

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 17-0003R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Costello, Middleton, Schleifer, Clarke, President Young,
Councilmembers Burnett, Dorsey, Pinkett, Bullock, Cohen, Stokes, Sneed, Henry, Scott

Introduced and read first time: January 9, 2017

Assigned to: Budget and Appropriations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Finance

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Quarterly Budget Briefings**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on the Chief of the Finance Department's Bureau of Budget and
4 Management Research to brief the City Council on how the City's actual finances compare to
5 its budgeted projections in a timely manner after the close of each quarter in the City's fiscal
6 year.

7 **Recitals**

8 For the last several years, the City of Baltimore, like governments at all levels throughout the
9 nation, has had to address significant gaps between projected revenues and expenditures. This
10 trend seems likely to continue, with the Finance Department having projected previous annual
11 budget shortfalls as high as \$75 and \$60 million.

12 In order to address these shortfalls, the City Council has had to approve a variety of measures
13 to both cut City expenses and raise additional revenue. Some of these measures have been more
14 effective than originally estimated, and others less so.

15 However, due to the way that budget reporting is currently handled, it often takes quite some
16 time before it is clear to either the public at large, or their representatives on the City Council,
17 which measures are successful or where projections are falling short. This lack of timely
18 information undermines the public's ability to understand the City's finances or meaningfully
19 participate in the budget process. It also makes it more difficult for the Council to assess what
20 further measures could best be used to ensure balanced budgets going forward.

21 Greater transparency about how closely actual expenditures and revenues are adhering to
22 budget projections would greatly help to both inform and educate stakeholders throughout
23 Baltimore about the City's financial realities. More, and better, ideas about how to address these
24 realities could then be developed.

25 Accordingly, the City Council should be regularly and publically briefed about how closely
26 the City's finances are adhering to the budgeted projections on a quarterly basis. A mechanism
27 for ensuring that these briefings continue in a timely manner after the close of each quarter on a
28 permanent basis should also be developed.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 In these volatile times, when changes to State or Federal policies could substantially affect
2 the funds available to the City at any time, the Council simply cannot afford to rely on stale
3 projections when making decisions. More frequent updates are clearly necessary, and quarterly
4 reports should not be unduly burdensome for the Department of Finance to arrange.

5 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
6 Council calls on the Chief of the Finance Department's Bureau of Budget and Management
7 Research to brief the City Council on how the City's actual finances compare to its budgeted
8 projections in a timely manner after the close of each quarter in the City's fiscal year..

9 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
10 Finance Director, the Chief of the Finance Department's Bureau of Budget and Management
11 Research, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.