

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
July 9, 2019**

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, William Coutz, Al Miller, George Patchell and Jackie Gregory; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, John Downs, Council Attorney; members of the press; and members of the public.

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

9:00 A.M. –Council President Meffley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and determined a quorum.

NOTE: Due to technical difficulties only Audio of this meeting is available on the County website www.ccgov.org.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Vice President Gregory, seconded by Councilman Coutz, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of July 2, 2019, as presented. Motion was approved unanimously.

Voices of Hope

Jennifer Tuerke, chief operations officer of Cecil County Voices of Hope, presented a proposal for a new 24/7 recovery community center for people seeking recovery and families new to recovery in order to connect to county resources. Voices of Hope is a nonprofit organization made up of people in recovery, family members and allies who support recovery in Cecil County. Her organization works together to advocate for recovery resources, mentor new people in recovery, work to eliminate the stigma of addiction and recovery, and generally support all pathways of recovery. Cecil County's rate of overdose fatalities, suicide, child neglect and abuse, and hepatitis C is just below the rate for Baltimore City. Ms. Tuerke stated that she was a former addict who is in the thirtieth year of recovery.

Ms. Tuerke stated that Voices of Hope is a model recovery organization that is community based. Voices of Hope has been recognized as a leading model for community based recovery. They have advocated for syringe services as a method to reach drug users who are hard to reach in order to offer compassion and recovery support. Voices of Hope works in complement to the Health Department in offering services. She commented on the success of a grant program to offer NARCAN to high drug areas of Cecil County, which resulted in a reduction of fatalities in the county. She explained their program of using peer advocates who have been certified by the state to help recovering addicts. This effort has developed into a Peer Academy with graduates reaching out to addicts in jail and probation.

She stated that Voices of Hope received a grant of \$4M from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to staff a community crisis center. They are looking at a location on Route 40 near North East at the site of the former Green Acres Motel. She showed drawings of the proposed renovation of the exterior former motel and interior spaces. This center should divert the number of substance abuse visits from emergency rooms. The new center would be

staffed with nurse practitioners, case managers and peers. The center will address only substance abuse, not mental health or homelessness issues.

Ms. Tuerke stated that Voices of Hope applied for another grant of \$1.8M to support the operations for three years. A temporary community crisis center has been arranged for two beds at Haven House. The vision of Voices of Hope is to have an inpatient treatment center in Cecil County. They are currently raising funds to support the project.

Council questions and comments ensued. Councilman Coutz stated that the importance of communicating the purpose of this program and its focus on families. Councilman Miller commented on the importance of involving family members. Vice President Gregory commended Voices of Hope on their efforts and recognized the impact of Voices of Hope on the community. Council President Meffley stated the importance of providing services to help families with substance addiction.

Council Manager Report

Mr. Massey updated Council Members about upcoming meetings and events.

Council Member Items

Councilman Patchell commented on the Little League All Star games being played throughout the county and commended this opportunity for youth to be involved in a positive experience with good volunteers and role models.

Councilman Miller attended the Salute to Veterans and met General Kilgo from Aberdeen Proving Ground. He attended the Local Management Board meeting and met Dr. Ira Chasoff, speaker at the board's recent program on the effects of substance abuse on children. He attended the Fair Hill International board meeting and commented on a three star event being planned this year. He also stated that construction has begun on a new racetrack at Fair Hill. He urged the public to attend the Cecil County Fair, the nine best days of summer. He stated that the public can receive a free ticket to the fair if they register for the summer reading program at the Cecil County Public Library. He also displayed a new yard sign that will be used to promote the fair.

Councilman Coutz thanked the audience for attending today's work session. He commented on the importance of youth involvement in positive organizations and activities in the community. He attended the groundbreaking of the Elkton Neighborhood Community Center and commented on the many years of planning this facility. He attended the Salute to Veterans in North East and commented on meeting General Kilgo from Aberdeen Proving Ground. He stated that the person who was injured in the North East fireworks display will have full use of his hand and commended the first responders and Medivac for saving his hand. He attended the Arts Council opening reception for JP Henry, who is autistic and nonverbal. This reception featured his photographic works captured by use of cell phones.

Vice President Gregory attended the Salute to Veterans in North East and commended North East VFW, Town of North East and Friends of the North East Library for their support of the

event. She praised the event as an opportunity to thank veterans, and as a way to bring the community together. She also meet General Kilgo.

Council President Meffley attended the groundbreaking of the Elkton Neighborhood Community Center and congratulated Mayor Alt for his work over many years. He stated that that center is in a good location and commented on the need for community centers in other parts of the county. He attended the Salute to Veterans in North East and welcomed General Kilgo to Cecil County. He stated that he entertained foreign exchange students from Spain over the weekend and took them on a boat tour of Cecil County on the Fourth of July, which ended with fireworks display. He attended the Chesapeake City Town Commissioners meeting where County Executive McCarthy and staff talked about their plans. The Commissioners discussed the proposed cell tower along Route 213's Scenic Byway. He stated that the proposed tower must be approved by the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals.

Adjournment

Councilman Coutz made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Vice President Gregory and approved by unanimous consent. Council President Meffley adjourned the work session at 9:59 a.m.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 9am in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building.

Approved:



Robert Meffley
Council President


James Massey
Council Manager