



Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman James L. Furstenberg
Councilwoman Laurie P. Marchini

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members: Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, Jimmy Furstenberg, Laurie Marchini

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Mark Gandolfi, Comptroller; Chuck Ternent, Police Chief; Shannon Adams, Fire Chief

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News

Kathy Cornwell, WCBC Radio

I. REVIEW OF THE FY24 BUDGET

Mr. Tressler began the meeting by introducing the budget schedule, which runs April 18th through June 6th, and provided a PowerPoint presentation. The highlights of the presentation are as follows:

City has seen an assessable real property tax base increase - \$921M to \$948M – to maintain current year level of revenue, do a constant yield rate of \$1.0309.

There is \$2.6M in the GF, and said that without ARPA funding, there would be a small deficit.

MPA revenue includes ARPA revenue loss of \$97K and \$155K GF transfer assistance.

GF assistance balloons to \$248K through FY27.

DDC revenue includes \$45K ARPA revenue loss, \$50K ARPA project funding, \$25K Mainstreet MD grant and \$75K GF assistance.

FY24 expenditures are \$387K or \$312K without the ARPA special project or Mainstreet grant revenue.

Water and Trash funds are showing a negative cash flow of \$1.5M and \$175K respectively.

Proposing water and trash rate increases for FY24 because Trash fund does not have adequate cash and this places Water fund in a vulnerable position.

Personnel cost increases – 2% COLA for non-union employees. AFSCME, Police, and Fire Unions are each receiving 2% plus longevity in accordance with contract terms.

Two full-time positions in the budget; two new part-time positions; eleven vacant positions. GF personnel costs comprise 67.5% of the expenditure budget.

Health insurance claim performance has been very favorable the last two years – rates decreasing 2.5% for FY24.

FY24 grant and other financial assistance – GF, \$19.2M; Water, \$2.2M; Sewer, \$0.3M.

New equipment and capital projects debt – GF, \$1.9M; Water, \$1.2M; Sewer, \$1.2M.

Capital improvements – bridges, buildings, parks, Baltimore Street, Decatur Street (lights)

Street improvements - \$1M for paving – Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Gleason and Mullen, South End; Columbia Gas Cost Sharing (partnering to repave streets damaged with recent work).

\$172M in projects currently in the pipeline – new grant sources are critical - some projects not feasible without it.

Future project: Washington Street Bridge is on the radar; Mechanic and Harrison lane widening; HVAC for Public Safety Building

Expected increase in Unassigned Fund Balance in the revised FY23 budget of \$290K.

Inflation – chemicals increase as well as gas, water meter fittings, lab expenses, maintenance materials, and interest expense. Electricity increased dramatically.

DDC is in its final year – need to bring operating budget more in line with revenues.

CDBG expenditures of \$906K – various recreational projects.

ARPA funds conclude in 2024, so won't have this extra in FY25 and beyond. ARPA project funds are closely monitored and may need reallocations.

Mr. Gandolfi stated that they will come back with a revised presentation, showing decreased healthcare costs, etc.

As for decisions to be made, Mr. Gandolfi will put out a news release stating if the City is maintaining the existing tax rate. He said they will be doing revisions through next Tuesday, and will finalize the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Gandolfi stated that the City is in really good shape, and said there's a lot to be proud of.

Mayor Morriss stated that this shows that the City is financially sound, and said all in all, the inflation rate is affecting everyone – it's the reality of the world we live in now.

II. AGENDA REVIEW – APRIL 18, 2023

Mr. Silka advised that Ordinance No. 3945 has been rescinded, so it will be skipped over during the reading of the Ordinances in the public meeting. He added that everything else on the agenda was pretty much housekeeping.

III. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Council Member Furstenberg advised that he attended the Arbor Day Celebration yesterday and said that he planted a dogwood tree.

Council Member Frazier advised that this Saturday there will be a 2-mile mini marathon and walk to raise money for Greenway Stadium. He also advised that the Fair Housing event will be at ACM on April 25th.

Council Member Cioni stated that the renovation committee for Greenway Stadium appreciates the City having an ad on the scoreboard, and added that the sound system has been upgraded as well. He also mentioned that LBC members appreciate the increase in their budget.

Council Member Marchini stated that Baltimore Street demolition has begun, described all the work taking place, and said outdoor dining would be provided as long as possible

She said recently they had a good Community Legacy meeting, headed by Ruth Davis-Rogers, and discussed project prioritization and grant funding.

Council Member Marchini stated that the DDC is shifting to a main street format, with each person assigned to a committee. She stated that Hometown Hero signs will still be up during renovation, and mentioned the recent Spring Fling at the Festival Grounds. She added that Friday after 5 will be held outside of Mezzo's, and said they are looking into signage for downtown during construction to let people know it's open for business.

The Councilwoman stated that on May 3rd the Lakota Group will be in Cumberland for public outreach meetings. Mr. Silka advised that they will also be here on May 2nd at the Work Session to speak to M&CC.

Mayor Morriss stated that he and Solicitor Mike Cohen went to Annapolis for the signing of the House Bill on tax sales. He advised that of the 3 bills, 2 passed. Mr. Cohen stated that the 3rd bill is not out of the question, it just needs some work. The Mayor stated that the one they really wanted to pass, did.

The Mayor was praised for being down in Annapolis a lot lately. Mr. Cohen stated that they would not have gotten these passed if they hadn't been down there, and said the lobbyist advised that it made a difference being there in person. They discussed getting with the lobbyist to put together a game-plan for next year, and stated that the decision to retain his services was a wise one. M&CC discussed reminding the new administration that "we are here", and said it doesn't hurt to continue building relationships.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on: May 2, 2023