May 31, 2017

Dear Member of County Council,

When I was sworn in as executive in December, I promised the citizens of Cecil County that I would lead for the future by advocating for the resources and strategies that will position us to seize the opportunities that will result in the quality of life each desires and deserves. In regard to the proposed FY 2018 Operating and Capital budgets, I charged my staff with putting together a financial plan that will move this county toward the path I ran on and pledged to achieve. I need your help to achieve the vision that we as elected leaders all want.

I observed your budget work session yesterday and want to assure you that there are no “nice to have” requests included in these budgets. I have stated the need and accepted the burden of seeking the first revenue increase in years. I truly believe that failure to do so by previous county elected officials has positioned us to act now or forever live in a governmental environment where we continue to poorly serve our citizens and Cecil County businesses.

I ask that you reconsider the following budget amendments offered yesterday to modify the proposed budget for fiscal year 2018:

1. **Public Information Officer** – Please review the attached job description. You will quickly realize that this is not a glamorous public relations position, but a much needed facilitator to coordinate a comprehensive communication plan addressing governmental needs to inform and react to current plans and issues within all segments of our government and community. The Council, as the job description notes, will benefit from this position as we all strive to better utilize all forms of communications in our efforts to convey an accurate and consistent message during the good times and times of crisis. I see this position as a necessary “growing pain” for Cecil County. Look around the County and you will find Cecil County Public Schools, Union Hospital, W.L. Gore, and even our own Sheriff’s Office have a single point of communication. I request that you restore the proposed cut of **$54,978** for this critically needed new position.

2. **Library Materials** – The plan that Director Miller outlined not only closes a significant gap in funding created seven years ago that has restricted the library’s ability to invest in the digital and print materials demanded by our citizens, it also makes smart investments that support student success, early childhood learning, small businesses, and the advancement of the non-profit community. Library usage has nearly doubled since the materials budget was cut, yet the Library has received minimal additional funding from the County. Failure to address this budget line in the past has put us behind in ensuring that the resources are available in each of the seven library locations. An increase of $25,000 when divided by seven libraries only gets an additional $3,500 into each branch. I request that you restore the proposed cut of **$50,000** to this much needed and community supported materials budget.

3. **Small Business Library Associate Position** – One of the great resources available to every citizen regardless of social/economic status or level of education is a free public library. I heard comments from you yesterday about needing to focus on economic development. This position is an extremely small amount to invest in a service that has had a measurable impact on the County’s economic growth. For many aspiring entrepreneurs, the library’s seven branches are often the first stop on their journey to becoming a business owner. Public testimony has verified the need and the results. I request that you restore funding at the level of **$29,100** for this part-time position.
4. **Administration Professional Services** – It is my belief that Cecil County Government needs to be more efficient and effective with its primary focus on the future welfare of County businesses and its citizens. Once elected I realized very quickly that the expertise to help me identify and construct a plan to address these needs was not available within the current governmental structure. As part of my transition, I requested the initial budget for consultant services as a start towards my focus of a better Cecil County Government. I am hoping you will support the purpose for the requested resource in order to continue this strategy for the next fiscal year. I request that you restore the proposed cut of **$30,000** and fully fund my request to **$60,000**.

5. **Information Technology Systems Analyst Position** – The need for ongoing expertise to deal with the many new software resources in the area of public safety provides the demand for the expansion of our Information Technology Department. Ensuring the software is functioning properly and the officers have sufficient support is critical in the 24/7 public safety arena. The County’s $2.5 million dollar investment in the recently completed CAD system and the $11 million dollar investment for the upcoming P-25 communications project require the County to have the staffing to meet the needs of these critical investments. Waiting till it breaks or a county government user is in trouble - is penny wise and pound foolish. I request that you restore the proposed cut of **$78,751** for this critically necessary position.

6. **Legal Professional Services** – The pending workload due to the upcoming union negotiations requires the County attorney to have the resources available to appropriately defend and support the position of the County. Unnecessary budget constraints only weaken the County’s ability to retain subject experts necessary to aid in defending the County’s position. While the County Attorney (as “in-house” general counsel) provides the vast majority of the County’s legal representation, there are occasions when the complexity and/or urgency of a legal issue is such that the County Attorney – a team of one individual – simply cannot provide the legal representation required to protect the County’s interest. I request that you restore the proposed cut of **$10,000** in order to defend the County’s best interests.

7. **Parks & Recreation Facilities Maintenance** – It is my belief that investing in Parks and Recreation is a proactive approach to the County’s opioid crisis. Providing the facilities for our youth of today will give them healthy and safe activities and may deter them from the “appeal” of drug use. The Cecil County Parks and Recreation Department 2014 per capita expenditures ranked 23rd in the State. We need to do better. Any cut in the ability to enhance the programs this department provides may alter the lives of our youth. I request that you restore the proposed cut of **$20,000**.

As always I and/or members of my staff are available to discuss these matters and more regarding the FY2018 budgets. I sincerely hope that you will consider my requests that are listed in priority order and act in the best interest of the future of Cecil County.

Respectfully,

Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive
 POSITION: Public Information Officer  
 GRADE: 11N  
 CODE: 

FLSA: Exempt  
DATE: 2/17

Job summary:
Under the direct supervision of the Director of Administration, the incumbent in this position acts as the primary information liaison between the County Executive and public, including citizens and the press. Performs complex administrative, technical and professional work in providing information to the public on a broad range of programs, services, issues and policies.  
This position serves at the pleasure of the County Executive.

Essential Functions:

1. Directs public information program designed to improve the County’s communications with the public, special interest groups, staff and appropriate governmental bodies at the local and State level;
2. Serves as a liaison between the press and the County Executive, County Council and employees;
3. Coordinates publicity efforts; prepares press releases, annual report, newsletters, brochures and official remarks or speeches; maintains County’s website material and coordinates social media efforts;
4. Assists Administration in communicating information about County initiatives and achievements through news stories, videos, exhibits, speeches or media announcements;
5. Develops ways to guide the design and implementation of policies, practices and procedures to continually improve cooperation between the County and its citizens;
6. Collects and analyzes information on the changing attitudes of key constituent groups;
7. Performs other duties as instructed and assigned.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

1. Skill in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with legislative and executive officials at the State, County and Town levels, as well as commissions, boards, civic groups, organizations, communities and citizens of the County;
2. Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
3. Ability to develop and implement program policy and procedures; to coordinate programs with other agencies and groups; to identify and address citizen and community problems and complaints;
4. Knowledge of current communication technologies: desktop publishing and graphic applications, videography, television, radio and publication standards, tools and techniques;
5. Ability to communicate with and work cooperatively, tactfully and effectively with individuals at all social and economic levels.

Education and Experience:
Cecil County Government  
Director, Human Resources
1. Bachelor’s Degree in Communications, Journalism, Public Administration, Business Administration, Political Science, or a related field;
2. Master’s Degree preferred;
3. Five (5) or more years of responsible administrative or managerial work experience with the legislative process and community relations;
4. Experience as a skilled and articulate public speaker with good interpersonal skills;
5. Experience as a skilled writer with demonstrated ability to translate highly specialized information and concepts into readily understandable form.

**Physical and Environmental Conditions:** The incumbent may be required to handle difficult and challenging issues or people. Work requires a flexible schedule, to include evenings or weekends, to accommodate the needs of County Government. Work requires no unusual demand for physical effort.

The work environment involves everyday risks of discomforts which require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices, meetings, and training rooms, e.g., use of safe work place practices with office equipment.

The above job description is not intended as, nor should it be construed as, exhaustive of all responsibilities, skills, efforts, or working conditions associated with this job.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions of this job.