

**BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2026, LEGISLATIVE DAY NO. 3**  
**February 2, 2026 6:00 P.M.**

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A. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ertel at 6:10 P.M. The Chairman asked the audience to rise for a moment of silent meditation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. There were approximately 65 persons in attendance. The following Councilmembers were present:

PAT YOUNG	FIRST DISTRICT
IZZY PATOKA	SECOND DISTRICT
WADE KACH	THIRD DISTRICT
JULIAN E. JONES	FOURTH DISTRICT
DAVID MARKS	FIFTH DISTRICT
MICHAEL ERTEL	SIXTH DISTRICT
TODD CRANDELL	SEVENTH DISTRICT

**B. APPROVAL OF JOURNAL**

Upon motion by Councilman Jones seconded by Councilman Young, the reading of the Journal Entries for the meeting of January 20, 2026 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 91-25, 92-25 and 93-25.

**D. INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 10-26** 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 Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration.

**Bill 11-26** 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 made available to the County through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy.

**Bill 12-26** entitled An Act for the purpose of clarifying the application of certain locational and timing requirements for a riding stable in the R.C.5 (Rural-Residential) Zone; and generally relating to uses permitted in the R.C.5 Zone.

**Bill 13-26** entitled An Act for the purpose of establishing a new category of signs to allow a placemaking sign to be located in a commercial and entertainment center under certain circumstances; and generally relating to signs.

**G. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

**4. Appointment – Acting Director – Department of Recreation & Parks – Bryan E. Sheppard**

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this correspondence from the County Executive nominating Bryan Sheppard to serve as Acting Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Mr. Sheppard's appointment follows the retirement of Bob Smith as Director of Recreation and Parks. Councilman Patoka commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones seconded by Councilman Kach, this appointment was unanimously confirmed.

**E. CALL OF BILLS FOR FINAL READING AND VOTE**

**Bill 94-25**, CEB – Professional Development Fund Grant, was called. Councilman Jones moved to amend this Bill with the following amendment:

1. On page 1, in the third line of the purpose paragraph and in the first line of the first WHEREAS clause, strike "Center" and substitute "Commissions".

Councilman Ertel seconded the motion and this amendment passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Thereafter, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Kach, Bill 94-25, as amended, passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 95-25**, Zoning Regulations – Downtown Towson District – Tree Replacement, was called. Councilman Ertel commented. Councilman Marks moved to amend this Bill with the following amendment:

1. On page 3, in line 16, strike “THE PLANTING OF TREES TO REPLACE”; strike lines 17 through 21 and substitute “AN APPLICATION WHICH IS SUBJECT TO ARTICLE 33, TITLE 6 OF THE COUNTY CODE IN ORDER TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF §§ 5-1601 THROUGH 5-1613 OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND AND LOCATED WHOLLY OR IN PART IN THE D.T. DISTRICT IS EXEMPT FROM THE MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 259.16.A.6.A(3)(C).”.

Councilman Jones seconded the motion and this amendment passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Thereafter, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Kach, Bill 95-25, as amended, passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 96-25**, Zoning Regulations – Nonconforming Dwelling Units, was called. Councilman Marks moved to amend this Bill with the following amendments:

1. On page 2, in line 8, after “UNITS” insert “THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED ONE OR MORE VALID RENTAL HOUSING LICENSES”; in line 10, after “AND” insert “BEEN”; in line 12, after “B.” insert “UPON POSTING OF THE PROPERTY BY THE OWNER FOR 14 DAYS,”; in the same line, after “ADMINISTRATIVELY” insert “BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PERMITS, APPROVALS, AND INSPECTIONS”; in line 13, after “AFFIDAVIT” insert “UNDER OATH”.
2. On page 3, in line 1, after “COMPLAINT” insert “WITHIN THE POSTING PERIOD BY AN OCCUPANT OR OWNER WITHIN 1,000 FEET OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY”; in line 3, strike “MAY” and substitute “SHALL”; in line 4, after “USE” insert “UNDER THIS SECTION”; after line 4, insert “D. THIS SECTION DOES NOT ELIMINATE OR REPLACE THE RIGHTS AFFORDED UNDER SECTION 104 OF THESE REGULATIONS.”.

Councilman Jones seconded the motion and these amendments passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Councilman Ertel moved to amend this Bill with the following amendments:

1. On page 1, in the second line of the purpose paragraph, after “time;” insert “exempting certain areas from the provisions of this Act;”.
2. On page 3, after line 4, insert “D. THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION DISTRICT.”.

Councilman Jones seconded the motion and these amendments passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Thereafter, upon motion by Councilman Marks, seconded by Councilman Kach, Bill 96-25, as amended, passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 97-25**, Government Reorganization – Office of Immigrant Affairs, was called. Councilmembers Patoka and Ertel commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Patoka, this Bill passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 98-25**, Protections for Non-U.S. Citizens, was called. Councilmembers Patoka, Jones, Young and Ertel commented. Councilman Ertel moved to amend this Bill with the following amendments:

1. On page 3, in line 20, after “PREEMPTION” insert “; APPLICABILITY”.
2. On page 4, in line 4, strike “OR”; in line 8, strike the period after “STATES” and substitute “; OR”; in line 11, after “INCLUDES” insert “AN”.

3. On page 5, in line 17, strike “OR”; in line 19, after “PASSPORT” insert “; OR (5) REQUIRED IN ORDER TO SCREEN APPLICANTS FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL BENEFITS PROGRAMS”.
4. On page 7, in line 20, strike “OR”; on page 8, in line 3, after “SUBTITLE” insert “; OR (6) INQUIRIES REGARDING CITIZENSHIP OR IMMIGRATION STATUS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCREENING OF APPLICANTS FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL BENEFITS PROGRAMS”.

Councilman Patoka seconded the motion and these amendments passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Thereafter, upon motion by Councilman Patoka, seconded by Councilman Jones, Bill 98-25, as amended, passed by the following roll call vote:

Aye - Young, Patoka, Jones, Ertel  
Nay – Kach, Marks, Crandell

**Bill 1-26**, CEB – MRC-STTRONG, was called. There being no discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Young, this Bill passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 2-26**, CEB – Perinatal Care Coordination Infrastructure, was called. There being no discussion, upon motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Ertel, this Bill passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 3-26, Zoning Regulations – Data Center Study**, was called. Councilmembers Young, Crandell and Patoka commented. Councilman Young moved to amend this Bill with the following amendments:

1. On page 3, in line 5, after “until” insert “either”; in the same line, after “2027” insert “or 90 days after the Planning Board submits its report and recommendations to the County Council under Section 3 of this Act, whichever is earlier”; in line 12, after “centers” insert “hold at least one public hearing,”; in line 14, after “general” insert “description of the nature of data centers, their utility as a piece of IT infrastructure, and a”; in line 18, after “center” insert “as well as data center cooling technology, including air-cooled, closed loop, hybrid, and liquid immersion systems”; in lines 20 and 21, strike “; and” and substitute “, as well as other high-intensity industrial and commercial uses of similar scale, including warehouses, logistics facilities, manufacturing uses, and research and development facilities; (d) on a per acre basis, compares the relative tax revenue generation, assessed property value, employment density, and economic benefit associated with data centers to other uses of a similar size currently permitted in the same zones and locations as data centers, as well as other high-intensity industrial and commercial uses of similar scale; and”; in line 22, strike “(d)” and substitute “(e)”.
2. On page 4, in line 2, after “size,” insert “public utility use, and economic impact,”; in line 3, after “including” strike “a ban” and substitute “restrictions”; in line 11, strike “and”; in line 13, after “considerations” insert “; (7) whether the County should place Project Labor Agreement requirements on the construction of data centers, and, if so, what should those requirements be and under what circumstances should they apply; and (8) an appropriate definition of a data center, including, if necessary, any delineation between a types of data centers based on their use, such as for the training, deployment, or delivery of Artificial Intelligence applications or services”.

Councilman Jones seconded the motion and these amendments passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Councilman Ertel moved to amend this Bill with the following amendment:

1. On page 3, in lines 6 and 7, after “may not” strike “accept any application, petition, or request for a hearing” and substitute “approve any development plan or zoning petition”.

Councilman Young seconded the motion and these amendments passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Councilman Crandell moved to amend this Bill with the following amendment:

1. On page 4, in line 11, strike “and”; in line 13, after “considerations” insert “; and (7) which zoning classifications are appropriate for data centers.”.

Councilman Ertel seconded the motion and this amendment passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Councilman Patoka moved to amend this Bill with the following amendment:

1. On page 3, in line 5, strike “January 1, 2027:” and substitute “August 30, 2026”; in line 13, strike “October 1,” and substitute “June 15,”.

Councilman Ertel seconded the motion and this amendment failed by the following roll call vote:

Aye - Patoka, Marks  
Nay – Young, Kach, Jones, Ertel, Crandell

Thereafter, upon motion by Councilman Young, seconded by Councilman Kach, Bill 3-26, as amended, passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Bill 4-26**, Zoning Regulations – Density Residential (D.R.) Use Regulations in Existing Developments, was called. Councilman Patoka moved to amend this Bill with the following amendments:

1. On page 2, in the third WHEREAS paragraph, in the third and fourth lines, strike “and is at odds with over 50 years of administrative rulings and caselaw regarding the County’s residential Zoning Regulations;” and substitute “and the administrative rulings and caselaw that have interpreted § 1B01.1.B.2;”; in the fourth WHEREAS paragraph, in the first line, after “number of” insert “existing”; in the second line, strike “the County has granted in the intervening 55 years”.
2. On page 3, in the second WHEREAS paragraph, in the first and second lines, strike “appears to ignore the context in which the County Council enacted Bill 100-70 in the first place,” and substitute “is not consistent with the legislative intent of Bill 100-70;”; in the third WHEREAS paragraph, in the second and third lines, strike “individual properties being developed because such zoning changes were required to manage the density and uses of each individual plot;” and substitute “various properties to manage density and the evolving uses of the properties;”; in the fourth WHEREAS paragraph, in the third line, strike “micromanage the zoning or use of each individual plot;” and substitute “consistently update the zoning regulations to reflect evolving zoning uses of property in Baltimore County;”.
3. On page 4, in the WHEREAS paragraph, in the second and third lines, strike “the potential invalidation of over 55 years of approvals by the County,” and substitute “many subsequently-approved zoning uses throughout the County since the adoption of Bill 100- 70;”.

Councilman Ertel seconded the motion and these amendments passed by the following roll call vote:

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

Thereafter, upon motion by Councilman Patoka, seconded by Councilman Jones, Bill 4-26, as amended, passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**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 January 27, 2026. 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 and 2.

**1. Contracts – (3) – On-call landscaping services**

Two leases with Woman, Infant and Children Program and Center for Family Success & Essex Health Center (units 100, 101, 102 & 103), to lease multiple units located at 201 Back River Neck Road, Essex, Maryland 21221.

**1. Amendment to Contracts – National Testing Network, Inc. – Consulting services – Entry level/promotional examinations**

Three contracts to provide on-call landscaping services at various County-owned and/or operated sites.

**2. Contract – Hazen and Sawyer, D.P.C. – Professional engineering services – Lead Reduction Program**

A contract with Hazen and Sawyer, D.P.C., to provide professional engineering services to assist with management of the Lead Reduction Program.

There being no discussion, upon motion by Councilman Patoka, seconded by Councilman Ertel, Fiscal Matters 1 and 2 were unanimously approved.

**G. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

**1. Res. 3-26 – Adoption of Small Area Plan Number 11 – Master Plan 2030**

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this Resolution of the Baltimore County Council to adopt, as part of Baltimore County’s Master Plan, Small Area Plan Number 11 that includes Middle River, Essex, White Marsh, Rossville, and Bowleys Quarters. Councilman Marks motioned to defer Resolution 3-26. Councilman Patoka seconded the motion and this Resolution was deferred by the following roll call vote:

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

It will now be discussed at the Work Session on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 and Final Reading and Vote to occur at the Legislative Session on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

**2. Res. 4-26– Designation of Pikesville as a Sustainable Community**

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this Resolution of the Baltimore County Council to support the designation of the community of Pikesville as a Sustainable Community, pursuant to the Sustainable Community map and Sustainable Community Plan (the “Plan”) as further described in the Sustainable Community Application, attached as Exhibit B (the “Application”), for approval either directly by the Department of Housing and Community Development (the “Department”) of the State of Maryland or through the Smart Growth Subcabinet of the State of Maryland. Councilman Patoka commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Kach, seconded by Councilman Ertel, this Resolution was unanimously approved.

**3. Res. 5-26 – General Assembly – Strengthening laws against squatters**

At the direction of the Chairman, the Secretary read this Resolution of the Baltimore County Council encouraging the Maryland General Assembly to take legislative action to address the continuing crisis of squatting throughout Maryland. Councilman Jones commented. There being no further discussion, upon motion by Councilman Marks, seconded by Councilman Ertel, this Resolution was unanimously approved.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, upon motion by Councilman Kach, seconded by Councilman Crandell, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 P.M.

  
Thomas H. Bostwick  
Legislative Counsel/Secretary