

County Council of Dorchester County
Open Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2025

The County Council of Dorchester County convened into Open Session on January 21, 2025 at 5:07 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; William V. Nichols; and, Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Operations Specialist. Rob Kramer was absent.

Upon motion by Councilman Nichols, at 5:08 p.m., seconded by Councilman Detmer, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, adjourned into Closed Session, 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; and, §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. 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 21, 2025 at 6:04 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; William V. Nichols; and, Ricky C. Travers. Also present in Room 110 were: Jerry Jones, County Manager; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Operations Specialist. Rob Kramer was absent.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Travers 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 – Public Works was removed and the following items were added:

1. Legislation – Introduction – Community Reinvestment & Repair Fund
2. Maryland’s Opioid Restitution Fund – Abatement Plan
3. Announcement – Thendara 4-H Center

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, approved the amended agenda.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Pfeffer reported total cash and investments as \$36,322,216.66.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

The Council convened into a Closed Session at 5:08 p.m. on January 21, 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) & (3):

1. Notifications of recent personnel changes within the County were provided;
2. Personnel matters relating to specific individuals and positions; and,
3. Discussed the potential lease of a specific property.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, approved the Consent Agenda.

- County Council Open Session Minutes – January 7, 2025
- Accounts Payable Disbursement Report – Week Ending – January 17, 2025

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PUBLIC HEARING – ABOLISHING BOARD OF ELECTRICAL EXAMINERS

BILL NO. 2024-11 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 a public hearing is being conducted on Bill No. 2024-11 for the purposes of abolishing the Board of Electrical Examiners and eliminating the requirement for a registration to provide electrical services in Dorchester County.

Susan Webb, Planning & Zoning Director, provided a brief overview of the bill.

Joseph Foster, resident, spoke in favor of the bill.

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

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council adopted Bill No. 2024-11, the roll call was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – absent; Nichols – aye; and, Travers – aye.

PUBLIC HEARING – BURIAL SITES PRESERVATION REPEAL

BILL NO. 2024-12 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 a public hearing is being conducted on Bill No. 2024-12 to repeal Chapter 63 (Burial Sites Preservation) of the Dorchester County Code.

Ms. Webb provided an overview of the bill and why it has been put forth to the Council.

Dorothy Samonisky and Ashley Samonisky, residents, who spoke against the bill. The Council deliberated the Samonisky's concerns.

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

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, agreed to provide the Burial Sites Preservation Board a one-year trial period from January 21, 2025 to demonstrate the board's effectiveness, with the provision that it will be disbanded if board members fail to maintain professional conduct.

Upon motion by Travers, seconded by Nichols, the Council voted against Bill No. 2024-12, the roll call was: Pfeffer – nay; Detmer – nay; Kramer – absent; Nichols – nay; and, Travers – nay.

INTRODUCTION – COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT & REPAIR FUND

AN ACT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND PURSUANT TO MD. CODE ANN., ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND CANNABIS § 1-322 TO AMEND CHAPTER 144 (TAXATION) OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENACTING A NEW ARTICLE XXII ENTITLED “COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AND REPAIR FUND” REGARDING THE USE OF FUNDS FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AND REPAIR FUND; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS BILL SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY, AND GENERALLY RELATING TO TAXATION IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND.

Ms. Barnes said for introduction is a bill to amend Chapter 144 (Taxation) of the Dorchester County Code for the purpose of enacting a new article, (22) XXII, entitled “Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund” regarding the use of funds from the State of Maryland Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, agreed to proceed with the publication of a public hearing.

The Council adjourned into Open Session.

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

PUBLIC HEARING – COUNTY PROPERTY DISPOSITION – ASPHALT PLANT

Ms. Barnes said a public hearing is being conducted on the disposition of the Asphalt Plant, located at 3960 Red Hill Road, Linkwood, Maryland to Russell Paving Co. Inc., for \$300,000.00 with in-house financing over a 20 year term at 5%.

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

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council approved the roll call was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – absent; Nichols – aye; and, Travers – aye.

PROCLAMATION

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH – JANUARY 2025

The Council presented a Proclamation declaring January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

ACTION ITEMS

FY25 PROGRAM OPEN SPACE UPDATE – RECREATION & PARKS

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, approved the request of Duc Trieu, Recreation & Parks Director, to update the FY2025 Program Open Space Annual Program to include the 2027 Land Preservation Parks & Recreation Plan and the Thendara 4-H Center to utilize the remaining funds.

REQUEST TO SOLE SOURCE – POOL SERVICES – RECREATION & PARKS

Upon motion by Councilman Nichols, seconded by Councilman Travers, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, approved the request of Mr. Trieu to sole source with Coastline Pool Services for the operation and maintenance of the Dorchester County Pool from June 14, 2025 to December 31, 2025 at \$145,248.00, funded by the Recreation and Parks FY25 Swimming Pool Budget.

In response to Councilman Detmer’s inquiry, Mr. Trieu explained the benefits of sole sourcing with Coastline Pools. Mr. Jones added that a request for proposals was advertised in 2022 and they were the only bidder.

EVENT REQUEST – CUBMOBILE DERBY – BOYS SCOUTS OF AMERICA DEL-MAR-VA COUNCIL

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, approved the request of Michael O’Connor, Cubmobile Chair, Boy Scouts of America Del-Mar-Va Council, to use the County Office Building grounds and outdoor electric, as

well as two bleachers from Recreation and Parks, for the Annual Cub Scout Cubmobile Derby on Sunday, April 6, 2025.

The Council acknowledged that a request to close Court Lane has been submitted to the City of Cambridge, and a Certificate of Liability Insurance will be provided prior to the event.

POLL CONFIRMATION

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, confirmed its decision in the interim of meetings, via poll, to wait on increasing the Dorchester County Liquor License fee and reintroduce a bill during the 2026 Legislative Session, by a 5 to 0 vote via poll.

MARYLAND'S OPIOID RESTITUTION FUND – ABATEMENT PLAN

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Detmer, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, approved a local abatement plan to allocate its portion of Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund, \$336,945.30, towards providing the required comprehensive medication assisted treatment within the Detention Center.

ANNOUNCEMENT – THENDARA 4-H CENTER

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Detmer, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, agreed to enter into a lease with the Maryland 4-H Club Foundation, Inc., to lease the Thendara 4-H Center, located at 5275 Lords Crossing Road, Hurlock, Maryland.

COUNTY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Jones voiced concerns of the State of Maryland's proposed budget and how the County will balance its budget.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS

Councilman Nichols reiterated Mr. Jones, adding that it is going to be a very grim budget year. He said this is only the beginning and seniors cannot afford a tax increase. Councilman Pfeffer said next year will be worse.

Councilman Travers highlighted that: 1) the State of Maryland passed an education bill, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, without a clear plan on how to fund it or knowing the total cost 2) Governor Wes Moore's State budget proposes an increase on the amount that counties contribute towards the State Department of Assessments and Taxation from 50% to 90%; 3) Senators and delegates need to fight hard for rural Maryland; and, 4) the Board of Education's budget increased by \$2.8 million from FY25 to FY26. Councilman Pfeffer said the year to year increase is normally about \$200,000 to \$300,000.

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, reappointed Robert Whaples to the Seafood Reconciliation Committee.

Councilman Detmer expressed: 1) concerns about the ownership of a solar property being transferred to the National Bank of Canada; 2) that the County is barely managing to make ends meet.

Councilman Pfeffer explained that: 1) to balance the budget, the County needs roughly \$3.5 million of new money; and, 2) the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) determined that a Dorchester County poultry farm tested positive for the bird flu. He said questions regarding the disease should be directed to MDA.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. A. Samonisky and Ms. D. Samonisky provided recommendations on how to increase the County's revenue.

Donald Hall, Director of Behavioral Health Service, Dorchester County Behavioral Health, thanked the Council for approving the abatement plan.

In response to Terry Robbins, resident, Councilman Pfeffer said snow geese and Canadian geese are susceptible to the bird flu.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, and upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council, by a 4 to 0 vote, Councilman Kramer absent, adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

ATTEST:



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 4th day of February, 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: 1/21/25; Time: 5:07 p.m.; Location: 501 Court Lane, Room 110,
Cambridge, MD 21613; Motion to close meeting made by: DeArmer Seconded by: Nichols
Members in favor: Pfeffer, DeArmer, Nichols, Travers
Opposed: _____ Abstaining: _____ Absent: Kramer

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 the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifications of recent personnel changes within the County were provided • Personnel matters relating to specific individuals and positions 	Public Discussion of applicant's names and job info could discourage people from applying for County jobs
§3-305(b)(13)	Same topic as above	Public Information Act, GP Section 4-310 and 311 requires us to shield recommendation letters and job applications
§3-305(b) (3)	To discuss the potential lease of a specific property	To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto

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: _____

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY
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1. Notifications of recent personnel changes within the County were provided;
2. Personnel matters relating to specific individuals and positions; and,
3. Discussed the potential lease of a specific property.