



Howard County Council

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

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 (draft; rev 5/14-Approved)
Budget Work Session
May 9, 2014
C. Vernon Gray Conference Room

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

Council Staff Present: Sheila Tolliver, Administrator; Craig Glendenning, Auditor; Audit Staff: Ed Shulder, Lisa Geerman, Steve Peters, Jim Meyd, Ali Shirazie

Administration Budget Staff: Ray Wacks, Budget Director; Analysts: Brooke Mano, Don Stitely, Gale Benson

The Chairperson, Dr. Calvin Ball, called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. in the C. Vernon Gray Conference Room. He called on Rick Walter, Area Extension Director for the Cooperative Extension Service, to discuss the soil conservation allowance. Mr. Walter noted that it allows only for a cost of living and merit increase in salaries. He also invited members to the open house on October 23, 2014 to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Cooperative Extension.

Donna Wells, Executive Director of the Mental Health Authority, highlighted additions of \$70,000 for a second mobile crisis team and \$75,000 allowed for Grassroots to conduct an EP follow-up program. She said that the Authority has State funds for FY 2015 for crisis management, and they will look to the Horizon Foundation for assistance with non-Medicaid-eligible clients.

Karen Butler, Director of the Department of Social Services, noted the following enhancements: a fiscal position, funds for child care subsidies, and positions to staff moving the inter-agency family preservation program in-house (to be reimbursed by a State grant). She noted the difficulty in being able to do timely hiring to fill vacant positions because of the State's processes.

John Byrd, Director; Laura Wetherald, Operations; Raul Delerme, Capital Projects; and Bill Eckert, Budget, discussed the budget allowed for the Department of Recreation and Parks. The highlighted the following: an increase in the scope of Blandair, for which 8 phases are planned, one is complete, and two are in design; a second phase for Troy Park; and continuation of the Belmont property for which \$1.4 million already has been expended of an expected total of about \$2.5 million.

There also was an update on North Laurel's master plan for a pool, Patapsco Female Institute's restoration, East Columbia Library, South Branch Park, .Columbia Youth baseball fields and community park, Carroll Property at Kiwanis Park.

The following follow-up questions were posed concerning the capital budget:

- A list of what has been done and what is planned for Belmont;
- A copy of the agreement with the town of Sykesville concerning South Branch Park,
- A plan to clear brush between the library and school on fields identified by Council member Terrasa.

In the operating budget, Mr. Byrd noted five new positions associated with capital projects. Ms. Wetherald confirmed that camps will be held in the winter. Support for expansion of deer management was offered.

Jackie Scott, Deputy Director, and Cheryl Mattis, Director of Budget and Planning, discussed the budget for the Department of Citizen Services. They noted a new parent educator for the parents as teachers program in Children's Services; a conversion of a contingent employee in Voices for Change; a conversion of two contingent positions to benefitted positions in the Office on Aging; the launch of a community outreach for the senior study on facilities and programs. Ms. Watson noted that the outreach needs to be broad, including people in assisted living facilities.

John Powell, Director of the Department of Transportation, and Jai Saunders, Budget, discussed the regional transportation agency, which will begin service on July 1, increasing the red line to Columbia from a one-hour cycle to a half-hour cycle. He also noted that there is an allowance for a bicycle/pedestrian coordinator, and \$900,000 for the bike plan.

Maura Rossman, Health Officer, noted that no new positions were allowed for the Health Department, but that excess funds resulting from slow recruiting allow the following enhancements: year two of the HIV project; a Heal Zone in North Laurel/Savage to allow healthy diets and active lifestyles; community health work initiatives to reduce preventable hospitalizations; and a school based health center at Bollman Bridge; influenza prevention program. They also requested funds for mental health training, Stand-up Howard County, anti-bullying; streamlining health care and reducing gaps; Alzheimer's programming, including the "I'm still here program"; shade structures to reduce melanoma; social services coordination; intergenerational transport; and continuation of the food hub. Ms. Sigaty expressed concern about the sustainability of the rant programs and urged billing consumers or their insurance companies. In response to Mr. Fox's observation that only \$8 million of \$9 million appropriated in FY 2014 had been spent, Mr. Wacks offered that the County had assumed a 10% turnover rate when it calculated COLA's for FY 2015, in light of the difficulty in filling vacancies.

The following follow-up questions were asked:

- Ms. Sigaty asked for a plan for the sustainability of the food hub.

The Council broke at 11:20 a.m. and resumed at 1:15 p.m.

Jackie Scott returned with staff from the Department of Citizen Services for the discussion of the community partnership (grants) programs.

The following new grants were highlighted: Camp Attaway and Living in Recovery (two new programs); a change in program name for Family Stabilization (to Pathways Program); the homelessness program; workforce inclusion through Humanim, a welcome center through FIRN, a one-time grants initiative, and initiative grants.

Ms. Terrasa asked for a comparison of the grant requests with the allowances [note: Mr. Glendenning provided this information on May 12].

She also asked how much Camp Attaway received when they were part of the budget for the Dept. of Recreation and Parks. [note: information provided on May 12]

Colleen West, Director of the Arts Council, highlighted increases totaling \$650,000 including arts programming at Long Reach (\$202,450), an arts incubator at Long Reach (\$200,000), and \$250,000 for organizational stability.

- Ms. Watson asked for an update on the Long Reach village center purchase.

Mr. Wacks reported that the Tourism program gets revenues from the hotel and amusement taxes automatically.

The Plan to End Homelessness gets about 100 calls per month, but half don't live in the county or need services from other agencies. About 150 families are in active management.

- Mr. Fox asked for the applications for funding from Pathways and the Plan to End Homelessness.

Healthy Howard has approximately 100,000 enrolled and will shift to outreach to the foreign born and connections with other resources now that the health care for all initiative is underway in the State.

Mr. Wacks explained that funding for the Patapsco Heritage Greenway was put into a general account where it can be drawn as necessary, as the needs of the project could not be accurately predicted. He also noted that more funds were put into programs, allowing for a reduction in "supplemental funds (formerly emergency funds)."

At the request of Ms. Watson, a synopsis of the Aging In Place initiative was provided by Ms. Scott.

- Ms. Watson asked how the \$250,000 provided to the Department of Citizen Services on an "as needed" basis in FY 2014 was used.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

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