



# Howard County Council

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

## COUNCILMEMBERS

Deb Jung, Chair  
District 4

Liz Walsh, Vice Chair  
District 1

Opel Jones  
District 2

Christiana Rigby  
District 3

David Yungmann  
District 5

## Minutes - Approved

Operating Budget Work Session #3  
Wednesday, May 8, 2024  
Hybrid Meeting (In-Person and WebEx)  
Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>  
10:00 a.m.

Chair Jung opened the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

**Council members present:** Chair Deb Jung, Vice-Chair Liz Walsh, Council Member Opel Jones, Council Member Christiana Rigby, and Council Member David Yungmann.

**Staff present:** Michelle Harrod, Administrator to the County Council; Gary Kuc, County Solicitor; Amanda Mihill, Office of Law; Lisa Geerman, Acting County Auditor; Lori Buchman, Auditor; Rebecca Gold, Auditor; Theo Wimberly, Administrative Manager; Owen Kahn, Legislative Analyst; Isaiah Anderson, Executive Assistant; and Virginia Gambrell, Administrative Aide were also present.

**Administration staff:** Noted below.

## *Agenda*

### **Fire**

The Department of Fire and Rescue introduced their staff and gave a brief overview of the Department's FY2025 operating budget requests. The Department responded to questions from the Council on the Department's efforts to fill outstanding vacant positions; and the opportunity for grants or State funding to fund various programs, including the fall protection program.

There was a general discussion about the net zero tax rate shift between the property tax and the fire tax; the use of appropriation from fund balance; if the change in education funding is affecting fire funding; and the modeling and performance of the fire fund.

The Department responded to further questions from the Council on recording of fund balance transfers through the administrative bureau; standby premium pay for full time equivalent employees; the cost sharing structure with volunteer services; ways to incentivize volunteer recruitment; and what the Department's strategy is to manage retirements and succession.

## **UMD Extension**

The University of Maryland Extension (UME) thanked Howard County for their partnership and presented their FY 2025 requests. UME responded to questions from the Council on their plans for moving their office space and the agreement with the County for building use at the Ascend One; updates on various UME programs in the County; and the mission of UME.

## **Soil Conservation**

The Soil Conservation District presented their FY 2025 operating budget requests. There was a brief conversation about the accomplishments of the Soil Conservation District and the proposed new revolving fund.

## **Planning and Zoning**

The Department of Planning and Zoning presented their FY 2025 operating budget requests and highlighted FY 2024 accomplishments. There was a general discussion about the timeline for starting the APFO Committee, Comprehensive Rezoning, and other long term planning efforts that are currently pending at the Department.

The Department responded to questions from the Council on efforts and need for zoning enforcement; status of comprehensive rezoning; DPZ's process for making zoning decisions; details of a specific case of the fee-in-lieu at Dorsey's Ridge; public notification of decisions; the status of the Downtown Columbia Plan; the Downtown Columbia Liaison position; the proposed fee adjustments; enforcement and benchmarks of the DRRA in Downtown Columbia; general oversight of developer agreements; status of the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund; and the process to review fees.

## **Ag. Preservation**

The Agricultural Preservation team presented their FY 2025 budget requests and responded to a question from the Council on using the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund for salary.

## **Department of Corrections**

The Department of Corrections gave an overview of the Department's FY 2025 operating budget requests. The Department responded to questions from the Council on mandatory requirements at the detention center that would affect the budget; new accreditation and impact on recruiting; plan to fill outstanding vacancies; comparison of correctional pensions to the Police Department; retention rates compared to other counties; the percentage of employees that live in Howard County; strategies to prevent recidivism; US Marshalls detainees housed by the County; and requirements for a new facility.

## **Housing & Community Development**

The Department of Housing and Community Development gave an overview of their FY 2025 budget requests. The Department responded to questions from the Council on efforts to increase low- and moderate-income homeownership opportunities; the plan for transferring homelessness services to DHCD; strategies to reduce the cost of home ownership; projections for MIHUs; use of the community renewal program fund; analysis of fee-in-lieu revenue and amount; the proposed transfer of funds for the community investment funds; and the portion of homelessness services that is expended on personnel costs.

There was a general discussion about the proposed rental subsidy for the Columbia Housing Center and who is eligible to receive the aid, including if the subsidy would be properly used for students at Howard Community College. The Department responded to questions from the Council on the use of community renewal funds; details of the fund statement; what control the County has over enterprise building project designs; the status of the continuing care program; what needs to be done to fulfill the requirements at the Erikson property; and calculation of the building excise tax ; and what the County can do to index fee-in-lieu to another measure.

Chair Jung closed the meeting at 2:47 p.m.

### ***Council requested follow up:***

- *Council Member Walsh requested a multi-year analysis of how the net zero tax transfer will impact County finances, including a comparison to the changes made in CR 86-2019.*
- *Chair Jung requested confirmation that the fire transfer tax is used for fire capital projects and what law would need to be changed to alter that requirement.*
- *Council member Rigby asked if there was anything stopping the advertisement of the reduction of the Fire Tax.*
- *Chair Jung requested a short simple explanation of the changes to the Fire Tax and Property Tax from the Administration.*
- *Council Member Rigby requested a meeting with the Soil Conservation District to discuss soil conservation and regeneration.*
- *Council Member Yungmann requested DPZ look into the feasibility of adding after hours on call zoning inspector officers.*
- *Council Member Walsh, Chair Jung, and Council Member Yungmann requested a Monthly Meeting with DPZ and the Administration to discuss the timeline for comprehensive rezoning and other long term projects.*
- *Council Member Rigby asked for information on the PDP fee would be imposed.*
- *Council Member Walsh requested the consultant report on DPZ fee increases.*
- *Chair Jung requested more information from the Budget Office and the Office of Law on what the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund can be used for.*
- *Chair Jung asked for specifics on what responsibilities were taken over for the former Downtown Columbia Liaison.*
- *Council Member Rigby requested the number of correctional employees who live in Howard County.*

## **5/8/2024 Operating Work Session Attendee List:**

### **Budget Office**

Holly Sun  
Brook Mamo  
Caitlin Nardolillo  
James Kwak  
Paul McIntyre  
Norman Schnobrich  
Brandee Ganz  
Felix Facchine

### **Fire**

Louis Winston  
Robert Smeltzer  
Gordon Wallace  
Bruce Bennett  
Meaghan Kordusky

### **UMD Extension**

Lynn Rubin Traversa

### **Soil Conservation**

David Plummer  
Jackie Covington  
Michele Cerulli

### **Planning and Zoning**

Lynda Eisenberg  
Laura Boone  
Mary Kendall  
Jessica Bellah  
Chad Edmondson  
Philip Thompson

### **Ag. Preservation**

Lynda Eisenberg  
Laura Boone  
Mary Kendall  
Joy Levy  
Jennifer Jones  
Laura Just  
James Zoller

### **Corrections**

Margaret Chippendale  
Greg Smith  
Scott Tilton

### **Housing & Community Development**

Kelly Cimino  
Tom Wall  
Rose Burton

Visit the Council's website (<http://cc.howardcountymd.gov>) to view legislation, send written testimony, and sign-up electronically to testify at public hearings.

Persons needing accommodations to fully participate in the meeting, please contact the Council Office, 410-313-2001.