



Howard County Council

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

COUNCILMEMBERS

Opel Jones, Chair
District 2

Christiana Rigby, Vice Chair
District 3

Liz Walsh
District 1

Deb Jung
District 4

David Yungmann
District 5

Minutes – Approved

Operating Budget Work Session #3
Monday, May 11, 2026
Hybrid Meeting (Virtual and In-Person Meeting)
Video Streamed at cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us
Banneker Room
10:00 am

Chair Jones opened the meeting at 10:00 am.

Council Members Present: Council Chair Opel Jones, Vice-Chair Christiana Rigby, Council Member Deb Jung, Council Member Liz Walsh, and Council Member David Yungmann.

Staff Present: Michelle Harrod, Administrator to the County Council; Gary Kuc, County Solicitor; Amanda Mihill, Assistant County Solicitor; Yusef Ibrahim, Deputy Council Administrator; Jim Almon, Legislative Analyst; Nick Rinehart, Legislative Analyst; Owen Kahn, Fiscal Manager; Melinda Massey, Fiscal Manager; Isaiah Anderson, Executive Assistant; and Rozonna Hightower, Administrative Aide.

Administration Staff: Noted below

Agenda

University of Maryland (UMD) Extension

Sherly Bennett, Interim Executive Director, appeared before the Council and provided an overview of the UMD Extension Operating Budget request for Fiscal Year 2027. Ms. Bennett gave an overview of the program, highlighting the agricultural education programming, their agency partnerships, and the Master Gardener program. There was general discussion between the Council and the representatives from UMD Extension on how UMD Extension collaborates with the Soil Conservation District, and the Council asked questions about travel expenses for all of the UMD Extension employees.

Community Resources and Services

Jacqueline Scott, Director of the Department of Community Resources & Services (DCRS), appeared before the Council, accompanied by Cheryl Mattis, Deputy Director, and Ophelia Ross-Ott, Director of the Office on Aging, to present the Department's requested Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027. Ms. Scott presented highlights of the DCRS' proposed budget,

stating the request is a “maintenance of effort” request while emphasizing the impact of restricting staff has on meeting the increasing needs of all the populations that DCRS serves.

There was general discussion between Council Members and the members of DCRS on the reorganization of staff and programs in the Office of Aging & Independence, the application process for YEP Grants, the cuts in Tai Chi and Boxing classes at the 50 Plus Centers and how DCRS will commit to reinstate those classes. Council Members asked questions about the grant recipients of funds from the Opioid Restitution Fund and Community Reinvestment Fund and the impact of cuts in funding at the Federal level to DCRS operations.

Community Service Partnerships (CSP)

Felix Facchine, Chief of Staff for the County Executive, appeared before the County Council along with Jacqueline Scott, Director of DCRS, Megan Godfrey, and Kim Eisenreich of DCRS to give an overview and answer questions on the proposed Operating Budget for Community Services Partnerships (CSP) for Fiscal Year 2027.

There was general discussion among Council Members and the CSP representatives on the amounts that certain CSP grant recipients are receiving, the number of people that attend the programming offered by the grant recipients, and the recent audit findings on documentation practices for the CSP grantees. Council Members asked questions about whether the CSP grants for Grassroots fund the mobile crisis response unit, and what DCRS is doing in response to the findings of the CSP audit.

County Executive

Felix Facchine, Chief of Staff for the County Executive, and Tim Lattimer, Deputy Chief of Staff, appeared before the County Council and provided highlights of the proposed Operating Budget for the County Executive’s office for Fiscal Year 2027. Mr. Facchine highlighted the increases in the proposed budget due to healthcare costs, chargebacks, data processing charges, and a compensation increase for the County Executive in December 2026.

There was general discussion among Council Members and the representatives from the County Executive’s office regarding the growth of salaries in the Executive’s office, information about the transition of the current administration to a new administration, the offboarding expense for departing employees, and health insurance chargebacks.

County Administration

Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer, was accompanied by Jamarly Herry, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Raul Delorme, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Anju Bennett, Office of Human Resources Administrator, and Felix Facchine, Chief of Staff for the County Executive, in appearing before the County Council to present the proposed Operating Budget for County Administration for Fiscal Year 2027.

Ms. Ganz provided highlights of the Administration’s proposed budget, including new Administration initiatives, the movement of Fleet and Mail Services to the Department of General Services (DGS), a newly proposed Voluntary Retirement Incentive program, and details on how County Administration is navigating a difficult and uncertain fiscal environment.

There was general discussion among Council Members and the representatives from County Administration on the rising costs of employee benefits compared to that of external County agencies, the status of the Human Resources Compensation study, the increase in prescription drug costs for County employees, and the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) access to certain files and systems.

Council Members asked questions about Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), the noncompliance rate for businesses implementing the Plastic Bag tax, and the status of office space for the OIG.

Finance

Rafiu Ighile, Director of Finance, was accompanied by Angela Price, Deputy Director, and Angela Moore, Deputy Director, in appearing before the County Council to present the proposed Operating Budget for the Department of Finance for Fiscal Year 2027. Mr. Ighile gave opening remarks and highlighted that the Department's proposed budget is a level budget, with one adjustment of a \$330,000 transfer amount for postage costs related to Water and Sewer Tax billing.

There was general discussion among Council Members and representatives from Finance regarding debt service increases, FEMA reimbursements, and questions about how the remaining ARPA funding has been spent.

Office of Law

Gary Kuc, County Solicitor, appeared before the County Council to provide an overview of the Office of Law's proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027. Mr. Kuc provided opening remarks on the Office's workload and highlighted the number of open lawsuits, claims, and other cases being reviewed by the Office. Additionally, he highlighted the proposed budget, describing it as a maintenance of effort budget with funding for 1 new attorney position.

There was general discussion among Council Members and Mr. Kuc regarding handling an increasing workload with the same number of personnel, and questions regarding various open lawsuits involving the County.

Economic Development Authority

Jennifer Jones, CEO of the Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA) appeared before the County Council to provide an overview of the proposed Operating Budget for HCEDA for Fiscal Year 2027. Ms. Jones provided opening remarks about the HCEDA and its continued focus on economic outcomes, long-term competitiveness of Howard County, the goals of advancing growth of the Maryland Innovation Center and continued small business support in the upcoming fiscal year.

There was general discussion among Council Members and Ms. Jones regarding the dedicated HCEDA staff that work at each Columbia village center, more details on the success of international and out of state trade conferences, and the status of a payout due to HCEDA as the result of a zoning amendment case involving Blue Stream LLC.

Technology & Communications

David Leeds, Director of the Department of Technology & Communication Services (DTCS) and Chief Information Officer, was accompanied by DTCS Deputy Directors Sandra Tello and John Eckard in appearing before the County Council to give an overview of DTCS' proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027. Mr. Leeds provided brief opening remarks on the proposed budget, highlighting that the request will continue to fund life cycle systems operations, cybersecurity operations and various broadband initiatives.

There was general discussion among Council Members, and the representatives present from DTCS regarding the impacts of GASB 96 on the DTCS fund, the need for increased staff in DTCS, protecting the County from technology vulnerabilities from outside vendors, and more details about the proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) specialist position.

Housing & Community Development

Kelly Cimino, Director of the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) was accompanied by Rose Burton, Deputy Director, Tom Wall, Fiscal Manager, and Khadija Riaz, Fiscal Specialist, in appearing before the Council to give an overview of DHCD's proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027. Ms. Cimino provided opening remarks and highlighted projects funded by DHCD in the previous fiscal year, the Plan to End Homelessness, key affordable homeownership, and other FY2027 initiatives.

There was general discussion among Council Members and the DHCD representatives present regarding the Departments Settlement Down Payment program, details on affordable homeownership programs, for-sale Moderate-Income Housing Units (MIHUs), and the status of the proposed affordable housing development on the Beechcrest property along Route 1.

Non-Departmental Expenses

Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer, was joined by Holly Sun, Budget Director, and Felix Facchine, Chief of Staff for the County Executive, in appearing before the Council to discuss the Non-Departmental Expenses proposed in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, which includes Debt Service, Pay As You Go (PAY-GO) Funding, Non-departmental funds and contingency reserves.

Ms. Sun highlighted the section of the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget that provides details of the Non-Departmental PAYGO funds and recipients used to fund one-time operating needs for this fiscal year. She also highlighted that \$47 million in PAYGO funds was put towards the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

There was general discussion among Council Members and Administration representatives regarding how PAYGO funding is managed and tracked, the unanticipated costs associated with snow removal, the Administration's process and criteria for selecting PAYGO recipients, and information about the PAYGO funding to the Columbia Association for sidewalk repairs and maintenance.

Chair Jones adjourned the work session at 3:17 pm.

Council requested follow-up:

DCRS

- *Please confirm the list of Opioid Restitution Fund recipients, located on the Community Partnerships webpage, is accurate.*

If not, please provide an updated list of fund recipients.

- *Please confirm that the list of the stakeholder members of the Adult Use Cannabis Advisory Panel, located on the County website, is accurate*

If not, please provide an updated membership list

CSP

- *Please confirm the point of contact (POC) from the Behavioral Health Division in the Health Department, and more details on the grant funding for the Grassroots Mobile Crisis Unit that is managed by that POC.*

County Executive

- *Please provide information on how the salaries of employees in the County Executive's office compare to those of surrounding jurisdictions.*
- *Please provide a list of potential locations for tree plantings by the County Executive's office in the upcoming fiscal year.*

County Administration/Human Resources

- *Please provide a detailed comparison of whether the six prescription drugs selected by the Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board for cost review in 2024 (Ozempic, Trulicity, Farxiga, Jardiance, Skyrizi, and Dupixent) are included in the list of prescription drugs that are increasing in cost for Howard County employees.*

Finance

- *Please provide a detailed list of expenditures of ARPA funds, as referenced in the work session.*

Howard County Economic Development Authority

- *Please provide a status update on the \$2 million that was supposed to be paid out to the EDA, in accordance with [Section 127.5.0.E.3.d of the Zoning Regulations](#) and the approval of [CB8-2021](#) (ZRA 193 – Blue Stream LLC)*

Non-Departmental Expenses

- *Please provide an overview comparing the last 7 fiscal year budgeted amounts vs actual expenses for snow removal.*

5/11/2026 Operating Work Session Attendee List:

Budget Office

Holly Sun
Brook Mamo
Lori Buchman
Andrew Galarza
Norman Schnobrich
Paul McIntyre
Caitlin Nardolillo

UMD Extension

Sherly Bennett

Community Resource Services

Jacqueline Scott
Cheryl Mattis
Ophelia Ross-Ott

Community Services Partnerships Grant

Jacqueline Scott
Felix Facchine
Cheryl Mattis
Kellie Brown
Megan Godfrey

County Executive

Felix Facchine
Tim Lattimer

County Administration

Brandee Ganz
Anju Bennett
Raul Delerme
Jamar Herry
Leah Miller
Dean Hof
Dawn Tinker
Lakeisha McClendon
Stephanie Adibe
Patrick Pope

Jennifer Sager

Finance

Rafiu Ighile
Angie Price
Angela Moore

Office of Law

Gary Kuc

Economic Development

Jennifer Jones

Technology & Communications

David Leeds
Sandra Tello
John Eckard

Housing & Community Development

Kelly Cimino
Tom Wall
Rose Burton
Khadija Riaz

Debt Services

Rafiu Ighile
Angie Price

Pay-Go-Funds

Brandee Ganz
Felix Facchine

Non-Departmental

Budget Office – noted above
Finance
Rafiu Ighile
Angela Price

Contingency Reserves

Budget Office – noted above

Visit the Council's website (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.