

Minutes of the County Commissioners of Worcester County, Maryland

April 16, 2024

Budget Work Session

Anthony W. Bertino, Jr., president
Madison J. Bunting, Jr., vice president
Caryn G. Abbott
Theodore J. Elder
Eric J. Fiori
Joseph M. Mitrecic
Diana Purnell

The commissioners met at 11 a.m. with Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young and Budget Officer Kim Reynolds to conduct a work session to resume their review of Worcester County Departmental Operating Budget Requests for FY25. The requested FY25 Operating Budget currently reflects estimated revenues of \$260,076,878 and requested expenditures of \$270,193,052, which leaves a shortfall of \$10,116,174 that must be reconciled by either reductions in expenditures, additional revenues, or a combination of the two.

Human Resources Director Stacey Norton reviewed the proposed FY25 Human Resources Budget of \$552,381, representing an increase of \$40,217 or 7.9%.

Tourism and Economic Development Director Melanie Pursel reviewed the proposed FY25 Economic Development Budget of \$503,868, representing an increase of \$45,843 or 10%; and the proposed FY25 Tourism Budget of \$1,505,815, representing an increase of \$120,546 or 8.7%.

Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young reviewed the proposed FY25 County Administration Budget of \$1,320,260, representing an increase of \$84,028 or 6.8%; Orphan's Court Budget of \$38,100, representing an increase of \$1,200 or 3.3%; Other General Government Budget of \$3,896,215, representing an increase of \$155,583 or 4.2%; Wor-Wic Community College Budget of \$2,618,000, representing an increase of \$87,758 or 3.5%; Other Natural Resources Budget of \$625,935, representing a flat budget; Taxes Shared with Towns Budget of \$3,630,114, representing an increase of \$509,157 or 16.3%; Grants to Towns of \$7,149,511, representing an increase of \$732,136 or 11.4%; Benefits and Insurance Budget of \$24,268,854, representing a decrease of (\$2,361,164) or -8.9%; Interfund Budget of \$8,387,325, representing the transfer to Water and Wastewater to cover Riddle Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade shortfall and bypass interconnection and transfer dedicated to reserve to meet the 15% requirement per resolution; Other Social Services Budget of \$854,418, representing an increase of \$324,050 or 61.1%, as outlined in the requests from the County nonprofit organizations; and Other Recreation and Culture Budget of \$101,500, representing an increase of \$21,500 or 26.9%. Commissioner Bertino requested staff provide a year-by-year comparison of budget trends for the nonprofits from 2019 to date for their review at their next budget work session.

The commissioners recessed for lunch.

After lunch, the commissioners resumed their budget discussions. Commissioner Fiori was absent from the afternoon budget session due to a prior commitment.

State's Attorney Kris Heiser reviewed the proposed FY25 State's Attorney's Office Budget of \$3,311,733, representing a decrease of (\$25,802) or -0.8%.

Ocean City Fire Chief Richard Bowers reviewed the proposed FY25 EMS and Fire Department Budget of \$12,212,249, representing an increase of \$1,734,154 or 16.6%.

Fire Marshal Matt Owens reviewed the proposed FY25 Fire Marshal's Office Budget of \$913,933, representing an increase of \$192,605 or 26.7%; FY25 Fire Training Center budget request of \$118,272, representing an increase of \$724 or .6%; and FY25 Emergency Services Operating Budget of \$3,529,512, representing an increase of \$255,438 or 7.8%.

Warden Tim Mulligan reviewed the proposed FY25 County Jail Budget of \$10,376,175, representing a decrease of (\$48,083) or 0.5%.

Public Works Director Dallas Baker reviewed the proposed FY25 Solid Waste Budget of \$4,903,079.46, representing an increase of \$227,694 or 4.9%; FY25 Water and Wastewater Budget of \$17,072,760, representing an increase of \$1,729,522 or 11.3%; Homeowner Convenience Centers Budget of \$730,886, representing a decrease of (\$23,373) or -3.1%; Recycling Budget of \$1,160,170, for an increase of \$208,346 or 22.5%; and Public Works Administration/Fleet Maintenance Budget of \$914,327, for an increase of \$77,906 or 9.3%.

Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados and Parks Superintendent Jacob Stephens reviewed the proposed FY25 Recreation Budget of \$2,264,711, representing an increase of \$207,937 or 10.5%; Parks Budget of \$2,25,796, representing a decrease of (\$19,398) or -0.8%; and Boat Landings Budget of \$54,438, representing a decrease of (\$271,700) or -83.3%.

Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell reviewed the proposed FY25 Environmental Programs Budget of \$1,970,128, representing an increase of \$64,248 or 1.9%.

Information Technology Director Brian Jones reviewed the proposed FY24 Information Technology Budget of \$720,103, representing an increase of \$31,991 or 4.6%; and Other General Government – IT Budget of \$970,617, representing a decrease of (\$55,113) or -5.4%.

Finance Officer Phil Thompson and Assistant Finance Officer Jessica Wilson reviewed the proposed FY25 Treasurer's Office Budget of \$1,738,647, representing an increase of \$307,288 or 21.5%; Other General Government – MIS (Document Imaging) of \$170,200, representing a decrease of (\$8,900) or -5.5%; and Debt Service of \$10,077,454, representing a decrease of (\$3,121,808) or -23.7%.

The commissioners answered questions from the press, after which they adjourned to meet again on May 7, 2024.