

County Council of Dorchester County
Open Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2024

The County Council of Dorchester County convened into Open Session on December 17, 2024 at 5:09 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.; and, William V. Nichols. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; Charles MacLeod, County Attorney; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Operations Specialist. Ricky C. Travers joined the meeting late.

Upon motion by Councilman Kramer, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote (Councilman Travers joined the meeting late), adjourned into Closed Session at 5:10 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 December 17, 2024 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 Operations Specialist.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Nichols led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

After publication of the agenda, the item, Stormwater Management Agreement – East Coast Organics Inc. – Public Works was removed and the the following items were added:

- 1) Grant Submission Request – GOCPP – SFY26 State Aid for Police Protection – Sheriff's Office; and,
- 2) Letter of Support – Healthy Food Financing Initiative – Reinvestment Fund Applications – Elijah's General Store, LLC

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

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Pfeffer reported total cash and investments as \$35,554,187.14.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

The Council convened into a Closed Session at 5:10 p.m. on December 17, 2024 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. Personnel matters relating to specific individuals and positions;
3. Received legal advice from the County Attorney regarding the following:
 - a. Local funding to a specific organization;
 - b. A specific litigation settlement;
 - c. Specific legislation relating to traffic laws; and,
 - d. Requirements of administering an advisory board regarding the distribution of specific funds

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- County Council Open Session Minutes – December 3, 2024
- Accounts Payable Disbursement Report – Week Ending December 13, 2024
 - Councilman Travers abstained from payments made to Simmons Center Market
- Amended FY25 Operating Grant Agreement – MTA – Delmarva Community Services
 - Request of Andrea Waters, Transportation Grants Specialist, Delmarva Community Services, Inc. - Delmarva Community Transit, to accept Amendment No. 1 of the State of Maryland Department of Transportation FY25 Operating Grant Agreement
- FY24 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Submission – FEMA – Emergency Medical Services – Finance
 - Request of Marilyn Williams, Grants Writer, Finance, on behalf of Debbie Wheedleton, Emergency Medical Services Manager, to submit a \$405,000.00 grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA to provide financial assistance for critical resources needed for emergency operations, including vehicle acquisition, with a 10% match and a performance period of two years, based on the award date, contingent upon the FY26 Budget
- FY25 SolarAPP+ Implementation Grant Submission Maryland Energy Administration – Planning & Zoning – Finance
 - Request of Marilyn Williams, Grants Writer, Finance, on behalf of Susan Webb, Planning & Zoning Director, to submit a FY25 SolarAPP+

Implementation Grant Program application through the Maryland Energy Administration, which is a formula grant to assist the County with the cost of installing and implementing SolarApp+ software required by the Brighter Tomorrow Act of Maryland

- Budget Transfer Request – Recreation & Parks
 - Request of Duc Trieu, Recreation & Parks Director, to complete a FY25 Budget transfer
- FY25 Community Partnership Agreement – Moving Dorchester Forward, Inc.
 - Request of Nancy Shockley, Local Management Board Coordinator, Moving Dorchester Forward, Inc., to renew the FY25 Community Partnership Agreement between the State of Maryland, acting by and through the Children’s Cabinet, and Dorchester County, acting by and through Moving Dorchester Forward, Inc., effective July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 to obtain funding from the Cabinet, in the amount of \$531,292.00

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously adjourned into Legislative Session.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PUBLIC HEARING – RURAL EVENT VENUE – GUEST COTTAGE TEXT AMENDMENT

BILL NO. 2024-10 AN ACT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND AMENDING CHAPTER 155 (ZONING), SECTION 155-50 (SUPPLEMENTARY USE REGULATIONS) OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING FOR GUEST COTTAGES AS AN ACCESSORY USE IN THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION, AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION, AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION – RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREA, NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS, AND GENERAL BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICTS, PROVIDING FOR RURAL EVENT VENUES AS A SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE IN THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION, RURAL RESIDENTIAL, RURAL RESIDENTIAL – RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREA, AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION, AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION – RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREA, SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL, AND SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL – RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREA ZONING DISTRICTS AND AS A PERMITTED USE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS AND GENERAL BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICTS, ADOPTING SUPPLEMENTARY USE REGULATIONS REGARDING THE SAME, DEFINING TERMS ASSOCIATED THEREWITH, AND AMENDING THE TABLE OF PERMITTED USES BY ZONING DISTRICT REGARDING THE SAME; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS BILL SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY, AND GENERALLY RELATING TO GUEST COTTAGES AND RURAL EVENT VENUES IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND.

Ms. Barnes said a public hearing is being conducted on Bill No. 2024-10, which was introduced at the November 19, 2024 meeting, relating to guest cottages and rural event venues in Dorchester County.

Councilman Pfeffer asked for public comments, hearing none, the public hearing was closed.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers seconded, by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously adopted Bill No. 2024-10, the roll call was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – aye; Nichols – aye; and, Travers – aye.

INTRODUCTION – ABOLISHING BOARD OF ELECTRICAL EXAMINERS

AN ACT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND AMENDING CHAPTER 82 (ELECTRICAL STANDARDS) OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF ABOLISHING THE BOARD OF ELECTRICAL EXAMINERS AND ELIMINATING THE REQUIREMENT FOR A REGISTRATION TO PROVIDE ELECTRICAL SERVICES IN DORCHESTER COUNTY; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS BILL SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY, AND GENERALLY RELATING TO ELECTRICAL STANDARDS IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND.

Ms. Barnes said for introduction is legislation to amend Chapter 82 (Electrical Standards) of the Dorchester County Code for the purposes of abolishing the Board of Electrical Examiners and eliminating the requirement for a registration to provide electrical services in Dorchester County.

Ms. Webb provided an overview of the bill and its purpose.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously agreed to proceed with the publication of a public hearing.

INTRODUCTION – BURIAL SITES PRESERVATION REPEAL

AN ACT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND REPEALING CHAPTER 63 (BURIAL SITES PRESERVATION) OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY CODE IN ITS ENTIRETY; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS BILL SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY, AND GENERALLY RELATING TO BURIAL SITES IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND.

Ms. Barnes said for introduction is legislation to repeal Chapter 63 (Burial Sites Preservation) of the Dorchester County Code in its entirety.

Ms. Webb provided an overview of the bill and its purpose.

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously agreed to proceed with the publication of a public hearing.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council adjourned into Open Session.

OPEN SESSION

COMMENDATIONS

TOP OF CLASS – DALTON ROBINSON

The Council presented a Commendation to Dalton Robinson for graduating with a class standing of number one out of 36 at the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy's 119th Entrance Level Class for Jail and Correctional Officers.

PRESENTATIONS

VETERAN & MILITARY SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Bruce C. Bereano, Lobbyist, introduced Eric Johnson, Executive Director, Veteran & Military Support Alliance (VAMSA); and, Lei Ellingson, Deputy Director, VAMSA, whom presented information to the Council regarding VAMSA, and requested to be added to the agency funding request list for consideration during the FY26 Budget deliberations.

ACTION ITEMS

FY2026 RURAL LEGACY APPLICATION – PLANNING & ZONING

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously approved the request of Susan Webb, Planning and Zoning Director, to submit applications to the State of Maryland for FY2026 Maryland Rural Legacy Program preservation funds, which are allocated through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, with the areas being submitted in the following order of priority, which is rotated annually to ensure each area receives equal opportunity:

- 1) Agricultural Security Corridor – Eastern Shore Heartland Rural Legacy Focus Area
- 2) Nanticoke Rural Legacy Focus Area
- 3) Harriet Tubman Rural Legacy Focus Area

ETHICS COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council appointed Matt Leonard to the Ethics Commission to fill the unexpired term of Andrew Pasden, by a 4 to 1 vote, with Councilman Detmer opposing.

GRANT SUBMISSION REQUEST – GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION & POLICY – SFY26 STATE AID FOR POLICE PROTECTION – SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously approved the request of James W. Phillips, Jr., Sheriff, to submit a FY26 State Aid for Police Protection Fund grant application through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention &

Policy, which is an annual formula grant intended for and to be used exclusively to provide adequate police protection in the subdivisions and qualifying municipalities of Maryland during the July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 performance period.

LETTER OF SUPPORT – HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE – REINVESTMENT FUND APPLICATIONS – ELIJAH'S GENERAL STORE, LLC

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Travers, the Council unanimously agree to provide a letter of support for each of the following Healthy Food Financing Initiative Fund (HFFI) – Reinvestment Fund applications submitted by David Beverley to expand the operations at Elijah's General Store, LLC in Toddville, Maryland: 1) \$200,000.00 Food Access & Retail Expansion (FARE) Fund Grant application; and, 2) \$40,000.00 FARE Fund Technical Assistance application.

In response to Councilman Pfeffer's inquiries, Mr. Beverley explained: 1) the process of the grant awards; and, 2) how the funding may be appropriated, for instance, zoning changes, permitting, hiring employees; attorney fees, website formation, etc.

Councilman Pfeffer noted that the letters of support do not obligate the County to provide funding.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS

Councilman Nichols: 1) thanked those that provided support to his family during a house fire; and, 2) wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilman Kramer wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilman Travers said to remember the reason for the season, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Councilman Detmer addressed an issue regarding the 508 funding that some fire companies have not received. Councilman Pfeffer added that this is a State issue, but a resolution is underway, and the State Fire Marshal website is updated on a monthly basis.

Councilman Detmer: 1) commended Mr. Beverley for overcoming obstacles to serve the people of Toddville; 2) congratulated Councilman Pfeffer for being the World Coalition Chair and Second Vice President of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo); 3) said MACo had two big themes at the Winter Conference, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and green energy; and, 4) wished everyone a happy holiday season and Merry Christmas.

Councilman Pfeffer: 1) reiterated Councilman Detmer regarding the conference and added that there will be cuts at the State level with a \$2.7 billion deficit, however, the State shall not cut disparity grants or highway user revenues. He said the conference allowed collaboration among counties to address financially burdening issues and State preemptions; 2) wished everyone a happy, healthy and safe Christmas; and, 3) thanked staff for all that they do.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

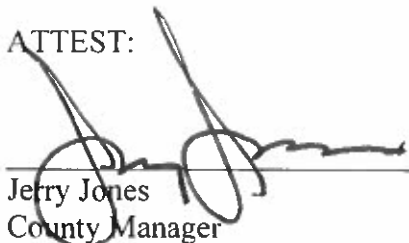
Dorothy Samonisky, resident and Burial Sites Preservation Board Chairperson, highlighted her concerns regarding the following: 1) veteran support; 2) Burial Site Preservation Board disbanding; 3) EV mandates in rural counties; and, 4) position of the television screens in the Council's Chambers.

Ashley Samonisky, resident, presented her concerns of repealing the Burial Sites Preservation Board to the Council.


ADJOURNMENT


With no further business to discuss, and upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously the Council adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

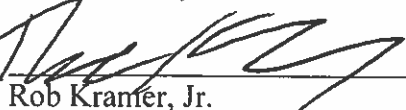
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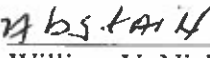

Jerry Jones
County Manager

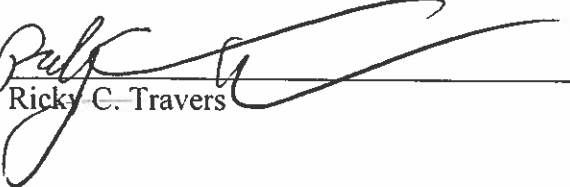
THE COUNTY COUNCIL
OF DORCHESTER COUNTY:


George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President


Mike Detmer, Vice President


Rob Kramer, Jr.


William V. Nichols


Ricky C. Travers

Approved the 7 day of Jan., 2025