



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 Scott Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

MINUTES

M&CC Regular Public Meeting
57 N. Liberty Street, Cumberland, MD 21502

DATE: November 18, 2025

I. OPEN SESSION – 6:15 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

PRESENT:

Council Member Richard J. "Rock Cioni"
Council Member Eugene T. Frazier
Council Member James L. Furstenberg, III
Council Member Brian R. Lepley
President Raymond M. Morriss

Also Present: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison K. Layton, City Clerk; Chief Pyles and Chief Adams;

IV. Statement of Closed Meeting

The Mayor and City Council of Cumberland met in public session beginning at 4:45 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of City Hall on Tuesday, November 18, 2025 for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to discuss board and commission appointments and to also receive legal advice regarding an agreement with TeaBow Residential, LLC. Authority to close the session is provided by Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i) and 3-305(b)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

V. Proclamations

1. Proclaiming Saturday, November 29, 2025 as Small Business Saturday in the City of Cumberland
Mayor Morriss read the proclamation into record and presented it to Becky McClarran, a photograph was taken with the Mayor and City Council Members
2. Proclaiming November 2025 to be Municipal Government Works Month

IV. Directors Reports

Motion to approve the reports was made by Council Member Cioni, seconded by Council Member Frazier, and was passed on a vote of 5-0

(A) Administrative Services

1. Administrative Services Monthly Report for October 2025

(B) Public Works

1. Maintenance Division Monthly Report for October 2025

(C) Fire Department

1. Fire Department Monthly Report for October 2025

(D) Police Department

1. Police Department Monthly Report for October 2025

(E) Utilities- Flood, Water, Sewer

1. Utilities Division Water/Sewer Monthly Report for October 2025

V. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Council Member Furstenberg, seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0

1. Approving the Open Work Session Minutes and Regular Session Minutes of November 4, 2025, and the Closed Session Minutes of November 5, 2025

VI. Public Comments for Agenda Items Only

All public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person

No public comments were received

VII. Unfinished Business

(A) Ordinances

1. Ordinance 4029 (*2nd and 3rd readings*) – authorizing the transfer of 454-456, 458-460, 462, 464, 470, 472, 474-476 and 478-480 Baltimore Avenue to Christiansen Properties LLC for the purchase price of \$400

SECOND READING: Motion to accept the second reading was made by Council Member Lepley, seconded by Council Member Furstenberg, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

Mayor Morriss called for questions or comments. Being none, the ordinance was moved to its third reading.

THIRD READING: The ordinance was submitted in title only for its third reading and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

2. Ordinance 4030 (*2nd and 3rd readings*) - authorizing the transfer of 114-116 Winton Place to Mardoce LLC for the purchase price of \$100

SECOND READING: Motion to accept the second reading was made by Council Member Cioni, seconded by Council Member Furstenberg, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

Mayor Morriss called for questions or comments. Being none, the ordinance was moved to its third reading.

THIRD READING: The ordinance was submitted in title only for its third reading and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

VIII.

A. Orders (Consent Agenda)

Mr. Silka reviewed each item on the Consent Agenda and Mayor Morriss called for questions or comments. **Motion** to approve each item was made by Council Member Lepley, seconded by Council Member Frazier, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

1. Order 27,894 - authorizing the execution of an Outdoor Dining/Outdoor Seating Lease Agreement with Corner Tavern and Cafe', Mise En Place, Ottaviani's Tasting Room, and Ristorante Ottaviani for the use of the public right of way immediately in front of and adjacent to the property for a term effective November 1, 2025 through October 31, 2026
2. Order 27,895 - accepting the proposal from Laurel Auto Group Inc. for one 2025 Ford Police Interceptor vehicle at a cost not to exceed \$45,290
3. Order 27,896 - approving the use of Construction Inspector Jim Wilson to provide onsite technical advice for the Evitts Creek Phase IV - Interceptor

Sewer (City Project 06-08-S) on a day to day basis at an hourly rate of \$40/hr for up to 1,250 hours, not to exceed \$50,000

4. Order 27,897 - authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Mayor and City Council of Cumberland and the Allegany County Board of Education, Maryland empowering the City, through the City of Cumberland Police Department, to remove disruptive individuals from Board buildings or grounds pursuant to Md. Code Educ. § 26-102(d)(2) when the Principal, Assistant Principal, School Security Employee or Superintendent are not present, effective January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026
5. Order 27,898 - authorizing the execution of a Technical Assistance Grant Program grant agreement with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regarding DHCD's provision of a total amount not to exceed \$20,000 in grant funds to the City to be used for a Real Estate Development Plan to help downtown Cumberland's Revitalization Strategy, and authorizing the City Comptroller to accept these funds
6. Order 27,899 - authorizing the City Administrator to sign and execute all Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Subrecipient Agreements by and between the Mayor and City Council and the Allegany Museum
7. Order 27,900 - awarding increments of the Choose Cumberland Relocation Package grant to both Kai Langlie and Jaroslav (Yadi) Candler in an amount not to exceed \$20,000 (City match \$10,000, Grant \$10,000) each, with the cumulative programmatic City amount not to exceed \$100,000, utilizing grant funds received from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

IX. Public Comments

Drew Knippenberg, a resident of Washington Street, remarked that with the revitalization of downtown, the Washington Street bridge closure seems like an afterthought. He inquired about the plan to fix the problem.

Mike Snow, a resident of Washington Street, commented on the closure and eyesore of the Washington Street bridge, as well as the navigation

issues it causes. He believes it has been neglected and wants to know why CSX has not addressed the problem.

Ally Litten, a resident of Washington Street, stated that she approached the Mayor and City Council in 2017 to ask about the bridge's closure. She believes that Washington Street is one of the highest taxed streets in the city and questioned the fairness to residents who cannot even drive on a section of the street that their taxes fund.

Ed Mullaney, who owns two properties on Washington Street, said that many residents on the West Side have been adjusting because the Washington Street bridge has been closed since 2012. The closure is due to CSX causing damage to it with double-stacked rail cars. He called Washington Street a treasure but now an eyesore, and he urged the city to find a way to fix the problem.

Christina Elson, a resident of Washington Street, expressed that she is proud to live in Cumberland. She hopes the turnout will demonstrate the community's support for the Municipal Government in finding a solution to the bridge closure issue. She asked who is responsible for finding that solution and how the community can help achieve the same goal.

William Malloy, a resident of Washington Street, reported that the bridge closure has caused detours on side streets not designed to handle the traffic volume. He asked for a specific date when a commitment can be made to resolve the problem.

Chris Stevens, a resident of Washington Street, is discouraged by the closure of the bridge, which has caused the street to fall into poor condition. He added that his house must adhere to Historic Preservation standards for renovations and believes the district should follow the same guidelines. He spoke about the town of Oakland and the solution they proposed to address the issue. We need to think outside the box and find a solution. He read a petition with over 1400 signatures expressing concern and a desire to fix the problem.

Brett Showalter, a resident of Washington Street, asked the Council what grade they would give the City for the lack of functioning bridges on the West Side and requested examples to support their assessment.

Laura McElhaney, moved to Washington Street during the pandemic. Having lived in various areas throughout the Country, she does not understand how a street that was damaged by a private entity has been closed since 2017 with no known intention to fix. She has requested to know if there is a plan to address it and what those steps look like.

Jake Shade, a resident of Washington Street, referenced Delegate Buckel's bill that has passed, which states that the City can declare the bridge a nuisance due to negligence caused by CSX. He believes that CSX gets an easy pass, and this bill could be the solution to fix the problem.

Dr. Gregg Wolf, a resident of Washington Street and owner of 8-10 Allegany Street, has invested a considerable amount of money into his property, which serves as a corner showpiece. Due to the bridge closure, traffic has increased, and he has observed numerous traffic violations, including at the stop sign where Allegany meets Washington Street. If there is no plan to address this issue, is there a plan to mitigate traffic? Has CSX considered moving the spur down to one track coming in from Westernport?

Leslie Taylor Nuemann, a resident of West Side for the past eight years, is concerned about emergency personnel reaching residents due to the bridge closure. She mentioned the Greene Street underpass, where tractor trailers are occasionally stuck, and trains at the Beall Street crossing. She inquired about what actions are being taken by the city to secure emergency routes for resident safety.

Ruth LaCourse, who has been a resident of Washington Street since 2020 and loves the neighborhood, noted an issue when her out-of-town parents come to visit and need guidance to her house due to the bridge closure.

Gary Lindner, a resident of Washington Street, spoke of two concerning issues. The first is vagrancy downtown, and the second is a solution to

repair the bridges on the West Side. He inquired about the ownership of the Washington Street bridge and whether there is an underlying problem the City faces with CSX.

Mayor Morriss thanked all attendees for taking the time to share their concerns. To comply with State and Federal regulations, it would take seven years to be able to build a new bridge after reaching an agreement with CSX. Once CSX granted access to the property, a bat study had to be conducted on the Cumberland Street bridge, which took 6-7 months to complete, and an additional 60 days to receive the report, indicating that construction could begin after July 31, 2026.

He went on to add that we can't build a bridge at Federal height, and Oakland has one track at Federal height and another that is not. Negotiations have taken place with CSX about the bridge, as well as other issues detrimental to the city. Because no declaration of ownership has been established, the only option at the moment is to remove the 300 block of Washington Street.

We have asked the Maryland Department of Transportation to reach out to the State Attorney's office to represent our case and were turned down. The Cumberland Street bridge construction should begin in August 2026, Fayette Street is still being negotiated, and CSX is being pressured by the State to raise the Greene Street underpass.

Offering a pedestrian bridge to go downtown that is ADA compliant, connecting with a sidewalk that is not ADA compliant, can quickly become a bureaucratic process.

Brian Plitnik, President of the Historic Dumbhundred Action Committee, is present representing the North End residents to address the condition of the guard rail on Henderson Avenue. He mentioned he is aware of a plan to fix the issue but inquired if there is anything that can be done until then with winter weather approaching.

Mike Cornelius, advised that last month he believes a homeless person broke into Parkview Liquors and attempted to break into several other dwellings on Greene Street. He noted they are gathering in various downtown locations and have their belongings scattered around. He also expressed concern about speeding on Greene Street and showed a picture he had of someone almost being hit.

Mayor Morriss and the Councilmembers advised Mike to provide Chief Pyles with all of this information so it can be addressed.

IX. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Minutes approved on December 2, 2025

Raymond M. Morriss, Mayor

ATTEST: Allison K. Layton, City Clerk