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, September 16, 2025; 4:30 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; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Shannon Berry, Assistant to the City Clerk; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Acting Chief Lieutenant Bonner; Robert Smith, Director of Engineering

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

Public: Frank Asher and Kit Pepper Lescalette

I. DISCUSSION ON ORDINANCE 4019

Councilman Furstenberg and Frazier read the proposed language to revise the current language in Ordinance 4019. All agreed with the language in Councilman Frazier's proposal.

Councilman Frazier voiced a concern with the City Administrator approving events and feels the decision should be made with a committee of five or more persons. Mayor Morriss advised that, due to the appeals process incorporated in the Ordinance, the need for such a committee would be eliminated.

The events committee considers the logistical elements, such as the impact on city resources. Although insurance is not an option to be waived, any fees involved with an event that the applicant would like waived can be brought to the attention of the Mayor and City Council. The City Administrator does not deny events and operates within the scope of the Ordinance already set in place.

A discussion ensued regarding various events and their associated aspects.

II. DISCUSSION ON THE CENTRICA AGREEMENT

Robert Smith advised of a project that would create energy savings, and the savings would be used to fund other projects that may have been unaffordable. At the WWTP, a switchgear is in need of replacement as it has reached the end of its useful life and is unable to power the plant.

In an effort to offset the investment, Centrica would install solar panels on two acres of the old baseball field behind the plant. The total wattage the panels will create is 35% of the energy needs at the plant. The agreement would be for 15 years and would include a performance guarantee that outlines the expected energy savings the panels will provide. If Centrica fails to meet this number, it will issue a check to the City for the difference.

The upfront cost is $1M, but it will offset a $1M savings after 25 years, therefore hedging future energy increases. It is expected that the panels will degrade at .5% a year and should reach 25-30 years of expectancy. Depending on the success of this project can determine the use for future projects.

III. ARC MATCH FOR SPORTS COMPLEX FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mr. Silka spoke of a conversation regarding a sports facility in the city and updated that the CEDC has aligned some vendors to conduct a feasibility study to consider the impact, the number of standalone facilities, restaurants, and the region as a whole. The study would tell us what size of a facility the area could support.

A grant application has been submitted through ARC for this study, and the estimated cost will be approximately $ 90,000. ARC will cover 70% of the cost, and the City will cover the remaining 30%, resulting in a total cost to the City of around $ 27,000. To move forward, ARC would like to see the commitment from the City to agree to the funds by approval from the Mayor and City Council.

IV. DISCUSSION ON A POLICE HIRING INCENTIVE

Mr. Silka updated that he is working on an order from 2022 to make modifications to the language. The following are areas of interest and include modifications:

1. In addition to officers receiving a 100% tax credit, upon the end of employment for the officer, the tax credit would be prorated for the entire months they resided in the city for that year.
2. Newly hired certified officers would receive a $15K bonus, distributed in three $5K increments.
3. Academy incentives for completing training.

Eric Bonner noted that funds for hiring police officers come from PRAR grants, and the city does match as well.

V. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Silka updated the Corridor of Opportunity, which took place the previous week, with about 35 in attendance and great feedback. A walking tour will take place the following week.

Councilmembers discussed the project and the impact it would have on the community.

VI. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

Mr. Silka updated on a few new orders:

- Order #5 authorizes the naming opportunities on Baltimore Street
  Councilman Cioni inquired about naming opportunities at the park.
- Order #8 is to improve the traffic flow for Ascension Street.
- Order #12 is receiving grant funds for the Main Street program for staff funding and marketing.
- Order #10 is accepting the agreement with Centrica for the installation of solar panels.

VII. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

- Heritage Days and the Whiskey Rebellion began on Friday, drawing great attendance. Railfest and the car show also had a fantastic turnout. The LaVale Lions Club sold out, ending another successful event.
- Councilman Cioni provided a handout for Park and Recreation updates.
- Progress has continued on the skatepark.
- The YMCA Dragonboat race is this weekend at Rocky Gap.
- MML Fall Conference.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton_____
City Clerk

Minutes approved on_____

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Closed Session Minutes

City Hall, 57 N. Liberty Street, Cumberland, MD 21502
2nd Floor Conference Room
Tuesday, September 16, 2025; 4:30 p.m.

On September 16, 2025, the Mayor and City Council met in public session beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of City Hall for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to discuss personnel matters in regard to the recruitment of a Chief of Police, and to consult with staff and also obtain legal advice about threatened litigation regarding water service provided to certain outside-City water customers. Authority to close the session is provided by Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i), (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 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; Allison K. Layton; City Clerk; Shannon Berry; Assistant to the City Clerk; and City Solicitor, Michael Cohen;