

County Executive's Weekly Message



For the week of April 10, 2017

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

The County Council has started deliberations on the revenue and expenditure proposals that I have put forth in my FY2018 Proposed Budget. During this time, the Council will hold Budget Hearings on Tuesday's (times will vary) in order to ask questions of all departments and agencies seeking an appropriation of County tax dollars. I **urge** you to get involved and learn about my proposed budget and how I intend to move Cecil County forward.

On April 11, 2017 at 6:00pm the Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) will present their FY2018 proposed budget to Council. As you read their budget and listen to their presentation, please keep in mind the following:

- Education is the solution to many of the challenges facing our County today. Solutions to these challenges include a technically trained workforce, drug education and awareness, and the foundation to build lifelong learners who become the next leaders of our County.
- It is imperative that we fund CCPS at a level that supports the needs of the school system without curtailing essential services. My budget allocates \$81,688,528 in FY2018 to support the schools in their role of delivering a high quality education to our County's youth. This amount is \$1,717,590 above the State required maintenance of effort. In comparison to FY2017, it is an increase of \$1,078,090 (1.3% increase).
- My budget addresses the deferred maintenance issues facing CCPS. The first way to address the issues of deferred maintenance of the system is, quite frankly, to build new schools. The County's Capital Budget continues to fund the new Gilpin Manor Elementary School; a project that is programmed to receive a total of \$11,000,000 of County bonds. The second way to address their deferred needs is to fund the three priority small capital projects as presented to the County by CCPS; the FY2018 Operating Budget continues funding the schools' energy performance contract and also funds installation of VAV units at Bohemia Manor High School and resurfacing the tennis courts at North East High School. The Capital Budget also addresses and funds the following maintenance needs in FY2018: roof replacements at Cecil Manor Elementary, Bo Manor Middle/High, and Providence School and new boilers at Perryville High and Conowingo Elementary School.

I believe in the value of Education. I wish I could have funded every need in the Public Schools requested budget, but as I shared in my proposed budget message to the County on March 31 - there are many needs in Cecil County and not enough revenue. As I listened to the needs of CCPS, as well as those of other departments and agencies, it became apparent to me that the decision to increase both the property and income tax rates assessed in our County is necessary. 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. My focus on the future is even more evident as I have proposed a balanced budget that does not rely on savings from prior years (fund balance), but instead raises current revenue to support the services the County provides to its citizens. This County has not balanced a budget without a deficit in over 20 years.

I hope I can count on your support for my plan to move Cecil County forward. If we do not address the needs of Cecil County now, when will we? If I don't stand up and take responsibility for a fiscally sustainable plan for the future of our great County - Who will?

Again, I urge you to become involved in the upcoming weeks as this plan affects all of us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alan McCarthy
Cecil County Executive