



# Howard County Council

George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

## COUNCILMEMBERS

Christiana Rigby, Chair  
District 3

Deb Jung, Vice Chair  
District 4

Liz Walsh  
District 1

Opel Jones  
District 2

David Yungmann  
District 5

## Operating Budget Work Session #5 – Approved

Web-based Hybrid Meeting  
Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>  
Wednesday, May 15, 2023  
1:00 p.m.

Chair Rigby opened the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

**Members Present:** Christiana Rigby, Chairperson; Deb Jung, Vice Chairperson; Liz Walsh; and David Yungmann.

**Staff Present:** Michelle Harrod, Council Administrator; Theo Wimberly, Administrative Manager; Lynne Blume Rosen, Roz Hightower, Administrative Support; Gary Kuc, County Solicitor; Amanda Mihill, Assistant County Solicitor; Owen Clark, Deputy County Auditor; Lori Buchman, County Auditor's office.

**Administration Staff Present:** Noted below.

### Agenda:

#### **Community Services and Public Works**

##### Social Services

Ms. Rieu provided highlights of the programs offered by the Department of Social Services, including the Ready by 21 Program for foster children and requested the continued funding of the Program after the depletion of COVID funds.

The Council Members and Ms. Rieu discussed:

- the issue of youth aging out of foster care who can no longer afford to live in Howard County;
- the use of housing vouchers for children who are experiencing homelessness for the youth who are aging out of foster care; and
- the State employee positions that are receiving salary increases to make them more attractive to potential job candidates, including child abuse and neglect screeners;

## Health Department

Dr. Rossman provided an overview of the proposed FY2024 Operating Budget for the Health Department, including salary increases, cost of living adjustments, and technology contract increases. Dr. Rossman reviewed:

- implementation of COVID responses as a regular part of its public health responsibilities;
- a three-year strategic plan, including addressing mental health, substance abuse, and chronic health issues;
- the Department's receipt of a three-year grant to support maternal health, school-based wellness initiatives, and the leveraging of State grant funding to reduce harm in the areas of mental health and substance abuse;
- the increase in environmental health fees to meet the needs of businesses and homeowners as a result of a study of the staffing costs and technology costs of each fee;
- hiring of a part time person for sound monitoring including sound at Merriweather Post Pavilion;
- receipt of a State grant for a community outreach health officer for chronic disease and healthy lifestyles;
- efforts to reduce food scarcity in our community;
- workforce development efforts due to the continuing struggle to hire qualified individuals; and
- goal of increased clinical reimbursement, including school based wellness clinics.

The Council Members, Dr. Rossman, and Mr. Davis discussed:

- the specific functions being expanded with the online environmental health initiative;
- status of noise monitoring efforts, including Merriweather Post Pavilion and property adjacent to Route 32;
- efforts regarding mental health for children;
- endemic stage of COVID, the need to address the impact on children of social isolation, mental health, and education lapses;
- returning of workforce to post covid workflow and address of public health issues;
- underfunding for future crises due to stopping of COVID funds; and
- status of 2022 health report card.

### *Council Requested:*

- Please provide an analysis of the costs associated with performing a sound study for traffic noise.
- Please provide a report on what factors impact residents' quality of life.
- Please provide the Health Report Card once updated. Please indicate when this will be completed.

## Community Resources and Services

Ms. Scott provided an overview of the proposed FY2024 Operating Budget for the Department of Community Resources and Services, including the impact of the sunseting of COVID emergency funds. She reviewed efforts regarding changing the narrative around how people see

human services and the launching of three new initiatives, the East Columbia 50 Plus Center, a Columbia based multi-service center, and the Family Support Center.

The Council Members, Ms. Scott, Ms. Mattis, Department staff, and Mr. Mamo discussed:

- the Family Support Center and its relationship with the Blueprint;
- consumer protection activities;
- payment of rent, eviction, and mental health issues;
- correction of double counting of salaries in grants fund;
- salary increases to address staff turnover;
- underserving of children and adults in the Elkridge area;
- rebuilding of programs after COVID to include nutritional programs and availability of food at senior centers;
- increase in need for bilingual services;
- Community Service Partnership Grant programs, sources of funding, and targeting investments to critical needs;
- new positions in the budget;
- Howard County General Hospital, the emergency department, and hospital audits; and
- Summer Academic Program.

*Council Requested:*

- Please provide a list of services provided, location, size of facility, and what areas they serve.

CSP

- Please indicate how much the County is spending collectively on homelessness. Please include a summary of who is offering the assistance, if they are receiving a direct or indirect grant and what specific program they are providing, if applicable. Please provide for the past 5 years.
- Please provide the data on the success of the Summer Academic Program. Please indicate the funding source of the program and who is receiving assistance from the program.

**Motion by Council to Suspend Rule 1.007(b)(1) Consideration of bills – Amendment Prefile**

The motion to suspend Rule 1.007(b)(1) to change the FY2024 Budget Amendment Prefile date from Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2 pm to Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon passed.

Recreation and Parks

Ms. Morgal provided an overview of the proposed FY2024 Operating Budget for the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department priorities.

The Council Members, Ms. Morgal, and Mr. Mamo discussed:

- Department efforts to respond to the mental and behavioral health crisis experienced by children, including improving mindfulness skills and resiliency, in addition to training to expand the mental health awareness of staff for before and after care programs and childcare providers;
- contingent community outreach positions and their responsibilities;

- status of vacant positions, including the frequent turnover of part-time benefited child care providers;
- status and location of existing and planned community and teen centers and future plans for siting of activities in Elkridge;
- timeline for strategic planning to implement the priorities of the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan;
- teen centers for Elkridge, Wilde Lake, and Harper's Choice and planning for partnerships with the Columbia Association and other community groups to use existing buildings;
- positive cash flow at golf course that covers current operating expenses, recent capital improvements, and the anticipated need for funding future capital expenses; and
- operating budget statement and FY 2023 revenue, use of the capital projects fund, funding of projects with transfer taxes, and projects that have not been funded.

### Department of Public Works

Mr. Kebede provided an overview of the proposed FY 2024 Operating Budget for the Department of Public Works. He described cost increases for construction tools, maintenance contracts, labor, software, gas and electric, and fleet maintenance at the same time as increasing demands for services. Mr. Kebede reviewed the organizational chart, profiled key activities that inform the budget request, and workforce challenges. He reviewed the proposed fee increases. The budget is meant to maintain the current level of service and continue to prepare for increasing costs. He discussed the availability of federal funds and opportunities for collaboration with regional stakeholders.

The Council Members, Mr. Kebede, DPW staff, Mr. Mamo, and Mr. Gardner discussed:

- how to address vacancies with apprenticeship training programs and partnerships with education institutions to create workforce pipelines;
- the number of vacancies that are not filled for critical positions and the need to increase operating budget to offer higher salaries after receiving the results of the County Compensation Study and how to implement its recommendations;
- overtime costs compared to regular salaries;
- response times for providing services;
- reasons why and for which agencies DPW carries operation and capital costs of other County agencies and payment of utility bills;
- status of Complete Streets training for County engineers;
- maintenance costs for proposed Central Branch library; and
- amounts and reasons for proposed fee increases.

### *Council requests:*

- What initiatives will be implemented in the near future to address the vacancy problems?
- Please provide the overtime costs over the past 5 years, by Bureau.
- Please provide the number of calls for services and the response times for the past 5 years. Please provide broken down by service.
- Please provide the debt service amount for the new Howard County Library Central Branch.

Chair Rigby adjourned the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

**5/15/2023 Operating Work Session #4 and #5 Attendee List:**

**Budget Office**

Holly Sun  
Brook Mamo  
James Kwak  
Andrew Galarza  
Norman Schnobrich  
Caitlin Nardolillo  
Paul McIntyre

**Economic Development**

Larry Twele  
Elaine Brown  
Kathy Johnson

**Police**

Greg Derr  
Sean Hollywood  
Alex Rosensweet  
Cory Zirk  
Thomas Ehart  
Justin Baker  
Gary McLhinney  
Terrence Benn  
Wayne Weaver

**Fire**

Louis Winston  
Robert Smeltzer  
Gordon Wallace  
Tavon Claggett  
Bruce Bennett  
Meaghan Kordusky  
Sean Alliger  
Sharon Walsh

**County Executive**

Angela Cabellon  
Felix Facchine

**County Administration**

Anju Bennett  
Raul Delerme  
Lindsay DeMarzo  
Maria Bernadzikowski  
Dean Hof  
Mark Miller

Robert Phillips  
Patrick Pope  
Brandee Ganz  
Jennifer Sager  
Yolanda Sonnier  
Francine Trout

**Transportation**

Bruce Gartner  
Jai Saunders  
David Cookson

**Social Services**

Geneva Rieu  
Michelle Goodman  
Jan Wilson

**Health Department**

Maura Rossman  
Moenik Bleu  
Antigone Vickery  
Michael Davis

**Community Resource Services**

Jacqueline Scott  
Cheryl Mattis  
Kellie Brown

**CSP**

Jacqueline Scott  
Cheryl Mattis  
Kellie Brown  
Rose Burton  
Megan Godfrey

**Recreation and Parks**

Nicola Morgal  
Mike Milani  
Bill Eckart  
Dan McNamara

**Public Works**

Yosef Kebede  
Michele Dudek  
Sharon Walsh  
Mark DeLuca  
Mark Richmond  
Lindsey DeMarzo

Ross Beschner  
Amy Hart  
Maria Madison  
Amah Binde