

County Council of Dorchester County
Open Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2025

The County Council of Dorchester County convened into Open Session on January 7, 2025 at 5:06 p.m., in Room 110 of the County Office Building, 501 Court Lane, Cambridge, Maryland 21613. A roll call of the members was conducted. Present in Room 110 were: George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President; Mike Detmer, Vice President; Rob Kramer, Jr.; William V. Nichols; and, Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; Charles MacLeod, County Attorney; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Operations Specialist.

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman, the Council unanimously adjourned into Closed Session 5:07 p.m., pursuant to the following sections of Title 3 of the General Provisions Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, §3-305(b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; §3-305(b)(13) to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter; and, §3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. The Written Statement for Closing a Meeting under the Open Meetings Act is attached hereto.

OPEN SESSION

The County Council of Dorchester County convened into Open Session on January 7, 2025 at 6:05 p.m., in Room 110 of the County Office Building, 501 Court Lane, Cambridge, Maryland 21613. Present in Room 110 were: George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President; Mike Detmer, Vice President; Rob Kramer, Jr.; William V. Nichols; and, Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; Charles MacLeod, County Attorney; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Administrative Specialist.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Pfeffer led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

After publication of the agenda, the following item was added: Resolution Adoption – Support of a Comprehensive Upper Chesapeake Bay Sediment Management Plan.

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously approved the amended agenda.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Pfeffer reported total cash and investments as \$35,502,826.53.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

The Council convened into a Closed Session at 5:07 p.m. on January 7, 2025 to discuss the following items pursuant to Title 3 of the General Provisions Article of the Maryland Annotated Code §3-305(b)(1), (13) and (7):

1. Notifications of recent personnel changes within the County were provided.
2. Received legal advice from the County Attorney regarding the following:
 - a. Personnel matters relating to a specific County policy;
 - b. Specific requirements related to the budget;
 - c. Advertising requirements related to a specific matter; and,
 - d. Obligations of supporting a specific project.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

- County Council Open Session Minutes – December 17, 2024
- Accounts Payable Disbursement Report – Week Ending January 3, 2025
- Budget Transfer Request – Finance
 - Request of Karen Tolley, Finance Director, to complete an FY25 Budget transfer.
- FY25 Energy Efficiency Equity Program Grant Submission/Letter of Support Request – Public Works
 - Request of Marilyn Williams, Grants Writer, Finance, on behalf of David Dierks, Facilities & Risk Manager, Public Works, to submit a \$70,671.00 FY2025 Energy Efficiency Equity Program grant application through the Maryland Energy Administration to be applied towards an energy-saving lighting retrofit project at the Dorchester County Circuit Court, no match requirement, performance period ends August 1, 2027.
- Letter of Support – Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit – USDA Wildlife Services
 - Request of Kevin Sullivan, State Director, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services, to provide a letter of support for the Agricultural Deer Cooperative Permit in Dorchester County.

PROCLAMATIONS

MENTORING MONTH – JANUARY

The Council presented a Proclamation declaring January as Mentoring Month.

ACTION ITEMS

EVENT REQUEST – WAGS, WINGS AND WHEELS – AIRPORT

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council

unanimously approved the request of Steve Nuwer, Airport Director, to partner with Baywater Animal Rescue, Chesapeake Classic Car Club and Carol's Kitchen to host the 2025 Wags, Wings and Wheels Show at the CGE Airport on Saturday, August 9, 2025, (rain date August 16, 2025) from 10:00AM to 4:00PM, with proceeds going to Baywater Animal Rescue and Dorchester County Dog Control.

Mr. Nuwer provided insight on what brought the event back into focus and provided more details. He said Young Eagles Day will be included in this event.

L. Thomas Divilio, President, Baywater Animal Rescue, said the facility has been around since 1947 and is one of the leading no kill shelters with a save rate 98.5% over the last nine years. He said the organization depends on donations and fundraisers like this one.

EVENT REQUEST – SECOND ANNUAL RUN FUR THEIR LIVES 5K FUN RUN – BAYWATER ANIMAL RESCUE

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously approved the request of Carly Stockus, Executive Director, Baywater Animal Rescue, to host its second annual Run Fur Their Lives 5k Fun Run on Stone Boundary Road April 19, 2025 from 6:30AM to 10:30AM.

The Council acknowledged that Ms. Stockus will: 1) provide a Certificate of Insurance naming the County as an additional insured; and, 2) coordinate with the Sheriff's Office, Public Works, Emergency Services and Economic Development.

BID AWARD – AUDIT SERVICES – FINANCE

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, after a discussion, unanimously approved the request of Karen Tolley, Finance Director, to award the bid for audit services to the second to lowest bidder, Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC, at a total of \$555,175.00 for FY23 through FY27, with 710 pledge hours, funded by American Rescue Plan Act (\$113,782.37) and the respective fiscal year operating budgets. The Council acknowledged that the second to lowest bidder was selected based on their multi-county audit experience, physical proximity, and a more closely aligned audit hour engagement.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously appointed Cherry Moaney to the Administrative Charging Committee.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously appointed Stacy Kronner to the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board.

RESOLUTION ADOPTION – SUPPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE UPPER CHESAPEAKE BAY SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 680 in Support of a Comprehensive Upper Chesapeake Bay Sediment Management Plan, which advocates for dredging accumulated sediments above the Conowingo Dam.

COUNTY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Jones commended the Public Works Department and Public Safety team for their efforts during the winter storm.

Councilman Pfeffer thanked Mr. Jones for his time and dedication to the County.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS

Councilman Travers thanked all the employees that supported the County during the winter storm.

Councilman Detmer: 1) thanked the Public Safety umbrella for their services during the holidays and snow storm; 2) acknowledged that property tax assessments have increased, however, the property tax rate cannot be lowered at this time; and 3) Legislative session begins tomorrow, January 8, 2025.

Councilman Pfeffer added that the property tax assessments are determined by the State of Maryland, not the County. He noted that there is a process to appeal the assessments through the Appeals Board.

In response to Councilman Pfeffer's inquiry, Mr. Nuwer; David Dierks, Facilities & Risk Manager, Public Works; and, Robbie Larimer, Communications Division Manager, Sheriff's Office, provided an update on their facilities after the recent winter events.

Councilman Pfeffer highlighted the importance of checking on the elderly and neighbors during snow storms, and thanked the staff for their dedication.


PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT


With no further business to discuss, and upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously the Council adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

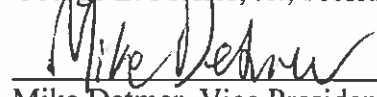


Jerry Jones
County Manager

THE COUNTY COUNCIL
OF DORCHESTER COUNTY:



George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President



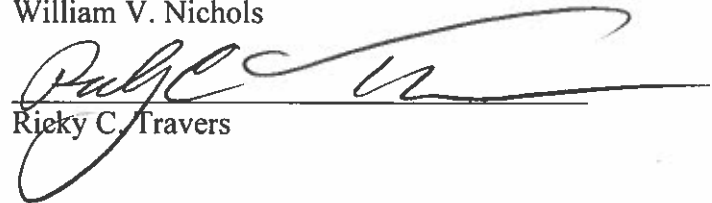
Mike Detmer, Vice President

Absent

Rob Kramer, Jr.

ABSTAIN

William V. Nichols



Ricky C. Travers

Approved the 21st day of January, 2025.

**PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING
("CLOSING STATEMENT") UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General
Provisions Article § 3-305)**

This form has two sides. Complete items 1 – 4 before closing the meeting.

1. Recorded vote to close the meeting:

Date: 1-7-25; Time: 5:06 p.m.; Location: 501 Court Lane, Room 110,
Cambridge, MD 21613; Motion to close meeting made by: Detmer Seconded by: Kramer
Members in favor: Pfeffer, Detmer, Kramer, Nichols, Travers
Opposed: _____ Abstaining: _____ Absent: _____

2. Statutory authority to close session (check all provisions that apply).

This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only:

(1) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"; (2) _____ "To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business"; (3) _____ "To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto"; (4) _____ "To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State"; (5) _____ "To consider the investment of public funds"; (6) _____ "To consider the marketing of public securities"; (7) "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice"; (8) _____ "To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation"; (9) _____ "To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations"; (10) _____ "To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans"; (11) _____ "To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination"; (12) _____ "To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct"; (13) "To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter"; (14) _____ "Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process." (15) _____ "To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to: (i) security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology; (ii) network security information . . . or (iii) deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices."

Continued →

3. For each provision checked above, disclosure of the topic to be discussed and the public body's reason for discussing that topic in closed session.

Citation (insert # from above)	Topic	Reason for closed-session discussion of topic
§3-305(b) (1)	To discuss notifications of recent personnel changes within the County; and,	Public Discussion of applicant's names and job info could discourage people from applying for County jobs
§3-305(b)(13)	Same topics as above	Public Information Act, GP Section 4-310 and 311 requires us to shield recommendation letters and job applications
§3-305(b) (7)	To receive legal advice from the County Attorney regarding the following: a) Personnel matters relating to a specific County policy; b) Specific requirements related to the budget; c) Advertising requirements related to a specific matter; and, d) Obligations of supporting a specific project.	Council does not want to waive the attorney-client privilege. See page 101, August 17, 2021, OMCB ruling (15 OMCB 99)

4. This statement is made by , Presiding Officer.

WORKSHEET FOR OPTIONAL USE IN CLOSED SESSION: INFORMATION FOR SUMMARY TO BE DISCLOSED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT OPEN MEETING. (See also template for summary.)

➤ **For a meeting closed under the statutory authority cited above:**

Time of closed session: _____

Place: _____

Purpose(s): _____

Members who voted to meet in closed session: _____

Persons attending closed session: _____

Authority under § 3-305 for the closed session: _____

Topics actually discussed: _____

Actions taken: _____

Each recorded vote: _____

➤ **For a meeting recessed to perform an administrative function (§ 3-104):** Time: _____

Place: _____

Persons present: _____

Subjects discussed: _____