June 2, 2017

Dear Members of County Council and my fellow Cecil County residents,

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 want all.

I observed your budget work session yesterday (Thursday, June 1) and want to assure you again 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 want to sincerely thank Council President Bowlsby, Vice President Schneckeburger, and the other Council members for allowing Director Al Wein to speak to the priorities that are proposed to be cut from the FY2018 budget. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Carl Roberts, Chris Moyer, Morgan Miller, Jason Allison, Winston Robinson and Clyde Van Dyke for providing additional support for my budget priorities. I again, ask that you reconsider your vote on June 6, 2017 at 7:00pm, 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. **At Thursday’s work session, your vote was to not reinstate this position. I urge you to reconsider.**

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 by $100,000 in FY2011, 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. **At Thursday’s work session, your vote was to not reinstate additional library materials for the seven branches of the library system. I urge you to reconsider.**

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. **At Thursday's work session, your vote was to reinstate this position. I want to thank you for recognizing the value this position has in aiding the development of new businesses in Cecil County.**

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. **At Thursday's work session, your vote was to not reinstate total funding for consultants to aid the Administration with much needed additional resources and expertise. I urge you to reconsider.**

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. The County’s IT Department serves not only the critical areas of public safety (911 Dispatch, Law Enforcement in-car laptops, etc.) but also other critical functions such as the Circuit Court, Board of Elections software, the software that monitors the Wastewater treatment plants, the County’s permitting system, and the Finance Department’s general ledger system are just a small sample of the entire County’s IT support needs. 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. **At Thursday's work session, your vote was to not reinstate this much needed public safety position. I urge you to reconsider.**

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 positon of the County. Unnecessary budget constraints only weakens 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. **At Thursday's work session, your vote was to not reinstate the contingency funding for the County’s legal endeavors. I urge you to reconsider.**

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. **At Thursday's work session, your vote was to reinstate the funding for Parks and Recreation. I want to thank you for allowing this department to have the proper maintenance budget to address the needs of our facilities.**

As always I and/or members of my staff are available to discuss these matters and more regarding the FY2018 budgets. I appreciate the time you have invested in reviewing and considering the FY2018 budget and I sincerely hope that you will reconsider my requests and act in the best interest of the future of Cecil County.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive

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