

County Council of Dorchester County
Open Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2025

The County Council of Dorchester County convened into Open Session on February 18, 2025 at 5:17 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 Nichols at 5:18 p.m., seconded by Councilman Kramer the Council unanimously 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; §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 February 18, 2025 at 6:03 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 Detmer led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Pfeffer reported total cash and investments as \$31,501,164.10.

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY

The Council convened into a Closed Session at 5:18 p.m. on February 18, 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. Potential disposition of County owned property;
- b. An amendment to a specific policy; and,
- c. Advertising requirements regarding a specific matter.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- County Council Open Session Minutes – February 4, 2025
- Accounts Payable Disbursement Report – Week Ending February 14, 2025
 - Councilman Travers abstained from payments made to Simmons Center Market
- Letter of Support – House Bill 1124 (cross-filed with Senate Bill 946) entitled, “Endangered and Threatened Species – Incidental Taking – Bats – Maryland Forests Association”
- Grant Awards – Hoopersville Village District Living Shoreline Project – National Fish & Wildlife Foundation – Planning & Zoning
 - \$1,500,000.00 National Coastal Resilience Fund 2024 grant award, with a \$28,080.00 match and performance period of January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026; and,
 - \$700,000.00 National Coastal Resilience Fund 2023 grant award, with no match requirement and a performance period ending December 31, 2025.

COMMENDATIONS

RYAN CLARK – 2024 MARYLAND 4-H STATE ARCHERY COMPETITION

The Council presented a Commendation to Ryan Clark for placing first overall in the 2024 Maryland 4-H State Archery Competition and qualifying for the Maryland National Team.

PRESENTATIONS

URBAN3 DATA – EASTERN SHORT LAND CONSERVANCY

Owen Bailey, Director of Land Use and Policy, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, provided a presentation to Council on the Urban3 Analysis of the Eastern Shore. Mr. Bailey answered questions posed by the Council.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PUBLIC HEARING – COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT & REPAIR FUND

Ms. Barnes said a public hearing is being conducted on Bill No. 2025-1 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.

Beth Anne Norman, President/CEO, For All Seasons, provided information on the services the organization provides to the community in relation to the CRRF. She requested one-time funding of \$100,000 to support the expansion of For All Seasons, and 15% of all ongoing CRRF tax revenue to allow them to continue to support County residents.

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

In response to Councilman Nichols, Councilman Pfeffer said recommendations on CRRF disbursements will be presented to the Council for approval once the logistics are finalized.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council adopted Bill No. 2025-1, the roll call was: Pfeffer – aye; Detmer – aye; Kramer – aye; Nichols – aye; and, Travers – aye.

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

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

ACTION ITEMS

EVENT REQUEST – MARYLAND FREEDOM SWIM – TCR EVENT MANAGEMENT

Upon motion by Councilman Detmer, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously approved, contingent on approval from the State of Maryland, the request of Jason Chance, USA Triathlon Certified Race Director/RRCA Certified Race Director, TCR Event Management, to use the Dorchester County Visitor Center for the finish line of the Maryland Freedom Swim on Saturday, May 17, 2025.

FLAG FOOTBALL – J. EDWARD WALTER PARK – RECREATION & PARKS

Upon motion by Councilman Nichols, seconded by Councilman Travers, the Council unanimously approved the request of Duc Trieu, Recreation & Parks Director, on behalf of Lamont Goodson, Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and Captain Antoine Patton, Cambridge Police Department (CPD), to use J. Edward Walter Park for

the RISE Flag Football league on Saturdays beginning April 27, 2025 to June 15, 2025 from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with the same stipulations as the 2024 season.

RISE Flag Football must:

- provide a Certificate of Insurance listing the County as an additional insured;
- execute a contract that releases the City/County from any injuries to the players, bystanders, coaches, etc.;
- indemnify, hold harmless and defend the County for any and all liabilities, claims, etc.;
- include a commercial general liability insurance policy of at least \$500,000, with accidental no fault medical injury to players of at least \$1,000 each;
- provide proof of background checks for all coaches;
- limit games to daylight hours only with CPD Officers on site; and,
- follow the same rules as the Dorchester County Recreation and Parks' Department leagues.

FY26 CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING PROJECTS DISCUSSION

Upon motion by Councilman Travers seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council agreed to submit a FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending application for the following projects:

- Rehabilitating sewer pipelines and pump stations;
- Design and study of the Hoopers Island causeway; and,
- Dorchester County Health Department building on Race Street.

POLL CONFIRMATIONS

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously confirmed its decision in the interim of meetings, via poll, to:

- Provide a letter of support for Senate Bill 796 entitled "Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restriction," by 5 to 0 vote;
- Provide a letter of support for House Bill 1124 (cross-filed with Senate Bill 964) entitled "Dorchester County - Well and On-Site Sewage Disposal Activities - Privatization Program" by a 5 to 0 vote; and,
- Deny a request of the City of Cambridge to support House Bill 232 (cross-filed with Senate Bill 346) entitled "Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program," by a 0 to 3 vote (no response).

COUNTY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Jones recognized the Public Works and Public Safety teams for their support during the multiple snow events.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS

Councilman Pfeffer welcomed Shay Sisco-Lewis, City Commissioner, to the meeting.

Councilman Detmer: 1) mentioned he is obtaining more information from Roger Harrell, Health Officer, Dorchester County Health Department, regarding a constituent's concern about an aquifer; 2) echoed Mr. Jones' recognition to Public Works and Public Safety; 3) expressed concerns regarding Senate Bill 931 entitled, "Public Utilities - Generating Stations - Generation and Siting (Renewable Energy Certainty Act)," and mandates being passed down from the State of Maryland; and, 4) said the National Outdoor Show is on February 21-22, 2025.

Councilman Pfeffer reiterated the concerns relating to Senate Bill 931. He added that the bill will 1) preempt the County's recently passed solar legislation; 2) allow for battery storage without fire safety preventions; 3) remove the County's ability to negotiate Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT); and, 4) exempts real property tax where solar panels are located.

Upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously approved the request of John Avery, Town Manager, Town of Hurlock, to provide a letter of support for a FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending application submitted by the Town of Hurlock for the Hurlock Wastewater Treatment Plant. Councilman Pfeffer said this does not obligate the County to provide monetary support.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sharon Smith, resident, expressed concerns regarding the County's low education achievement rating, while it has the sixth highest cost per student in the State. Councilman Pfeffer recognized the concern and said Dr. Jymil Thompson, Superintendent, Dorchester County Public Schools, tag line is, "23 no more." He said the Council, Dr. Thompson and the Board of Education have a great working relationship but agreed that there are areas that need improvement.

In response to Ms. Sisco-Lewis' inquiry, Councilman Pfeffer said the public cannot participate virtually in Council meetings, however, they can email info@docogonet.com or contact the Council personally.

In response to an inquiry posed by Gary McQuitty, resident, Councilman Pfeffer explained that if the County does not meet the State mandates, the State will withhold the County's income taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

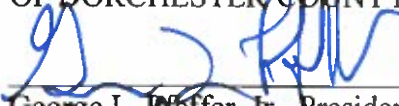
With no further business to discuss, and upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Nichols, the Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

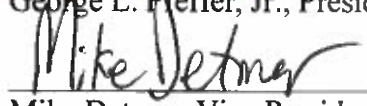


Jerry Jones
County Manager

THE COUNTY COUNCIL
OF DORCHESTER COUNTY:



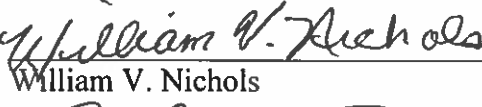
George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President



Mike Detmer, Vice President



Rob Kramer, Jr.



William V. Nichols



Ricky C. Travers

Approved the 4th day of March, 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: 2/18/25; Time: 5:17 p.m.; Location: 501 Court Lane, Room 110,
Cambridge, MD 21613; Motion to close meeting made by: Nichols Seconded by: Kramer
Members in favor: Pfeffer, Detmer, Nichols, Kramer, 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 receive notification of recent personnel changes within the County.	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)(7)	To receive legal advice from the County Attorney regarding the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential disposition of County owned property; • An amendment to a specific policy; and, • Advertising requirements regarding a specific matter. 	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: _____

CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY
February 18, 2025

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