



Howard County Council

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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 (draft-Approved) Operating Budget Work Session May 13, 2014

Members Present: Dr. Calvin Ball, Chairperson; Greg Fox (arrived 8:40), Mary Kay Sigaty, Jen Terrasa (arrived 8:45), Courtney Watson

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

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

The Chairperson, Dr. Calvin Ball, called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. in the C. Vernon Gray Conference Room. He called on Stan Milesky, Director, Department of Finance, who explained that there is one additional position allowed in FY 2015 for a person to ensure that the Executive agencies are complying with financial policies. This position may be located in either the Finance Office or the Office of the County Administrator.

Ms. Sigaty asked Mr. Milesky about the spending for broadband above the appropriation in FY 2014. Mr. Wacks replied that the Administration will be submitting an amendment to the FY 2014 budget to bring the spending into compliance.

Lonnie Robbins, County Administrator, and Nancy Gray, Assistant Administrator, summarized changes in the Executive and County Administration budgets, highlighting \$100,000 allowed for payouts to employee departures associated with the turnover in administrations; \$50,000 for transition expenses for the new County Executive; 2 positions, one in Human Resources to provide training and one in Purchasing to handle work load increases. He explained increases in operating funds to a number of offices within the Administration Office.

- Dr. Ball requested a list of the duties expected of the Downtown Development Director.

Joshua Feldmark, Director of the Office of Sustainability, explained that \$2 million in the “paygo” budget will pay for capital projects, and \$2 million in operations will fund design work, facilitation, and a possible management consultant to help implement the capital projects. He explained the process of selecting non-profits from the applicant

pool for receipt of grants and affirmed that fees are waived for everyone on the waiting list, whether or not their project is receiving funding.

Margaret Ann Nolan, County Solicitor; Paul Johnson, Deputy, highlighted initiatives completed in FY 2014 and noted that three attorneys will be leaving the office and will be replaced.

Larry Twele, CEO of the Economic Development Authority; Julie Lenzer-Kirk, Director of the Maryland Entrepreneurial Center (MEC); Vernon Thompson, Executive Vice President; and Lou LaPenna, Chief Financial Officer, discussed the budget of the Economic Development Authority, including a 4.5% overall increase. Asked if they have sufficient staff for the new initiatives planned, Mr. Twele reported that they asked for one position more than allowed, a researcher.

He noted that the Downtown Development Director position would be expanded to provide support for Route 1 Revitalization and the Columbia villages projects as well as to downtown.

A discussion followed about the move of the entrepreneurial center and office to the former Columbia Flier property. Mr. Wacks reported that \$2.8 million had been used for acquisition and \$1 million is estimated for first year renovation costs for the 30,000 square foot facility.

Tom Carbo, Director, of the Department of Housing and Community Development, summarized accomplishments in FY 2014. He noted new initiatives to revive the rehabilitation loan program and the revitalization loan program. He noted that his expenses are funded primarily from transfer taxes; the Housing Commission reimburses the County for its salary expenses from these funds. He noted that they asked for two new positions, one for the development/finance team; the other for community outreach.

Chris Merdon, Director of the Department of Communications and Technology Services; joined by Sandy Stecker, Deputy; and Norman Schnobrich, Fiscal Manager, highlighted new initiatives: 1) establishment of a project management office; 2) roll-out of surveillance cameras; 3) wireless in all facilities; 4) implementation of features associated with the CISCO enterprise license; 5) establishment of three enterprise funds and operating funds for the Intercounty Broadband Network; 6) 6 new county-specific positions, including conversion of two contract positions and addition of a technology person dedicated to the Economic Development Authority; 7) COLA's for staff; laptops for the Sheriff's and Police Departments; and 8) support for expansion of the use of SAP.

- Ms. Terrasa asked for a list of departments with dedicated technology staff.

There followed a discussion of funds, with the following highlights:

Fire Tax: Mr. Wacks thinks it will be adequate without increase through FY 16;
Speed Cameras:

- Mr. Wacks will get detail to better explain the revenue projections and the contract costs.

Environmental Services: costs of collecting trash are rising; fees have not, but will need to in the future;

Water/sewer fund: reflects transfers in of ad valorem tax and expenditures out; City water price increased 11%, County fees rising 9%, difference covered by ad valorem revenue.

Shared septic: Expect fee increases when County assumes all shared septic systems in FY 2016. Jim Irvin, Director of Public Works, will provide advance notice to Council of areas where fees will rise in the future.

Community Action Council: Mr. Wacks reported on three areas of funding, as follows: \$50,000 increase in the CSP (grants program); \$250,000 county match for State funds to food bank; and \$100,000 in the Health Department's budget for an intergenerational bus to serve the Vantage House/Head Start partnership.

Inner Arbor Trust: \$1.8 million in in non-department paygo (summarized on p. 181 in operating budget book, paper edition); In FY 14, \$5million was budgeted; of this, \$500,000 went to the Arts Council and \$4.5 million is held; in FY 15, \$2 million is allowed for Arts and Culture and \$1.5 million for Inner Arbor Trust. Mr. Wacks noted that there will be negotiated agreements to determine the specific uses of the funds.

Ms. Watson noted that the scholarship funds provided to the Community College Foundation need to be conditioned to ensure funds are restricted to scholarships for county residents.

A discussion of expenditures and planned expenditures from the land acquisition budget followed.

In response to a request from Council member Fox, Mr. Irvin offered to send an updated spreadsheet summarizing highway projects.

- Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, promised to provide a list of expected Administration budget amendments by Friday, May 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.