

BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES
LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2025, LEGISLATIVE DAY NO. 13
August 4, 2025 6:00 P.M.

A. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ertel at 6:04 P.M. The Chairman asked the audience to rise for a moment of silent meditation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Scout Troop #742 of Towson. There were approximately 225 persons in attendance. The following Councilmembers were present:

PAT YOUNG
IZZY PATOKA
WADE KACH
JULIAN E. JONES
DAVID MARKS
MICHAEL ERTEL
TODD CRANDELL

FIRST DISTRICT
SECOND DISTRICT
THIRD DISTRICT
FOURTH DISTRICT
FIFTH DISTRICT
SIXTH DISTRICT
SEVENTH DISTRICT

B. APPROVAL OF JOURNAL

Upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Kach, the reading of the Journal Entries for the meeting of July 7, 2025 was waived and accepted by the following roll call vote:

Aye - Young, Patoka, Kach, Jones, Marks, Ertel, Crandell
Nay – None

C. ENROLLMENT OF BILLS

The Chairman stated that the following Bills were passed by the County Council and signed by the County Executive. He certified and delivered to the Secretary, Bills 39-25, 40-25, 41-25 and 42-25.

F. APPROVAL OF FISCAL MATTERS

The Chairman stated that the Council would now consider Fiscal Matters. Extensive testimony on each item was taken at the Council's work session on July 29, 2025. The witnesses who testified at the work session were available to restate their testimony if needed. If a Councilmember had any questions regarding a particular Fiscal Matter, that item would be discussed as a separate matter. Chairman Ertel then called upon the Secretary to read the cover letters for Fiscal Matters 1, 3, 4 and 6 through 8. Fiscal Matters 2 and 5 were withdrawn prior to the meeting.

1. Contracts – (2) – De-lipping and refurbishment of baseball diamonds

Two contracts with Classic Lawn and Landscape, Inc., and Ruppert Landscape, to provide de-lipping and refurbishment of baseball diamonds at various locations throughout Baltimore County.

2. Contracts – (39) – Senior assisted living facility services

This Fiscal Matter was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

3. Amendment to Contract – Pinnacle Communications Resource Company, LLC – On-call environmental consulting services

An amendment to the contract with Pinnacle Communications Resource Company, LLC, to provide on-call environmental consulting services, to develop and implement targeted education and outreach messaging and materials.

4. Agreement – United States Geological Survey Maryland – Continuous-record streamflow and water quality gages

A contract with United States Geological Survey Maryland, to provide continuous-record streamflow and water-quality gages at various locations in Baltimore County.

5. BAT – Department of Public Works – Long Quarter South Interceptor Rehab project

This Fiscal Matter was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

6. Contract of Sale – Mt. Everest, Inc. - Acquisition of parcel – 6712 Windsor Mill Road, 21207 – Windsor Mill Road Project

A contract of sale with Mt. Everest, Inc., to acquire a parcel of land located at 6712 Windsor Mill Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21207, for the Windsor Mill Road Project.

7. Contract of Sale –Robert Lacy Bush - Acquisition of parcel – 6802 Windsor Mill Road, 21207 – Windsor Mill Road Project

A contract of sale with Robert Lacy Bush, to acquire a parcel of land located at 6802 Windsor Mill Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21207, for the Windsor Mill Road Project.

8. Contract – Bolton Partners, Inc. – Actuarial services

A contract with Bolton Partners, Inc., to provide actuarial services, to include but not limited to valuation and analysis services.

There being no discussion, upon motion by Councilman Kach, seconded by Councilman Crandell, Fiscal Matters 1, 3, 4 and 6 through 8 were unanimously approved.

G. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. Correspondence - Non-Competitive Awards

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read the correspondence from the Office of Budget and Finance listing the non-competitive awards made during June, 2025.

2. Grants - FY2026 Arts and Sciences Grants

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this correspondence from the County Administrative Office, for FY2026 Arts and Sciences General Fund Grants. The funds will be used to support the arts and sciences available to all Baltimore County residents. Jonathan Sachs testified. Councilman Patoka commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Kach, these Grants were unanimously approved.

3. Res. 36-25 – Accept monetary donation – Ms. Anne Louise Allen – DNA testing and analysis

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this Resolution of the Baltimore County Council to authorize the County to accept a donation of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00). Captain Buckingham testified. Councilman Jones commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Ertel, this Resolution was unanimously approved.

5. Appointment – Baltimore County Inspector General – Khadija Walker

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this correspondence from the County Executive nominating Khadija Walker to serve as Inspector General, subject to confirmation by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the County Council. Councilmembers Jones, Patoka and Kach commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Ertel, this Appointment failed by the following roll call vote:

Aye - Young, Jones

Nay – Patoka, Kach, Mark, Ertel, Crandell

4. Appointment – Baltimore County Ethics Commission – James Haynes

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this correspondence from the County Executive appointing James Haynes to the Baltimore County Ethics Commission for a three-year term to expire on June 30, 2028. There being no discussion, upon motion by Councilman Ertel, seconded by Councilman Kach, this Appointment was unanimously confirmed.

6. Res. 37-25 – Accept a donation – National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS)

This Resolution was for introduction only.

7. Res. 38-25 – Authorize payment in lieu of property taxes (PILOT) – Towson Owner, LLC

This Resolution was for introduction only.

8. Res. 39-25 – Authorize payment in lieu of property taxes (PILOT) – Holiday Heights MD TC LP

This Resolution was for introduction only.

9. Res. 40-25 – General Assembly – Inspector General Oversight of BCPS

This Resolution was for introduction only.

E. CALL OF BILLS FOR FINAL READING AND VOTE

There are no Bills for Final Reading and Vote at this time.

D. INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 51-25 entitled An Act for the purpose of amending the 2025-2026 Current Expense Budget, by appropriating to the Gifts and Grants Special Revenue Fund monies derived from federal funds and made available to the County through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy.

Bill 52-25 entitled An Act for the purpose of clarifying the circumstances under which a demolition permit may be issued for a certain structure; and generally relating to County Landmarks and Historical and Architectural Preservation.

Bill 53-25 entitled An Act for the purpose of amending Bill 6-24 in order to repeal and re-enact an uncodified provision setting forth the applicability of certain provisions of the Act; and generally relating to the Maryland Model Floodplain Ordinance.

Bill 54-25 entitled An Act for the purpose of permitting a Councilmember to make a corrective change to a Zoning Map approved during the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process under certain circumstances in order to return a property to its previous zoning; and generally relating to the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process.

Bill 55-25 entitled An Act for the purpose of revising and reconstituting the councilmanic districts of Baltimore County in accordance with the increase from seven to nine Council districts, beginning with the 2026 election, as required by Sections 206 and 207 of the Baltimore County Charter.

Following the introduction of bills, Chairman Ertel stated the following:

Before we adjourn the meeting, I want to make some remarks about Bill 55-25, the Redistricting bill we introduced this evening.

It has been said before, but it bears repeating. The bill and map we introduced tonight gets us one step closer to the historic expansion of the Baltimore County Council from seven to nine members. Since Baltimore County became a Chartered County in 1956, the County has changed dramatically – our demographics have changed, we are a more diverse County than ever before, and our population has more than tripled. We recognized that expanding the County Council would be very difficult. But we also realized that it was overdue, and was a necessary and welcome step to keep moving the County forward and in the right direction.

Expanding the Council also means drawing new Council districts. To do that, we enlisted the help of the Councilmanic Redistricting Commission. Each of us appointed a member to the Commission. Their work was difficult and complex. From January through June, the Commission held 13 public meetings, released two draft maps, and a majority approved a third map as its final recommendation. The Commission submitted its final report and recommendation to the County Council on June 17th. Their work was not without controversy and some members had to endure name-calling and threats. Frankly, they did most of the heavy lifting when it comes to redistricting. They gathered the relevant data, received training on all aspects of redistricting, and submitted a final report and recommendation. I want to thank each volunteer member of the Redistricting Commission for their long hours and hard work. They all deserve great credit and respect for the work they did in just four months to help get us to where we are today.

Since the Redistricting Commission submitted its final recommendation, the Council has reviewed their map and looked at the data. Each of us gave great consideration to the Commission's map. The Commission's map created two majority African-American districts and one majority-minority or "BIPOC" district on the West Side of the County, and one BIPOC district on the East Side of the County. In creating the BIPOC district on the West Side, the Commission's map reduced the voting-age population of the majority African-American districts to relatively slim majorities. In addition, both BIPOC districts split up communities in Woodlawn, and in the Essex-Middle River areas. However, we were not willing to sacrifice communities as well as jeopardize the voting power of strong, established majority African-American districts in order to create BIPOC districts that look gerrymandered, and we were not convinced would actually result in better opportunities for minority candidates.

The Redistricting bill and map we introduced this evening represents a new era for the County and the nine new Council districts we will have in 2026. The map is the product of what County residents emphatically told us they wanted at the July 8th Public Hearing and in many of the emails we have received.

The map creates two solid majority African-American districts that provide the best opportunity for voters in those districts to elect the preferred candidate of their choice, and does not create an adjacent BIPOC district that would detrimentally take African-American voters away from the two majority African-American districts. Rather, the map keeps together communities that were so important to advocates on the West Side of the County, meaning communities that have traditionally been together can stay together and continue to support their preferred candidates. The map also creates two distinct districts in the Randallstown and Woodlawn communities – two areas that have historically been at the center of African-American political advocacy in the County.

Similar to the West Side of the County, we heard at the Public Hearing on July 8th that ensuring communities that have traditionally been together stay together was vitally important on the East Side. Creating a district that encompasses the Essex-Middle River and waterfront areas was also a goal, and this is accomplished with the addition of a new district on the East Side. Like Randallstown and Woodlawn, Essex-Middle River can continue their history of strong advocacy in the new waterfront district.

Now that Bill 55-25 has been introduced, we look forward to hearing more from the public on the bill and map. The next steps will be the Work Sessions on August 26th and September 9th, with the final vote on the bill and map scheduled for September 15th. This will keep us on track for the Redistricting deadline of October 1st.

I sincerely want to thank everyone for their interest in Councilmanic Redistricting as this process continues.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, upon motion by Councilman Crandell, seconded by Councilman Jones, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 P.M.


OPEN MEETINGS ACT COMPLIANCE

Under the provisions of the Maryland Open Meetings Act, after a public body has met in a session closed under § 3-305 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, it must include a summary of the session in the minutes of its next public meeting.

These Meeting Minutes shall reflect that on Tuesday, July 29, 2025 at 2:18 p.m., a public meeting of the County Council was convened in the Council Library. The meeting was properly advertised as required by the County Charter and notice was also placed on the Council's website. The advertisement and notice stated that the meeting would be a public meeting, but could be subject to closure in order to discuss a litigation matter and receive legal advice from the County Attorney. In attendance were Council Chairman Mike Ertel and Councilmembers Izzy Patoka, David Marks, Todd Crandell, and Wade Kach; County Attorney James Benjamin; the undersigned Legislative Counsel/Secretary Tom Bostwick and Deputy Legislative Counsel Adam Phillips; and Acting County Auditor Elizabeth Irwin. There were no persons from the public in attendance. At 2:21 p.m., Councilman Marks moved to close the meeting to discuss the litigation matter and to receive legal advice, seconded by Chairman Ertel, and the motion was unanimously approved by the members present, and thereupon the meeting was closed.

Thereafter, Mr. Benjamin discussed the litigation matter with the Councilmembers. Several Councilmembers asked questions and made comments related to matter and Mr. Benjamin provided advice and his legal interpretation in response.

There being no further discussion during the closed portion of the meeting, at 2:45 p.m., Councilman Kach moved to re-open the meeting, seconded by Councilman Crandell, and the motion was unanimously approved by the members present, and the meeting was reopened. There being no further business, on motion by Councilman Patoka and seconded by Councilman Marks, and unanimously approved by the members present, the meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.


Thomas H. Bostwick
Legislative Counsel/Secretary