

School Budget Review Committee

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

Approved

Minutes

September 21, 2016

The following members were in attendance: Reg Avery, Olga Butler, Ron Caplan, Dan Chambers (substituting for Paul Lemle), Robert Coleman, Ann De Lacy, Ellen Flynn Giles, Ananta Hejeebu, Joshua Kaufman, Barb Krupiarz (substituting for Jason Werther), and Bill Woodcock. Matta Zeinali from PTACHC attended and may be substituting for Reg Avery in the future. In addition, County Auditor Steve Peters and Council Analyst Jeff Meyers also attended.

The video/audio archive of the meeting is available at this web address:
<http://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Online-Tools/Watch-Us>

Chairperson Joshua Kaufman began the meeting at 6:32 p.m. with reminders about microphone use, camera etiquette, and the process for naming substitute members. Mr. Kaufman proposed adding “scheduling of October meetings” to the agenda. There being no objection, he announced that the poll of members indicated that the next meetings will be on October 11 at 1 p.m. and October 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Woodcock moved to approve the draft minutes from August 30, 2016. Mr. Caplan seconded. By voice vote, the minutes were approved as offered.

Mr. Kaufman listed, in paraphrased form, the duties of the Committee stated in Council Resolution 88-2016. The Committee had an extended discussion about the duties, recognizing that some are connected to particular times of the year. The Committee discussed the meaning of each duty and discussed the nature of the kind of work that would be needed for each. By vote, the Committee prioritized each duty using this matrix:

Duty		votes for high priority	votes for medium priority	votes for low priority
1	review 2014 → 2017 budgets	7	2	2
2	review HCPSS audit 2014 → 2016	3	3	5
3	review budget amendments before CC		4	7
4	review proposed transfers	4	6	1
5	review deferred capital maintenance	2	2	7
6	review not fully funded projects	3	7	1
7	review school sites	2	3	6
8	2018 recommendations	11		
9	process recommendations	11		

Ms. De Lacy offered to provide hard copies of HCPSS budget books to those who want them. Anyone who does should contact Ms. De Lacy directly.

Ms. De Lacy and Ms. Giles noted that staffing comprises more than 85% of the School System's operating budget, thus it seems sensible to focus on that. Ms. Giles also described some of the salient differences in how the capital and operating budgets are handled. The capital budget must be essentially done in the fall to meet a State deadline. Also, the County Executive has more granular control over the capital budget.

Mr. Hejeebu thought that the Committee should also make recommendations about the processes used to formulate and adopt a budget, but there was not a complete consensus about whether that should be limited to the parts of the process controlled by the County Council or the entire process. Mr. Chambers noted that the Citizens Operating Budget Review Committee had made recommendations on these matters during the last budget cycle¹. Mr. Kaufman suggested that it would be useful to solicit and receive public input on budget processes given that there are already several opportunities for public testimony about line items. A discussion of methods to get and evaluate public input will be held at a future meeting.

¹ Mr. Lemle emailed them to the Committee on September 13, 2016

Mr. Kaufman suggested that the Committee initially focus on a few key topics and review the relevant portions of the available budgets on those topics. The Committee may wish to hear from HCPSS program or performance managers or others who are particularly involved with those key topics. The Committee agreed and decided to focus on (1) fixed charges (medical / dental), (2) special education, (3) legal fees, and (4) staffing. Mr. Kaufman and Ms. Butler agreed to try and provide to the Committee more focused information about the parts of documents that would be most help to review.

The Committee adjourned at 8:09 p.m.