



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
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COUNCILMEMBERS

Calvin Ball, Chairperson
District 2
Courtney Watson, Vice
Chairperson
District 1
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3
Mary Kay Sigaty
District 4
Greg Fox
District 5

Minutes Budget Work Session May 2, 2014

The Chair called the work session to order at 8:32 a.m. in the Banneker Room.

Members Present: Dr. Calvin Ball, Chairperson; Courtney Watson, Vice Chairperson; Greg Fox; Mary Kay Sigaty; Jen Terrasa

Budget Staff Present: Ray Wacks, Gale Benson

Council Staff: Craig Glendenning, Auditor; Audit Staff: Ed Shulder, Lisa Geerman; Ali Shiraze; Jim Meyd; Administrator: Sheila Tolliver

Chief Administrative Judge Lenore Gelfman summarized the operating and capital budget requests. She emphasized the need for a larger court house. Mr. Wacks noted that the County had hoped for State funding for part of the construction costs; the State's failure to provide funds increases the time period for completing this project. The Council also discussed the implications of defendants with mental health problems and the advisability of a mental health court.

Follow-up Requested:

- Sheila Tolliver will provide members with a copy of the April 28 edition of the *Daily Record's* story on the new Montgomery County court house.
- Sheila Tolliver will send to Judge Gelfman a copy of Judge Mary Reese's letter on the implications of defendants with mental illness.

Mr. Wacks summarized the budget allowance for the Orphans' Court, which contains only adjustments in salaries for judges.

State's Attorney Dario Broccolino described the budget for the State's Attorney's Office as status-quo. He noted the potential impact of the decision to provide attorneys to represent those charged with crimes in their appearance before the court commissioner. He explained that the Governor allowed \$10 million in State funds for attorneys' costs, but provided that the counties would pick up the difference, the dimension of which is unknown.

Follow-up Requested:

- An analysis of the State law (and court decision) leading to the \$3 million allocation at the State level for public defenders was requested.

Sheriff James Fitzgerald explained that his budget includes one new deputy. He highlighted accomplishments of his office.

The Board of Elections reported that its funding will decrease in FY 2015; however they have encumbered \$350,000 for new voting machines and have asked for funding related to a possible court case challenging the denial of the petition to referendum of some items in the comprehensive zoning legislation.

The Chair noted that the Council previously had discussed its budget in open meetings during the request development process.

Follow-up: Sheila Tolliver will provide members the amount of money allowed for the proposed salary increase for members of the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board, which will not be permitted because of the failure of State enabling legislation.

President Kate Hetherington, with Lynn Coleman, Vice President for Budget and Finance, summarized the increases in the budget of Howard Community College. These include a 3% salary adjustment for faculty and staff, 15 new positions, and operating funds sufficient to allow tuition increases to be minimal (\$2 per credit hour). She expressed strong support for the \$2.5 million allowed for scholarships and explained the College's intended targeting of those funds.

Ms. Coleman described plans to move funds from the College's fund balance and systemic renovation fund to allow the expanded garage project to move forward. She noted that the total cost of the new science building is estimated at \$74 million.

Follow-up:

- Mr. Wacks will clarify whether the scholarship funds are allocated to the College, the Foundation, or a separate fund. (He explained that they are in a separate fund and will be released to the Foundation or College, subject to a memorandum of understanding to be developed.)
- Dr. Hetherington will provide detail on how the funds will be distributed and what restrictions on their use will be imposed (some members expressed support for limiting scholarships to County residents.)
- Sheila Tolliver will provide the College a copy of legislation requiring the Transportation Board to analyze transportation alternatives and present a report.

President and C.E.O. Valerie Gross summarized the components of the 6.5% increase in the budget for public libraries. She expressed pleasure at the full funding anticipated for the ElkrIDGE branch construction, and discussed the need for a future facility to serve the southwestern portion of the county.

Dr. Renee Foose, Superintendent of Schools, with Ellen Flynn Giles, Board President, Beverly Davis, Budget Director, and Linda Wise, Deputy Superintendent, discussed the \$32.9 million (6.6%) increase proposed for the public schools. The proposed new

initiatives at six elementary schools, which are funded in the operating budget, were described by Dr. Evans.

Ken Roey, Chief of Facilities, summarized the capital budget allowance of \$77.338 million. He said that the County's failure to achieve the full \$4 million in State funds which had been estimated for the Patuxent Valley Middle School project would require the County to cover additional costs.

Ms. Watson asked Mr. Wacks to review the difference between the likely debt affordability and the capital requests programmed in the budget for FY 2016 and beyond. This discussion highlighted the need to moderate expectations for capital funding, as the need for projects significantly exceeds the County's debt affordability.

Ken Roey mentioned the estimated fiscal impact of the State's passing legislation to lower the threshold of State participation in capital projects that would trigger a requirement that contracts be bid at the prevailing wage. The Board noted that it had opposed this State legislation.

Dr. Ball asked for an update on relocatable classrooms. Mr. Roey summarized the numbers, the reasons for continued use of relocatable facilities, and the costs of moving them.

Follow-up:

- The auditor will analyze a selection of capital projects to estimate what the cost of the projects would have been using the State's formula and what it was using the County's actual spending.
- Mr. Roey will provide an inventory of relocatable classrooms and a discussion of the security plans for schools using relocatable classrooms.
- The auditor will show how per pupil spending in Howard County compares to other counties' spending over a period of ten years.
- The auditor will work with the school system to provide a table that shows how the Board's budget, as displayed in its new program format, relates to the budget categories which the State has defined and in which the County must appropriate funds.

The meeting closed at 11:20 a.m.