

County Executive's Weekly Message



For the week of May 8, 2017

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

On May 9th at 6:00, the County Council will review my FY2018 proposed budget for the following departments: Circuit Court, the Office of the State's Attorney, Department of Emergency Services, the Landfill Enterprise Fund and the Wastewater Enterprise Fund. I continue to **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 you read about their budgets and listen to their presentations, please keep in mind the following:

- The Circuit Court of Cecil County's with a proposed budget of \$2,100,000 is part of the operating budget for the County. Although the State is responsible for the guidelines and laws governing the operation of the Courts, the County is responsible to provide the resources, staff (except for judges who are employed by State) and technical infrastructure to manage the caseload. As the State institutes new procedures and software, the County is expected to fund the related costs. The County's Judicial System knows first-hand the magnitude of the drug problems afflicting our County and sees the day-to-day impact on the County. Until the problems of addiction start to decline, our Courts will continue to need additional resources including space and staff.
- The Office of the State's Attorney with a proposed budget of \$2,400,000 is also a component of the County's operating budget. Again, the actions within the department are often dictated by decisions at the State level. Just as the Circuit Court struggles to keep up with demand, so does the State's Attorney's Office. As more manpower and money are allocated to public safety to protect the citizens of the County, the Judicial System finds itself needing additional resources to bring to trial the offenders and prosecute those individuals who commit the crimes. This budget funds a one-time scanning effort of legal documents to be compatible with the new State record system and bring efficiencies in costs and time. The office needs to operate at the highest level of efficiency in order to optimize the efforts of the staff; recent budgets have not afforded the ability to hire additional prosecutors even as the number of cases increases.
- I often hear the complaint from constituents who say their property tax burden should be less because they do not have children in public schools. Over the past few months I hope I have brought to your attention the many services the County provides beyond education. There is no service in this County more critical than our Department of Emergency Services. The services provided by our 911 dispatch center and our paramedics are in place to serve **ALL** of us. They provide their services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to everyone, regardless of age or income level. The County needs to ensure continued adequate staffing and training of paramedics in order for those employees to continue to provide our citizens the highest quality lifesaving work. Our paramedics responded to over 11,000 calls over the past year. (That equates to 30 calls per day!) It is difficult for the County to retain both trained dispatchers and paramedics due to the high demand this County places on these individuals and the higher salaries offered by neighboring jurisdictions. My proposed budget seeks to start increasing the staffing levels in both areas in order to provide the necessary coverage for these positions while at the same time trying to ease the overtime burden on the department and the individual. I am sure each and every one of you has been touched by the Department of Emergency Services. It is necessary to start staffing these areas to accommodate the needs of our population.

As County Executive, I believe it is my job to keep our citizens safe and provide the necessary services when a life threatening event takes place; either to an individual or an entire community. First responders need to be adequately staffed and trained to provide the highest level of service when called to do so. I watch this County train great employees, only to have those employees leave for better opportunities. I need the resources to ensure this County has the best dispatchers, paramedics, and police to take care of this County. The County needs to be competitive and should be the County attracting talent - not losing the talent. Raising both the property tax rate and the income tax rate on the citizens of this County (including myself) is not an easy decision, but - I want this County to have the level of services it needs and deserves. The Court system, our prosecutors and the public safety staff need resources to adequately serve our community. Let's provide those resources and move Cecil County forward.

Sincerely,

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

Dr. Alan McCarthy
Cecil County Executive