



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, November 4, 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; Robert Smith, City Engineer; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; and Kevin Thacker, Code Compliance Manager.

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

I. DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATIONS

Mr. Silka opened the meeting and turned the discussion over to Robert Smith, Director of Engineering and Utilities.

Robert began the discussion by describing the final phase of the wastewater treatment operation which is the biosolids handling process which is currently pelletized through the heat drying facility. Since 2010 we have been contracted with NEFCO to process and dispose of the biosolids. An extension was granted in September for nine months of operation and that will expire on June 30, 2026

A study and a competitive bid process were conducted to determine the market for processing biosolids the figures he presented includes a third-party operator in the Biogas industry that would be locating in the Mexico Farms in the near future. The Biogas company could accept the City's biosolids at a cost lower than processing it via heating and drying. Currently this is preliminary and would not take place for another 18-24 months.

To operate efficiently we want to be in the \$700-800 per dry ton as other similar sized municipalities in our region, opposed to the current amount of \$1,000 per dry ton. NEFCO has a set fee for processing a specific amount of sludge per month, that fee also increases each year with the CPI

The suggested proposal would allow the operating company to provide their own crew with the expectation that the third party could bring the cost down to \$600-700 per dry ton, a \$3.5M savings over a five-year period of time. Our proposal would include operating with fewer operators than the current operator proposes.

The contract outlines a transition period for NEFCO to provide access to the facility for the next operator, and to provide the facility's standard operating procedures (SOP's). If we choose to self-operate, we would expect to operate the heat drying facility three to four days a week, where NEFCO was operating as they see fit which at times was seven days a week.

In the future we are looking at significant Wastewater projects so it is imperative to save money where we can at this time. Due to the age of the equipment, the new contract states that we would be responsible to pay for Capital Improvements after \$25,000.

Council agreed to modifying the budget and the addition of staff if the department is confident the \$700-800 per dry ton is achievable.

II. PRESENTATION FROM CODE ENFORCEMENT ON ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

Kevin Thacker explained that Community Development is looking to streamline the current nuisance abatement process. The current process takes 3-4 months to complete. After working with other municipalities, we are proposing to adopt the processes in place in Hagerstown and Frederick. Their process begins with an abatement and then leads to a citation, with no legal issues. The property owner is given seven days to comply; if compliance is not satisfied, a crew is sent to the property. Their tier for notices is 7-5-1, file the billing, and set the fine.

Kevin noted that our current code does not require a citation before abatement, and he believes we can move forward without changing the Ordinance. The proposed process would go as follows:

- Initial inspection
- Post the property
- Reinspection after 7 days
- Schedule abatement with third party
- Bill, the property owner

If the fine is not satisfied, it would then be applied to their water bill without disrupting service. Adding the fee to the water bill makes the property owner aware of the fee each month and also makes an agent aware of the fine should ownership be transferred through a real estate transaction. Fines would be set at \$300/500/1,000 and could be put in place January 1, 2026. If approved, a consultation with contractors will determine the fees based on lot sizes. The new process will streamline operations and strengthen enforcement efficiency.

III. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Silka provided updates on projects and new developments:

- The Citizens Local Government Academy concluded last week, and positive feedback was received to help improve year three.
- The ribbon cutting for the Skatepark will be this Saturday at 11:00 AM with a presentation and events from the Skatepark group.
- A press release on Facebook from the Police Department about ParkMobile received negative feedback. He reiterated that, as previously stated, once the kiosks have reached the end of their usage, they will be replaced with the app, which is also used in surrounding areas, as it would cost \$8K for the replacement.
- New hardware and software for both parking garages will go live on December 1, 2025, offering updated payment options with two hours free. Due to construction of the Wills Hotel, the Frederick Street garage is currently sold out.

IV. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 4, 2025

Mr. Silka highlighted points of interest on the agenda:

- Order #4 refers to the sale of surplus vehicles and equipment for \$67K
- Order #5 refers to the renewal of our contract with Percy Public Affairs
- Order #6 refers to adopting the goals and SWOT analysis from the goal setting session
- Order #9 refers to approving the historic tax credit for CG Enterprises as discussed in closed session.

V. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

- ❖ Councilman Cioni provided an update on the loss of Amy Nazelrod and discussed an issue at Constitution Park involving a group of kids causing disruptions at the pool during summer. He suggested finding a way to address the problem before the next season.
- ❖ The finishing work on the fields at the Gene Mason Sports Complex is underway, and the concrete is being completed today at the Skatepark. On Saturday, from 10:00 to 12:00, the Friends of the Park will host a cleanup at Constitution Park.
- ❖ Friday November 7, 2025 Rural King will have their grand opening at 9:00 AM.
- ❖ The Emmanuel Episcopal church will host an appreciation event in honor of Veterans for their service on Tuesday at 6:00 PM
- ❖ The first and largest water project on Shades Lane has come to completion and we are very pleased with the results.
- ❖ For the 250th anniversary, we are looking to have a parade on June 27, 2026 due to a lot of events taking place already on July 4, 2026

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton

City Clerk

Minutes approved on November 18, 2025