



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

Monday, May 12, 2025

Hybrid Meeting (In-Person and WebEx)

Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>
10:00 a.m.

Council Members present: Liz Walsh, Opel Jones, Christinia Rigby, Deb Jung, David Yungmann.

Staff present: Michelle Harrod, Administrator; Theo Wimberly, Administrative Manager; Isaiah Anderson, Executive Assistant; Rozanna Hightower, Administrative Support; Jim Almon, Legislative Analyst; Nick Rinehart; Legislative Analyst; Christopher Ashman County, Auditor; and Gary Kuc, County Solicitor.

Administrative Staff: noted below.

Chair Walsh started the meeting at: 10:05am

Agenda

Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits (DILP)

Director Bob Frances, Bob Firmini, and Don Mock appeared before the Council to discuss the proposed operating budget for DILP. There was a general discussion on the new permitting portal upgrade that DILP and DTCS are undertaking, how to improve the plan review process, and the impacts of the proposed position freezes in DILP.

Recreation and Parks

Director Nick Mooneyhan, Mike Milani, Owen Clark, and Nicola Morgall appeared before the Council and gave a presentation on the proposed Operating Budget for the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP). General discussion with Council ensued; topics included teen/youth engagement and details on “Camp Outrageous”, childcare services and staff vacancies, increases in personnel costs, and the Deer Management program.

Follow ups requested by Council:

- A chart detailing all of the trees planted by DRP as part of their forest conservation/fee-in-lieu requirements.
- More details on the increased costs in Workers Compensation.
- A breakdown of overtime costs vs. funding for contingent positions.
- An inventory of the Historic Properties in Howard County and their associated maintenance costs.

Community Resources and Services

Director Jaqueline Scott, Cheryl Mattis, and Ophelia Ott appeared before the Council to discuss the proposed Operating Budget for Community Resources and Services (CRS). There was a general discussion on the freezing of CRS positions and the potential impacts of cuts at the Federal and State level on the department's grant funding and programming. There was also a dialogue on the use of Opioid Abatement Settlement funds.

Council members requested the follow-ups below:

- What are Fire and Rescue, the Police Department, and the States Attorney using the Opioid Abatement Funds for that they received?
- A copy of the Analysis chart referenced during the Work Session, and shared with the County Administration, that was used to evaluate scenarios where grant funding for staff positions does not come through.

Transportation

Clarence Dickerson, Administrator for the Office of Transportation, was joined by Deputy Administrator David Cookson and Transit Planning Manager Carrie Anderson-Watters to give a brief presentation to the Council on their proposed Operating Budget and were available to answer questions. There was a general discussion about the Downtown Columbia Transportation Demand Plan, the HoCo Rapid Ride service, the timeline for moving the Downtown Columbia Mall bus stop, and ridership numbers for certain bus routes.

The Council requested follow-ups as noted below:

- Daily ridership numbers for the Route 410 bus.
- Daily ridership data for High School Students on the bus routes near Atholton High School and Wilde Lake High School.
- Data or metrics on how many people in Downtown Columbia are using the existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

Health

Antigone Vickery, Deputy Director of the Health Department, appeared before the Council with Dr. Kelly Russo and Dan Triplett to present the proposed Operating Budget for the Howard County Health Department. Ms. Vickery noted upfront the challenges in putting together the budget for this fiscal year due to impacts to funding and uncertainty at the Federal and State levels.

There was a general discussion about the funding cuts and impacts on the department, what services have been impacted, pre-natal care outcomes and food insecurity.

Council members requested the follow-up information below:

- A list of priority zip codes the Health Department uses for their outreach.
- The latest Concert Noise Monitoring report.

Social Services

Michelle Goodman, Assistant Director, was joined by Kimberly Creary to present the proposed budget to the Council for the Howard County Department of Social Services (DSS). There was general discussion about staff turnover, impacts to public benefits, and how to solicit more potential employees.

Council requested follow up on the following information:

- Number of DSS employees who live in Howard County and surrounding Maryland counties.
- Information on whether the income limits for SNAP benefits had increased.

University of Maryland Extension

Director Lynn Rubin Traversa appeared before the Council, joined by Nathan Glenn, to give a presentation on the activities and proposed Operating Budget for the University of Maryland (UMD) Extension program. There was a general dialogue about the importance of the program and agricultural education, impacts from cuts to the US Dept of Agriculture (USDA), and availability of their field trip program to Howard County middle schools.

Community Service Partnership

Jacqueline Scott, Director of Community Resources and Services (CRS) appeared again before the Council joined by Cheryl Mattis and Megan Godfrey to review the proposed budget for the Community Service Partnership (CSP). There was a general dialogue about the process for the various community service organizations that receive grants via the CSP and who makes those final award decisions.

County Council

Michelle Harrod, Council Administrator, and Christopher Ashman, County Auditor, appeared before the Council to discuss the proposed Operating Budget for the County Council. There was general discussion about the activities completed by the Council in Fiscal Year 2025, the proposed Banneker renovations, and new funding for a legal advisor to the Council.

State's Attorney

Richard Gibson, the State's Attorney for Howard County, was joined by Vicki Rand and Christopher Sandman to give an overview of their proposed Operating Budget to the Council. There was a general discussion about the 2 new positions they are requesting, their capacity for monitoring Body Worn Camera footage, and home detention monitoring.

Council requested follow-up information on the following items:

- How much funding has been put into Body Worn Camera footage monitoring over the past few fiscal years.
- A county-wide list of Howard County employees making less than \$55,000 per year.

Sheriff's Office

Howard County Sheriff Marcus Harris and Deputy Mark Verderaine appeared before the Council to answer questions about the proposed Operating Budget for the Sheriff's office. There was a general discussion about contractual services, any grants the Sheriff's office had applied for in Fiscal Year 2026, and the office's lowest starting salaried position.

Board of Elections

Guy Mickley, Director of the Board of Elections, appeared before the Council to present on the proposed Operating Budget for the Board of Elections. There was general discussion on the impacts of the previous State Legislative Session on the Board of Elections, how much of their budget is provided by the State, and early voting.

Vice-Chair Jones closed meeting at: 3:10 pm

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.

5/12/2025 Operating Work Session Attendee List:

Budget Office

Holly Sun
Brook Mamo
Lori Buchman
Andrew Galarza
Paul McIntyre

Inspections, Licenses and Permits

Bob Frances
Bob Firmini
Don Mock

Recreation and Parks

Nicholas Mooneyhan
Nicola Morgal
Owen Clark
Mike Milani

Community Resource Services

Jacqueline Scott
Cheryl Mattis
Kellie Brown

Transportation

Clarence Dickerson
Carrie Anderson-Watters
David Cookson

Health Department

Antigone Vickery
Kelly Russo
Dan Triplett

Social Services

Michelle Goodman
Kimberly Creary

UMD Extension

Lynn Rubin Traversa
Charles Schuster
Nathan Glenn

Community Services Partnerships Grant

Jacqueline Scott
Cheryl Mattis
Kellie Brown
Megan Godfrey

Council Office

Michelle Harrod
Chris Ashman

State's Attorney

Richard Gibson
Christopher Sandman
Vicki Rand

Sheriff's Office

Marcus Harris
Mark Verderaime

Board of Elections

Guy Mickley