

# County Executive's Weekly Message



**For the week of May 22, 2017**

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

The County Council has completed the public review of the departmental budgets that I have proposed for FY2018. The Charter now requires a public hearing to allow citizen comment of the proposed budget. **Mark your calendars!** The public hearing is at Elkton High School on Tuesday night, May 23, 2017 at 7:00pm. I NEED YOUR HELP! Please attend the public hearing and let the County Council know how you feel about my proposed budget and my plans to move Cecil County forward. Please keep in mind my budget goals for FY2018 are the following:

- **Goal #1: BALANCED BUDGET** – The FY2018 Budget is the first budget in 20 years that does not use fund balance to balance the budget. In other words, the County is not dipping into the savings account to pay FY2018 budgeted expenses.
- **Goal #2: FISCAL STABILITY** – The goal to eliminate structural deficits and provide necessary services requires the increase in the tax rates to generate revenues. Those revenues will support the goals in this budget and meet the County's priorities for the near future. By planning for our future now, we start a multi-year approach to budgeting and funding that will assure balanced operating budgets and provide sustainable and affordable support for Capital Projects well into the future.
- **Goal #3: SAFE, HEALTHY, & ACTIVE COMMUNITIES** – My goal of safe communities starts with the expansion of our police, paramedic and dispatch employees to meet our current needs. My budget adds three deputies, two paramedics and two dispatchers to address the current pressure on public safety resources within the County. These positions along with support for our volunteer fire companies, and the support of our health and judicial systems are critical to overcome the challenges we face in Cecil County. Citizens deserve to feel safe at home and out in the community.
- **Goal #4: INFRASTRUCTURE** – The road infrastructure of Cecil County requires our attention NOW. My budget restores prior funding cuts to road maintenance programs including \$733,000 in asphalt overlay and \$500,000 in life extending surface treatments. Capital projects include the replacing a bridge and culverts, and upgrading certain roads and intersections to provide safer roads. For those who question operational maintenance versus capital costs, the County uses bond funding for twenty plus year assets where the users pay over the life of the asset. (If the County were to use twenty-year bond funds for routine road surface maintenance lasting seven to twelve years, \$1,000,000 of cost would become \$1,430,365 of bond principal and interest payments and the County would pay that again to perform maintenance to the same road in year ten.)
- **Goal #5: EDUCATION** – I believe in the value of education. Research conducted by Pennsylvania State University's Dr. Dana Mitra shows that individuals who graduate and have access to quality education throughout primary and secondary school are more likely to find gainful employment, have stable families, and be active and productive citizens. Our investment in Cecil County Public Schools, Cecil College and Cecil County Public Library should not be diminished. If these institutions are funded adequately, they will improve the quality of life for our citizens and save the County's future budgets from higher incarceration costs, drug abuse costs, and judiciary costs (just to name a few). We need to make certain our educational system does not lack the current nor future essential resources to provide the quality education our young people deserve.
- **Goal #6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – I have an obligation to this County to create an environment that encourages economic growth to provide jobs for our citizens including our youth. I want to provide more jobs, better jobs and ignite the relationships with our towns to attract businesses and residents to Cecil County. Investing in much-needed sewer lines along Rte 40 and replacing antiquated wastewater treatment plants will provide the foundation for this growth to occur.

My focus for Cecil County is on the future. I have asked the same two questions many times during the FY2018 budget process.

- If we do not address the needs of Cecil County now, when will we?
- If I do not stand up and take responsibility for a fiscally sustainable plan for the future of our great County, who will?

The buck stops here with your County Executive. To meet current and future goals, together we need to agree that a tax increase of both property and income tax is a necessity. It takes a village to move Cecil County forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan McCarthy".

Dr. Alan McCarthy  
Cecil County Executive