
- Various infrastructure upgrades
- Reopening of the Baltimore Street bridge
- 40 acres of green space on Messick Rd and MD 51
- More than 100 blighted properties demolished
- Home development at the former Allegany High School

Citywide Key Projects require partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels, and over the next two decades, 10 projects could define Cumberland's economy. Those projects include:

- Reconstruction of the I-68 Viaduct
- Rolling Mill
- Village Crossing at Campobello
- Messick Road Infrastructure Are
- Redevelopment of Memorial Hospital Site
- Virginia Avenue Main Street

A comprehensive approach to address housing needs would include code enforcement, acquire blighted properties, and offer tax incentives. Issues that still need to be addressed are supportive services for low-income and/or homeless individuals, aging housing stock, and a lack of new market-rate houses being produced, an issue that will deter growing families and contribute to long-term growth.

The City's Role in Future Housing & Development include outsource housing, re-establish the Cumberland Housing Alliance, and empower non-profit organizations. (*See Handout for Areas of Opportunity*)

The 2024 Historic Preservation Plan is a tool for leveraging preservation in Cumberland through the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings to create attainable housing, promote tourism, protect resources, and maintain character. (*See Handout for Areas of Opportunity*)

Jamie reviewed the sectors of Cumberland and pointed out areas of opportunities and needs for the area. (*See handout for areas of Opportunity*)

The southeast sector of Cumberland includes a diverse mix of residential, commercial, and industrial spaces bound by Industrial Blvd., Williams Street, and Oldtown Road. In 2022, the Messick Road Industrial Area was developed to generate interest in development. A recently vacated Big Lots facility creates an opportunity for residential redevelopment.

The Northeast sector is centered around Willowbrook Road and Williams Street, with a southern border along I-68 and the eastern portions, including Decatur Heights and Baltimore Avenue.

Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Public Services Areas of opportunity include:

- Roads and bridges
- Wastewater
- Stormwater Management and Flood Control
- Police & Fire Emergency Services
- Schools & Libraries

II. PRESENTATION OF THE FY25 AUDIT RESULTS

Mark Gandolfi distributed the FY25 Audit results and noted that there were no findings or deficiencies. In January, the bond rating was reaffirmed to AA- the highest in over 20 years. The report shows fixed ratings over the past 20 years.

The General Fund unassigned balance exceeds the 25% goal for expenditures at 32%. In 2021, we had \$3.2M in ARPA funds upon receipt, and by the end of FY25, \$9.6M will be available.

Debt declined by \$0.5M to end FY25, but the goal is to reduce it further. All ARPA funds were expended, \$19.6M was received, and over \$1,040,788,000 in

interest was earned on those funds. The detailed report lists investments and completed projects funded by those funds (see handout).

Sewer and cash funds remained stable; cash declined due to the AES closure. It is anticipated that, in 2026, the DDC would not require General Fund Assistance.

III. UPDATES FROM THE FIRE CHIEF ON THE SWITCH FROM NFRIS TO NERIS FOR FIRE REPORTING

Chief Adams advised that the Federal Government implement the NEFRS (National Emergency Response Information System). The new system codes incidents differently from the old system in use. He reviewed a few examples and explained how they are now coded. A detailed report can be provided and broken down into categories if needed.

IV. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Silka advised that new City logos will be updated based on budget funds, and that all logos throughout the City should be converted by next year.

Interviews continue for the Historic Planner position. The position has been released on new platforms.

V. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 17, 2026

Mr. Silka referred to Order No. 1, which outlines concrete spending with specific vendors. Due to fluctuating prices, the order needs to be modified to reflect current prices.

VI. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Mayor Morriss attended the District 1 & 2 Consolidated Meeting in Annapolis and spoke with the Chairman of the budget subcommittee.

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton

City Clerk

Minutes approved on March 3, 2026



Closed Session Minutes

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

2nd Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, February 17, 2026; 4:00 p.m.

On February 17, 2026, 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 A) discuss personnel matters relating to the recruitment of the Fire Chief position; B) discuss the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition; C) to seek advice from the City Solicitor regarding the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the Mayor and City Council of Cumberland and to discuss potential changes to their terms; and D) discuss a settlement prior to potential litigation pertaining to a dispute over the amounts owed for utilities from a particular customer. Authority to close the session is provided by Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i), (b)(3), (b)(7) and (b)(8) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

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

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison K. Layton; City Clerk; and Michael Cohen; Solicitor; Ken Tressler; Director of Administrative Services