

**County Council of Dorchester County**  
**Open Meeting Minutes**  
**May 13, 2025**

The County Council of Dorchester County convened into Open Session on May 13, 2025 at 6:04 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; and, Irene Barnes, Executive Operations Specialist.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilman Pfeffer 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 \$29,723,264.42.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- County Council Open Session Minutes – May 6, 2025
- Accounts Payable Disbursement Report – Week Ending May 9, 2025

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

**LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**PUBLIC HEARING – 2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET & APPROPRIATION  
ORDINANCE**

**BILL NO. 2025-4     AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING: 2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET  
AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE OF DORCHESTER COUNTY**

Ms. Barnes said a public hearing is being conducted on Bill No. 2025-4 concerning the FY26 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance of Dorchester County.

Councilman Pfeffer asked for public comments, hearing the following:

Richard Legnaioli, resident, provided an account of a negative experience within the Finance Department, and spoke in opposition of the proposed real property tax increase.

Robert Aaron, resident, said Dorchester County is the third poorest county in the state, not including Baltimore city, and spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

In response to inquiries by Donald Gray, resident, Councilman Pfeffer said: 1) the 2021 and 2022 audits have been completed, and 2023 is underway; 2) the example provided on an increase to a tax bill, at the proposed real property tax rate, does not sound accurate; 3) digital access is the norm; and, 4) the Qualified Senior Tax Credit was increased to 10%.

Rita Curtis, resident, provided a comparison of specific lines on the FY25 budget, versus the proposed FY26 budget.

Derrick Whitwer, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed property tax increases. In response to Mr. Whitwer's inquiry, Councilman Pfeffer said he may submit questions to [info@docogonet.com](mailto:info@docogonet.com).

Lajan Cephas, Mayor, City of Cambridge, requested the Council continue the County's tax differential; 2) suggested that the County form a revenue committee/task force; and, 3) read a letter of opposition from the Mid-Shore Board of Realtors, regarding the proposed real property tax increase and the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

Donald Simon, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

Terra Felts, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential. She expressed concern that the tax increase may cause additional foreclosures.

Jameson Harrington, resident, spoke against a FY26 Budget request from Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc.

Michelle Fowle, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

Andy Fowle, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

Jenny Leichtling, resident, concurred with City of Cambridge Mayor Cephas's recommendations, and spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

Tom Hannan, resident, spoke in favor of the proposed real property tax increase, and opposed the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential. He said taxes should be increase equitably.

William Jackson, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

Lashawn Foster, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential. In response to Ms. Foster's inquiry, Mr. Jones explained the qualifications of the senior tax credit; at least 67 years old and must qualify for the homeowners tax credit.

Earl Murphy, Council President, Town of Hurlock, reiterated prior comments, and asked the Council to fairly increase taxes.

Adrian Holmes, resident, asked the Council to take Mayor L. Cephas's recommendations into consideration, and said the tax increases must be fair and equitable.

Spuddy Cephas, Council President, City of Cambridge, asked the Council hear the voices of the municipalities and its constituents.

A discussion ensued with Cleveland Rippons, resident.

Charles Fadly, resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed real property tax increases.

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

Councilman Travers suggested reevaluating the proposed tax increases.

Councilman Detmer expressed: 1) the reason the County is proposing the real property tax increases and elimination of the County's tax differential is a direct result of the State of Maryland's unfunded mandates forced upon counties; and, 2) opinions of District 5 constituents regarding that have spoken to him, and are in favor of the proposed elimination of the County's tax differential.

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

## **RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**

### **COUNTY MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Jones had no comments.

### **COUNCIL'S COMMENTS**

In response to Councilman Travers's inquiry, Councilman Pfeffer confirmed with Mr. Jones that he is on the cusp of a more fair and equitable option.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

## ADJOURNMENT

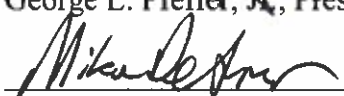
With no further business to discuss, and upon motion by Councilman Travers, seconded by Councilman Kramer, the Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
Jerry Jones  
County Manager

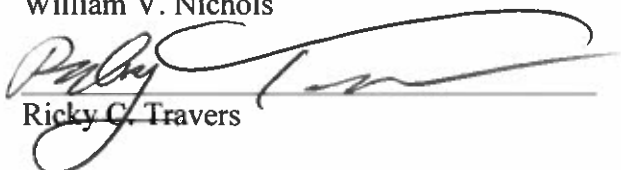
THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
OF DORCHESTER COUNTY:

  
George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President

  
Mike Detmer, Vice President

  
Rob Kramer, Jr.

  
William V. Nichols

  
Ricky C. Travers

Approved the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025.