

County Executive's Weekly Message



For the week of April 17, 2017

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

The County Council is entering week three of deliberations on the revenue and expenditure proposals that I have put forth in my FY2018 Proposed Budget. This week's budget hearings (Tuesday 4/18 @ 1:30pm) will cover some of the Administrative Departments of County Government. The Council will have the opportunity to ask questions of Department Heads about their objectives for the coming year and the budget they will need to support their efforts. I **urge** you to get involved and learn about my proposed budget for these specific areas of County government and how I intend to move Cecil County forward.

As I travel throughout the County, I have had the opportunity to share with some of you the many services the County provides to its citizens. When I learned of the many functions that are accomplished by the Administrative Departments of the County, it was surprising to learn the costs associated with these departments only comprises approximately 6% of the total general fund expenditure budget. As you read about the Administrative Department's budgets and listen to their presentations, please keep in mind the following:

- The Administrative functions of County government administer the delivery of valuable County services every day including accounting for your tax dollars, the security of all information systems (including the 911 dispatch system and the recording of Circuit Court cases), promoting the economic development of the County, the planning and permitting of citizens properties, and the facility maintenance staff to ensure that all County buildings and properties are working and properly maintained.
- I am working with the Director of Human Resources to ensure we incentivize our employees to put forth their best effort and once we invest in training our staff, they stay. The proposed FY2018 budget supports recognizing the valuable work performed by these individuals by including a 2% step increase in pay for County employees. As many of us experienced during the recession, step increases and COLA's were not funded. County employees received **no** pay increases for four of the last eight fiscal years due to the constraints of the County budget. The County continues to experience high employee turnover rates attributable to the low salaries of County jobs as compared to neighboring jurisdictions. The County has funded a compensation review study to analyze positions and serve as the guide for future increases. County government is made up of good people, who for the most part do a great job. Contrary to the perception of "bloated" government bureaucracy, we at the County are lean and mean.
- My budget is taking the first step in analyzing the delivery of county services in search of greater efficiencies and effectiveness by combing the Planning, Permits and Plans Review section of Public Works into the Land Use and Development Services Department. This will bring all employees that administer this function together and allow for one-stop capabilities to permitting, in support of attracting new Economic Development in Cecil County.

Quality employees, providing superior services, are what the citizens of Cecil County deserve. We cannot continue to expect the best at a less than marketable rate. I have challenged the Department Head's within County Government to make sure there is accountability for the level of service we provide as well as the employees that administer the service. The decision to increase both the property and income tax rates assessed in our County is not an easy one, but it will allow this County to continue to provide the services that currently exist. I will continue to work with my staff to find greater efficiencies as we strive to ensure quality services at responsible costs.

Austerity does not lead to prosperity. Together we need to move Cecil County forward.

Sincerely,

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

Dr. Alan McCarthy
Cecil County Executive