



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**MCPB Date: 10/23/2014**  
**Agenda Item #**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

**FROM:** Joyce P. Garcia, Special Assistant to the Planning Board

**SUBJECT:** Commissioners' Office FY16 Operating Budget Planning Discussion

**DATE:** October 16, 2014

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff is requesting the Board's approval to prepare the FY16 Commissioners' Office Operating Budget at the level of Base Budget, plus known operating obligations and a proposed staffing category change that includes a modest funding request for the conversion of the position.

**FY16 Operating Budget Preparation**

At its September 18 meeting, the Planning Board received a presentation from the Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM) on the FY16 budget process including key trends and the budget outlook, strategy, and timeline.

DHRM reported that the assessable base for Montgomery County grew a modest 2% in FY15 after falling for several years, and that, in February, 2014; the Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated that the assessable base will grow by 4.25% in FY16. This growth would provide an approximate increase of \$1,049,700 in property tax revenue for the Administration Fund without an increase in the tax rate. The County Council reduced the tax rate last year in favor of using more of the fund balance to balance the expenditure budget. The tax rate was reduced from 1.8 cents to 1.7 cents, and \$1.1M of fund balance was transferred to the Park Fund with most of the remainder utilized to balance expenditures for the Administration Fund in FY15.

With acknowledgement of the mandated requirements and essential needs required to maintain the Commissioners' Office work program, the Planning Board provided general guidance to develop the FY16 Operating Budget.

The chart below gives a historical perspective on the Commissioners' Office appropriation and career positions for the adopted budgets for FY14 and FY15 and includes the proposed budget for FY16. In FY15, the Commissioners' Office request was approved to restore a part-time position that was eliminated in FY11, and that position is now filled. A request is made for FY16 to convert this current part-time term contract position to part-time career. A minimal funding increase for this position in FY16, associated with the conversion for additional access to benefits, is included in the chart below.

### History of the Commissioners' Office Budget Changes FY14-FY16

	Adopted FY14	Adopted FY15	Proposed FY16	Change FY16 over FY15
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$1,142,601</b>	<b>\$1,239,277</b>	<b>\$1,261,650</b>	<b>1.83%</b>
<b>\$ Change</b>				
<b>% Change</b>				
<b>Career Positions</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>
<b># Change</b>				
<b>% Change</b>				
<b>Funded Workyear</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b># Change</b>				
<b>% Change</b>				

#### Known Operating Commitments

Known preliminary increases in the Commissioners' Office for salaries, benefits, retirement, and other post-employment benefits (OPEB), were reviewed by DHRM at the Board's September 18 meeting. Known operating commitments, mandated, contractual, and inflationary increases for the Commissioners' Office is provided below.

The information in this memo does not include adjustments in expenses such as risk management, long term disability payments, and unemployment. The Department of Finance expects to provide this information by the end of the October or early November in the Schedule of Fees and Charges. As a result, the Commissioners' Office has not yet included any increases for these expenses in the proposed FY16 budget.

	FY15 Adopted	\$1,239,277
<b>FY16 BASE BUDGET</b>		
	<b>Major Known Commitment Changes</b>	
	Salaries and Health Benefits	\$26,864
	Retirement	(\$7,000)
	Cost of Converting Term/Contract Position to Career	\$2,509
	Subtotal changes to the FY16 Proposed Budget	\$22,373
	<b>Subtotal Base Budget FY16</b>	<b>\$1,261,650</b>
	<b>Estimated Percent Change in FY16 Base budget vs. FY15 Adopted budget</b>	<b>1.83%</b>
	<b>FY16 Proposed Base Plus Proposed changes</b>	<b>\$ 1,261,650</b>

**Base Budget: Essential Needs Work Program Overview**

The Commissioners' Office consists of the five-member Planning Board and seven staff positions. For FY16, the Commissioners' Office is requesting that one existing part-time position, .5 workyear, be converted from a term contract to a part-time career position. No additional funding is requested for this position in FY16 beyond the required known mandated obligations associated with the conversion of this position.

The two major staff units in the Commissioners' Office are the Chairman's Office Unit and the Technical Writers Unit.

Major staff responsibilities for each unit are as follows:

Chair's Office Unit (Four full-time staff positions and one part-time position)

- coordinate and provide administrative, technical, and public support at Planning Board hearings
- develop and manage the Planning Board meeting agenda, including collection of documents and distribution of packets
- receive, acknowledge, and distribute correspondence directed to the Chair and Planning Board members for hearings
- webpost the Board's meeting agenda, meeting minutes, and Resolutions
- manage the electronic Correspondence-Tracking (C-Track) system and ensure timely response to written and verbal inquiries concerning Planning Board, Parks, and Planning issues
- serve as contact for county, state, regional and federal officials and agencies
- act as intermediary with the resolution of various issues
- manage the electronic database of homeowners, civic, and community association contacts and distribute to the public, officials, and internal staff, as requested
- develop and manage the budget for the Commissioners' Office
- represent the Commission on internal and external committees related to outreach, diversity, and special events
- manage the human resource functions for the Commissioners' Office

Technical Writers/Editors Unit – (Two full-time staff positions)

- serve as official recordkeeper of Planning Board meetings, producing regular and closed session meeting minutes
- coordinate transcription and certification of specific Planning Board meetings as requested by the Office of the General Counsel
- certification of Planning Board Resolutions
- provide CD and audio tapes of Planning Board meetings to staff and the public
- edit certain Commission documents, including master and sector plans and other documents, as requested
- provide Spanish and French translation of public documents, as requested by communications staff
- participate on internal committees specifically related to archival of documents

**Summary**

Staff is cognizant of the costs associated with mandated obligations including retirement and benefit costs. The modest FY16 budget request demonstrates the Commissioners' Office continued efforts to provide the best services and support with a 1.83% increase over the FY15 budget.

Additionally, the Commissioners' Office would benefit from requests included in the Planning Department's proposed FY16 Operating Budget, particularly those related to IT services including the request for website upgrade/redesign and the initiation of desktop virtualization.

Staff is requesting the Planning Board's approval to prepare the FY16 Commissioners' Office Operating Budget at the Base Budget plus New Initiatives level. The next session before the Planning Board is scheduled for October 30 for a second work session, if needed, and on November 20 to seek approval of specific funding levels for the FY16 Proposed Operating Budget for the Commissioners' Office.