

School Budget Review Committee

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

Approved

Minutes

January 11, 2017

The following members were in attendance: Reg Avery, Olga Butler, Ron Caplan, Ann De Lacy, Ellen Flynn Giles, Ananta Hejeebu, Joshua Kaufman, Paul Lemle, Ryan Sturm, and Bill Woodcock. In addition, County Auditor Steve Peters and Council Analyst Jeff Meyers attended. The following representatives of the School System attended: Beverly Davis and David Clark. Matta Zeinali, the alternate for Mr. Avery 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 6:36 p.m.

Mr. Kaufman proposed adding an item to the agenda:

“4. Discussion of actions related to the Superintendent’s proposed budget.”

Mr. Avery moved approval of the item, Mr. Woodcock seconded, and the motion passed by voice vote.

Mr. Kaufman distributed copies of an email from the County Attorney to Mr. Meyers regarding the Superintendent’s appointee to the Committee. The Attorney concluded that the Superintendent, and not the Board of Education, is the sole appointing authority. Ms. De Lacy is the Committee member appointed by the Superintendent.

Ms. De Lacy was concerned that the purposes of the Committee did not include improving student achievement. The purposes are listed in [CR88-2016](#).

The Committee reviewed the list of questions formulated on October 11, 2016, as found in the [minutes](#) from that meeting to determine whether all of the questions had been answered. Mr. Woodcock indicated that most of the question had been answered. Other members concluded that questions not marked as answered by Mr. Woodcock either had been addressed or were no longer relevant. The Committee appreciated the efforts of HCPSS staff to provide the information and attend Committee meetings.

In the time since the Committee was formed, elections changed the membership of the Board of Education. The new Board had, among other things, created an Operating Budget Review Committee. Also, the Superintendent's budget proposal was released, which is \$60 million more than the current year's budget. Mr. Kaufman suggested that the time was ripe for the Committee to make interim recommendations that might smooth the budget process.

Ms. Giles noted that each of the entities involved, the Board, the County Executive, and the County Council, has a different responsibility and role in the budget process. The budget process is set out in law, so that the Committee's recommendations could not contravene those responsibilities and roles. Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Hejeebu suggested that common sense recommendations to ensure that all the parties were sharing information and goals would be helpful even if done informally within legal constraints. Mr. Caplan suggested that an informal process is probably used by other counties, citing Baltimore County as an example. Ms. De Lacy noted that Montgomery County adopted term limits as the result of tension over the school system budget and a tax increase.

Mr. Kaufman moved, and Mr. Lemle seconded, that the Committee prepare a set of interim recommendations for any improvements to the 2018 budget. Ms. De Lacy suggested that the motion be restricted to the budget process, but that suggestion was not adopted. The motion passed by voice vote.

The Committee asked staff to investigate methods that members might collaborate on a document that would contain the Committee's interim recommendations being mindful that the Committee desires an open and transparent method that complies with the Open Meetings Act.

Mr. Kaufman asked the members to think about which individuals or organizations the Committee should invite. Mr. Caplan suggested that the chair of the Board of Education's Operating Budget Review Committee. Mr. Clark agreed to facilitate the invitation. The Committee also discussed inviting a representative from HCEA. Mr. Hejeebu was interesting in exploring any differences of opinion between HCEA and HCPSS.

The Committee adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

For Reference - Future Meeting Dates

January

Tue, Jan 31 6:30-8:30p

February :

Wed, Feb 8 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, Feb 23 6:30-8:30p

March:

Wed, Mar 8 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, Mar 23 6:30-8:30p

April:

Wed, Apr 5 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, Apr 27 6:30-8:30p

May:

Wed, May 10 11:30a-1:30p

Thur, May 25 6:30-8:30p