



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, March 18, 2025; 5:00 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; Chief Ternent; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor

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

I. PRESENTATION FROM RICH REINHARDT WITH PERCY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Rich Reinhardt greeted everyone in attendance and noted that the current session ends in 20 days, with a total of nearly 3,300 bills introduced. The Senate had 1400 bills introduced and the house had over 1900. Status updates on the bills for the City should be available soon showing what has passed, died, and what is still being monitored.

He went on to discuss the budget for 2025, identifying the primary issue as the ongoing contention with the Governor's administration and the Legislature. On March 4, 2025, Governor Moore released the FY26 supplemental budget, which included adjustments to proposed budgets based on updated projections. An additional \$300K was appropriated in FY25 and FY26

for DDA. Furthermore, \$37M was allocated to implement the Family Medical Leave Act within the Department of Labor, alongside \$9M set aside for an unexpected increase in unemployment insurance claims. There were also \$80M in reductions to the Governor's allowance for the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, which supports low-income residents, as well as a \$37M reduction in salaries for non-union staff.

A meeting held in March for the Board of Revenue Estimates indicated the forecast for FY25 and FY26 to be \$280 million less than projected. Reduced revenue is estimated to be around \$106.8 million for the remainder of FY25 and about \$173.2 million in reductions for FY26. Delegate Buckel suggests that the current issues are due to spending within the state. The question of how to address the \$3.3 billion deficit now needs attention. Discussions about raising taxes and increasing fees have been circulating, including proposals for a sugar soda tax and a business-to-business service tax.

Regarding the \$3.3B deficit, local counties are concerned about cuts that will result in an additional \$93M in cost shifts, where the State will bill the County for expenses not linked to County-level decision-making. The House Appropriations Committee will vote and subsequently move to the full committee as early as Thursday, and by Friday, the budgets will be up for consideration in the House Chamber. Once the House has made final decisions, the budget bills will go to the Senate for review.

Regarding capital decisions, the \$350K request in the LVI initiative for the Mechanic and Harrison Street intersection has become a top priority this year.

Bills being flagged and monitored:

- The Western Maryland Economic Future Investment Board has prioritized the George Edwards fund. Changes to the fund's purpose and eligibility for use have been mandated, and will now operate at discretion.
- House Bill 487, which addresses unhoused individuals, would prohibit government agencies from penalizing those who offer assistance to unhoused individuals in or around public places. The bill would also empower the Attorney General's office or an affected individual to initiate a civil action against the agent, office, or government body responsible for the harm inflicted. This bill has not progressed.
- House Bill 1164 addresses local laws related to the homeless right to rest act, which prohibits a county from enforcing local laws that prevent individuals from resting or sleeping in public spaces. The bill has not progressed and is highly unlikely to advance.
- Senate Bill 732 pertains to the sewage sludge utilization, requiring a permit from MDE to limit the total concentration of PFAS and PFOS. The bill includes mandates that are

unrealistic for a small municipality to comply within the timeframe outlined in the initial draft. Rich updated that he, along with Robert Smith and Hayden Lindsey, have had conversations with the sponsors in the House of Senate, as well as MACO and MML, expressing concerns about the application of the bill.

- House Bill 205 addresses employment standards for firefighters regarding wage payments and payroll information. It requires overtime payment for each hour worked over 168 during 28 days. Concerns from the MML highlight that several municipalities have paid firefighters, which could increase personnel costs by millions of dollars. The bill passed with amendments by a vote of 134-1, and the hope is to stall it during the last 20 days of the session.
- Last week's Business-to-Business tax bill hearing had over 120 people signed up to testify in opposition, with more than 400 unfavorable positions against it. The bill would impose a 2.5% sales tax on business-to-business services, including lobbyists. The Governor opposes a business-to-business sales tax and is in opposition to the budget that includes a 2-cent per ounce tax on sugary beverages.

Currently, the energy crisis is the second leading issue being considered and few bills related to energy were passed last night. House Bill requires an applicant seeking a certificate of public convenience and necessity was passed by the House. House Bill 121, mandates that electric companies submit a report to the Public Service Commission by February 1 of each year.

II. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF MARCH 18, 2025

- Recognition of new Fire Fighters
- Ruth Davis- Rogers to discuss Columbia Street being declared the Dumbhundred district and a request for inclusion on the National Historic Register
- Public Hearings for the Ochoa Urban Collaborative and the 2nd hearing for Ordinance 4007
- Consent agenda consists mainly of Sole Source purchases
- Grants from the DHCD
- Mr. Silka explained Order 27,675 pertaining to roof replacement up to \$25K

III. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

- Ms. Smith provided positive feedback on the sewer issues on the mall that were addressed
- A tour of the Peskin building resulted in some interest and a request for grant money
- Mayor Morriss testified in Annapolis for the George Edwards Fund
- April 3-5 will be Murder at the Museum, a joint fundraiser with the Embassy Theatre and the Museum
- Mayor Morriss met with Darlene Branigan Smith, the new interim President for FSU. She will be in position for the next 18 months helping select a new President
- Braddock Middle School 8th graders will be visiting City Hall this Friday at 9:00 AM for Council Members who can attend
- March 26, 2025, is the addiction seminar from 9:30 AM-3:30 PM followed by the Scenic Railroad Board meeting
- The Easter Egg hunt will be held at Mason's Sports Complex instead of Constitution Park due to the increase in turnout which will provide better parking options

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on April 1, 2025

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Closed Session Minutes

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

2nd Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, March 18, 2025; 4:30 p.m.

On March 18, 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 on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to receive the advice of the City Solicitor with regard to the city-wide trash and recycling collection RFP bid tabulation and to discuss the same with staff. Authority to close the session is provided by Section 3-305(b)(7) 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; Allison K. Layton, City Clerk; City Solicitor, Michael Cohen; Raquel Kettermann, Environmental Specialist and Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services