

Minutes (approved, 5/7/07)
County Council Capital Budget Work Session
April 24, 2007

Meeting convened at: 10:05 a.m.

Members present: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox, Mary Kay Sigaty, Jen Terrasa, Courtney Watson

Discussion: County Auditor Haskell Arnold outlined the Council's authority in the budget process. Budget Director Ron Weinstein elaborated on the capital budget process.

Greg Fox and Courtney Watson inquired about the Mt. Hebron project, clarifying that the Board of Education did request funds for the project, although they acknowledged that they would not be planning the project until the feasibility study is complete.

Greg Fox asked why fire projects weren't funded from sources other than the fire tax. Ron Weinstein responded that the fire tax is reserved for fire projects and was an appropriate source for the fire projects.

Police: Chief McMahon and Major Gary Gardiner explained the mobile data center in the Police Department budget. Responding to questions, the Chief said that the computer replacement schedule is three years, and the Department maintains its own technology staff.

Fire: Chief Herr, Jeff King, and Stephanie Shaffner summarized the projects in the fire department budget, with special attention to the cisterns requested for western Howard County. They described the FY 08 request and estimated it to purchase the first ten of a target 40 water sources. In response to a question, Ron Weinstein said that a 1 cent increase in the metro fire tax rate produces \$2 million, while a 1 cent increase in the west produces about \$800,000.

Libraries: Valerie Gross distributed new summaries of the square footage of the library facilities and described the capital request. She estimated the construction costs of libraries at \$300 per square foot.

Gary Arthur, Director of Recreation and Parks, and Ken Alban described the one new project, office space, and the Blandair project. Considerable discussion of the details of the planning process for the Blandair project, both with the community and with

architects and designers, followed. Gary Arthur assured the members that the project will have additional public input before the architectural design is complete.

The Chairman announced that the Council would continue with the capital budget work session on Thursday, April 26 at 10:00. They will break at 11:30 and reconvene at 1:00, continuing until they complete the review of the proposed FY 08 capital budget.

Follow-up Items Requested by Council:

1. Courtney Watson requested of Ron Weinstein the capital budget summary page (3rd page in the summary section) for each of the last five years.
2. Courtney Watson asked for the original premise in setting up the fire tax for the metro and west districts.

Action: None

Time Adjourned: noon