

SECOND MEETING

FIRST COUNCILMANIC YEAR - SESSION OF 2024-2028

JOURNAL
CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE

January 13, 2025

Rabbi Daniel Cotzin Burg of Beth Am Synagogue delivered an opening prayer.

Led by Marine veteran, Councilmember Zac Blanchard, the President and members of the Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The City Council of Baltimore met pursuant to adjournment. Present: Zeke Cohen, President, and Councilmembers Parker, McCray, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos

JOURNAL APPROVED

The Journal of December 5, 2024 was read and approved.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

VERONICA MCBETH, as the Director of the Department of Transportation.

JON LARIA, as the Chair of the Planning Commission.

INTRODUCTION AND READ FIRST TIME

The President laid before the City Council the following bills and Resolutions of the Mayor and City Council for first reading:

Bill No. 25-0001 - By: Councilmembers Dorsey, Parker, Conway, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Ramos, and President Cohen

An Ordinance creating the Department of Consumer Protection and Business Licensing; providing for the leadership and staffing of the Department; establishing the Department's purpose, powers, and duties; creating the Board of Consumer Protection and Business Licensing; providing for the membership of the Board; establishing the purpose, powers, and duties of the Board; transferring the administration of certain business licenses to the Department; repealing certain obsolete Boards; allowing the Department to suspend a certain license if the licensee engages in unfair, abusive, and deceptive trade practices; providing for a special effective date; making conforming changes; and generally relating to consumer protection and business licensing.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Housing and Economic Development Committee.

Bill No. 25-0002 - By: Councilmembers Conway, Pasrker, Dorsey, Middleton, Torrence, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover Ramos, Gray and President Cohen

An Ordinance requiring the Baltimore City Public School System ("City Schools") to prepare a report exploring the causes of student absences to better identify solutions to address the most persistent barriers students face to attending school; requiring City Schools to collaborate with certain City agencies to propose recommendations to address the root causes of unexcused absences found in the report; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Education, Youth, and Older Adults Committee.

Bill No. 25-0003 - By: Councilmembers Bullock, Conway, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos, and President Cohen

An Ordinance establishing Conservation Districts; providing a study, proposal, and review process; defining certain terms; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Housing and Economic Development Committee.

Bill No. 25-0004 - By: Councilmembers Blanchard, Gray, and Jones

An Ordinance reviewing, renewing and continuing the Midtown Community Benefits District and the Midtown Community Benefits Management Authority; providing for a special effective date; and generally relating to the activities and authority of the Midtown Community Benefits District and the Midtown Community Benefits Management Authority; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Housing and Economic Development Committee.

Bill No. 25-0005 - By: The Council President and Councilmember Schleifer
(Administration - Mayor's Office of Government Relations)

An Ordinance altering the criteria for registering as an arson offender with the Police Commissioner; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Public Safety Committee.

Bill No. 25-0006 - By: The Council President and Councilmember Schleifer
(Administration - Department of Planning)

An Ordinance amending provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code relating to variances to conform to relevant State law; making modifications to the process of granting variances; clarifying provisions of the Zoning Code relating to nonconforming structures; and generally relating to the zoning and land use laws of the City of Baltimore.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Land Use and Transportation Committee.

Bill No. 25-0007 - By: The City Council President (Administration - Department of Finance)

An Ordinance providing a Supplementary Special Revenue Fund Operating Appropriation in the amount of \$270,000 to the Mayor's Office of Recovery Programming – Service 916 (Opioid Restitution Administration), to provide funding for additional positions to oversee grants awarded through the Opioid Restitution Fund; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Bill No. 25-0008 - By: The City Council President (Administration - Department of Finance)

An Ordinance providing a Supplementary Special Revenue Fund Operating Appropriation in the amount of \$10,000,000 to the Mayor's Office of Recovery Programming – Service 917 (Opioid Grants - Named Organizations), to provide partial grant funding for non-profit organizations named in settlement agreements; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Bill No. 25-0009 - By: The City Council President (Administration - Department of Finance)

An Ordinance providing a Supplementary Special Revenue Fund Operating Appropriation in the amount of \$1,773,000 to the Mayoralty – Service 918 (Opioid Restitution Administration), to provide funding for additional positions to provide direction and guidance regarding the City’s opioid response, establishment of the Restitution Advisory Board, contractual support to establish a trust fund for litigation proceeds, and community engagement; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Bill No. 25-0010 - By: The City Council President and Councilmember Schleifer
(Administration - Department of Finance)

An Ordinance providing a Supplementary Special Revenue Fund Operating Appropriation in the amount of \$100,000 to the Department of Law – Service 862 (Transactions Contracts), to provide funding to create 2 additional positions to oversee contract agreements with grant organizations; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Bill No. 25-0011 - By: The City Council President (Administration - Department of Finance)

An Ordinance providing a Supplementary Special Revenue Fund Operating Appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 to the Baltimore City Health Department – Service 715 (Health - Administration), to provide funding for planning costs for a replacement facility for the Westside clinic; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Bill No. 25-0012 - By: The City Council President (Administration - Department of Finance)

An Ordinance providing a Supplementary Special Revenue Fund Operating Appropriation in the amount of \$2,000,000 to the Baltimore City Health Department – Service 307 (Health - Substance Use Disorder), to provide funding for staffing and support costs for opioid response and recovery strategies; and providing for a special effective date.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

The President laid before the City Council the following Council Resolutions for first reading:

Bill No. 25-0001R - By: President Cohen and Councilmembers Parker, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, and Ramos

Introduced
(Read and adopted)

Mission Statement for the 74th Term of the Baltimore City Council

FOR the purpose of establishing a mission statement for the 74th term of the City Council of Baltimore.

Recitals

WHEREAS, on Monday, December 9, 2024, members of the City Council collectively drafted a mission statement for its 74th term.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the City Council adopts the following as its mission statement for its 74th term:

The Baltimore City Council is a collaborative body dedicated to delivering reliable, equitable, and sustainable results, which enhance the quality of life for all Baltimoreans.

Through agency oversight, fiscal stewardship, and advocacy, we ensure the City gets the “basics” right, while also striving toward long-term, systems-level transformation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

Councilmember Middleton made a motion, which was duly seconded, that the Rules be suspended.

There being no objection, the President declared that the Rules were suspended.

Then Councilmember Middleton made a motion, which was duly seconded, that the Resolution be adopted.

The roll was called on the motion, resulting as follows:

Yeas - President and Councilmembers Parker, McCray, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos - Total 15.

Nays - 0.

The President declared the Resolution “Adopted”.

Bill No. 25-0002R - By: Councilmembers Middleton, Parker, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos, and President Cohen

Introduced
(Read and adopted)

Honoring the Efforts of First Responders in the Camp Small Woodberry Fire

FOR the purpose of honoring the efforts of the first responders to the recent fire at Camp Small in the Woodberry community on December 5, 2024.

Recitals

At approximately 5:10 pm on Thursday, December 5, 2024, a Baltimore Recreation and Parks employee reported a small fire on the property of Camp Small, a forestry processing center near the Woodberry community.

Because of the high winds and supplies of dry wood, the fire grew quickly into a three-alarm blaze. Beyond standard firefighting equipment, the Baltimore City Fire Department needed heavy machinery such as bulldozers and excavators to contain the fire. Over 100 brave Baltimore firefighters from 12 engine companies, with support from other agencies of the State, City, and Baltimore County, were able to control the fire with several days of dedicated and vigilant containment work.

Despite the severity of the raging fire, Baltimore’s firefighters were able to contain it without any reported injuries or damage beyond the initial site of the fire.

Baltimore is proud of the heroism and bravery of its firefighters, and thanks them for their battle against the December 5 Camp Small fire. Their commitment and courage protected many vulnerable homes from what could have been a deadly tragedy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, that the City Council expresses its deepest gratitude to all of Baltimore’s heroic firefighters and their support for their work in responding to the Camp Small fire. The City Council is committed to lifting up the fearless work of these public servants.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

Councilmember Middleton made a motion, which was duly seconded, that the Rules be suspended.

There being no objection, the President declared that the Rules were suspended.

Then Councilmember Middleton made a motion, which was duly seconded, that the Resolution be adopted.

The roll was called on the motion, resulting as follows:

Yeas - President and Councilmembers Parker, McCray, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos - Total 15.

Nays - 0.

The President declared the Resolution “Adopted”.

Bill No. 25-0003R - By: Councilmember Ramos, President Cohen, and Councilmembers Parker, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, and Glover

A Resolution inviting representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of the City Administrator, the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Office of the Fire Marshal, and other relevant parties to provide information on reforms to the Department of Housing and Community Development’s permit process.

The bill was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Legislative Investigations.

Bill No. 25-0004R - By: Councilmembers Gray, Parker, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos, and President Cohen

Introduced
(Read and adopted)

Request for City Action – Expand the Sewage Onsite Support Program

FOR the purpose of expressing support for the Environmental Protection Agency’s (“EPA”) and Maryland Department of the Environment’s (“MDE”) May 22, 2023 order to the Baltimore City Department of Public Works (“DPW”) to extend Sewage Onsite Support (“SOS”) Program coverage to all residential backups caused, at least in part, by a condition in the City-owned portion of the sewage collection system, and calling on the Mayor and Department of Public Works to implement the full original order in the Emergency Response Plan under the Modified Consent Decree between the City, EPA, and MDE.

Recitals

WHEREAS, raw sewage contains both a variety of pathogens, which can cause serious illnesses, and moisture, which can promote the growth of toxic mold.

WHEREAS, in 2002, Baltimore City entered into a Consent Decree with EPA and MDE to address violations of the Clean Water Act from discharges of untreated sewage. Under the Decree, DPW was required to investigate its wastewater collection system and make improvements to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows, which it failed to do by the 2016 deadline.

WHEREAS, in 2017, the City entered into a Modified Consent Decree with EPA and MDE that set forth new requirements and deadlines for City compliance in 2 phases. The deadline for completion of Phase I was January 2, 2021 and the deadline for Phase II is December 31, 2030.

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Modified Consent Decree, DPW is required to establish a “Building Backup Expedited Reimbursement Program” (“BBERP”) for costs incurred by residents for cleaning and disinfecting their property after certain sewage backups. In May 2023, EPA and MDE approved the City’s proposal to substitute the BBERP with the SOS Program to provide direct assistance to residents with wet-weather capacity-related backups, but denied the City’s plan to restrict the long-term program to only these types of backups.

WHEREAS, in lieu of adopting EPA and MDE’s order, the City invoked the dispute resolution process of the Modified Consent Decree. This process has continued between the agencies and the City for over a year without public comment, oversight, or input.

WHEREAS, residents of Baltimore City have a significant and ongoing interest in knowing what terms will be agreed upon in the finalized version of the Expedited Reimbursement Program and SOS Program required under the Modified Consent Decree. City residents have repeatedly expressed strong support for expanded and strengthened requirements for the City’s response to sewage backups.

WHEREAS, in a presentation to the City Council on June 3, 2024, DPW informed the City Council that in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, to that date, 60 households had applied for the Expedited Reimbursement Program but DPW had approved only 3 for reimbursement, totalling \$14,842.12 in reimbursements. In the same timeframe, DPW had assisted only 15 households through the SOS program, totaling \$121,064.12. This amount of assistance is well below the scope of sewage backup damage suffered by City residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, that the City Council expresses its support for EPA and MDE's May 2023 directive to the City of Baltimore to offer assistance under the SOS program for building backups originating, at least in part, in the City-owned portion of the sewage collection system, regardless of whether the backups occurred due to wet weather or capacity restriction, and calls on the Mayor and Department of Public Works to immediately end its dispute over the directive and re-release the Revised Emergency Response Plan adopting EPA and MDE's full original recommendation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of the Department of Public Works, the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department, the City Solicitor, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

Councilmember Gray made a motion, which was duly seconded, that the Rules be suspended.

There being no objection, the President declared that the Rules were suspended.

Then Councilmember Gray made a motion, which was duly seconded, that the Resolution be adopted.

The roll was called on the motion, resulting as follows:

Yeas - President and Councilmembers Parker, McCray, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos - Total 15.

Nays - 0.

The President declared the Resolution "Adopted".

CONSENT CALENDAR

CEREMONIAL RESOLUTIONS NO. 0001, 0002, 0003, 0004, 0005, 0006, 0007, 0008, 0009, 0010, 0011, 0012, 0013, 0014, AND 0015 ADOPTED UNDER RULE 3-9.

The resolutions were read.

The roll was called on the adoption of the resolutions, resulting as follows:

Yeas - President and Councilmembers Parker, McCray, Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Middleton, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, Glover, Ramos - Total 15.

Nays - 0.

Journal of the City Council

The President declared the resolutions adopted under Rule 3-9.

Ceremonial Resolutions will be found at the end of the Journal.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of President Cohen, duly seconded, the City Council adjourned to meet on Monday, January 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

Consent Calendar

CR0001 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Reginald Coates on retiring from the city of Baltimore after 48 years of service as a control system operator supervisor.

CR0002 Ramos

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Linnea Anderson, Keith Beatty, Wendell Blaylock, Teresa Cummings, Christopher Franklin, Jr., Suzette Geffrard, Howard Gillis, Milton Grant, Alice Lium, Melanie Marzette, Gregory Neal, Cecil Payton, Elizabeth Ransom, Karen Redd, Stacy Ridgeway, Drondele Sharpe, Norman Sydnor, and Gordon Williams on faithful service and diligence to provide volunteer services to enhance the Hillen community.

CR0003 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Shameka Akia McFadden.

CR0004 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Margaret Laurene Powell.

CR0005 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Mary Francis O'Neal.

CR0006 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Lula Mae Terry.

CR0007 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Leola Bossard.

CR0008 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Charles Kauffman Jr. on 38 years of service to the City of Baltimore.

CR0009 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Rosie Mae Barnhardt.

CR0010 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Isabelle Krough on outstanding service as the inaugural teen representative of the Butchers Hill Association Executive Board.

CR0011 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Dan Kiselik on exemplary service to the community as President of the Butchers Hill Association

CR0012 President Cohen, All Members

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Beth Braun on exemplary service to the community as President of the Butchers Hill Association.

CR0013 Jones

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Pastor Dantwan Broady on his 8th pastoral anniversary at Temple church and ministries.

CR0014 Torrence

A Baltimore City Council Resolution on the death of Charlotte Tires.

CR0015 Vice President Middleton

A Baltimore City Council Resolution congratulating Chief James Wallace on the committed and tireless efforts you invest in ensuring the safety of the residents in the city of Baltimore.