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# CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR

 ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR

100 N. HOLIDAY STREET

BALTIMORE MD, 21202

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## HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0060

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**Title:** Ordinance of Estimates for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026

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**Committee:** Budget & Appropriations

**Chaired by:** Councilwoman Danielle McCray

**Hearing Date:** 5/15/2025

**Time (Beginning):** 1:50 PM (BBMR – Budget Overview)

**Time (Ending):** 2:40 PM (BBMR – Budget Overview)

**Time (Beginning):** 3:20 PM (Department of Planning – Capital Improvement)

**Time (Ending):** 3:45 PM (Department of Planning – Capital Improvement)

**Location:** Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

**Total Attendance:** Approximately 25

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Zeke Cohen  
Sharon Middleton  
Odette Ramos

Danielle McCray  
Paris Gray

Isaac (Yitzy) Schleifer  
Antonio Glover

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Bill Synopsis in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attendance sheet in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Agency reports read? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Final vote taken at this hearing? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Motioned by: .....			
Seconded by: .....			
Final Vote: .....			

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**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

Laura Larsen, Budget Director (Bureau of Budget and Management Research)  
Sara Paranilam, Division Chief, Policy and Data Analysis (Department of Planning)

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### **Major Issues Discussed**

1. Chairwoman McCray welcomed colleagues, members of the Administration, and attendees. Chairwoman introduced 25-0060 for the purpose of providing the appropriations estimated to be needed by each agency of the City of Baltimore for operating programs and capital projects during the Fiscal 2026 year.
  - Noted that the Presentation for the Capital Improvement Plan as part of 25-0060 will be presented after the Baltimore City Public School System 25-0075.
2. The floor was open to Director Larsen [See PowerPoint].
  - Major recommendations outlined in the BOE recommended Fiscal 2026 budget
  - Noted the following:
    - Process for balancing the FY 2026 Budget - City faced a budget gap of \$85 million
    - Monitoring Federal Grants (\$216.4 Million) – if there are major changes will need to come back to the BOE and Council to adjust/amend the budget
    - FY 2026 is the first allocation of Opioid Restitution Funds (\$36.7 million – additional funds will be allocated annually
3. Chairwoman McCray opened the floor to questions from the committee members. Topics discussed in the hearing are as follows:
  - Due to the rate changes with the cost of water, what are the increases to funding affordability programs (such as Water for All) that serve residents that are struggling with their bills? [See further study request].
    - Funding for MOCFS and DPW to support affordability program.
  - Fines and Fees and concern for the \$6.5 million in unspecified fines and fees that will increase costs and cause additional cost burden for residents.
    - Fines & Fees – issue with increasing costs for residents
  - Capital funding for Enoch Pratt Library and how we are factoring capital fund needs
    - Largest capital budget is reflected in FY26
    - Strategizing how to sustain a larger capital budget so we can fund complete projects
    - Capital needs all agencies (not just libraries) that exceed the available funds
    - Example: For the 6-year program we have \$10million for the Hamilton Branch – more conversation to be had about funding for the library and needs for the entire the system
    - Would like further discussion during Agency Budget Hearings on how we are systematically addressing the capital needs for the libraries

- Renovations of libraries are needed since they are multi-service spaces
- Working on ratifying the 1<sup>st</sup> labor contract with their newly established union – FY 26 budget is aligned with personnel funding to meet that need.
- Balance of FY 26 for revenue generation – slide notes “- 26.4 million”
  - Targeted increases to General Fund revenue to avoid broad base tax increases – This breaks out to several different initiatives that includes increasing the landfill tipping fee, additional EMS revenue, adjustment to fines
  - Why not increase income tax rate? Since this is not a progressive rate that is tiered based on income this would be a higher cost burden to residents
- Increase Community Action Partnership (CAP) centers – whether we should increase centers or create satellite sites.
- Breakdown of the \$5.2 million that was allocated to solid waste in reference to the facility upgrades and staffing
  - \$5 million that is being added to staffing that will support the creation of 15 crews
    - This includes contractual work for Summer 2025
    - The new crews will start by January 1, 2026
  - \$250,000 is split between DPW and Department of General Services to support a position that is dedicated to overseeing the maintenance and management of the 8 solid waste facilities and contracts and supplies.

4. Hearing called to a recess.

5. Chairwoman McCray welcomed back Department of Planning for their Presentation for the Capital Improvement Plan as part of 25-0060.

6. The floor was open to Division Chief Sara Paraniham [See PowerPoint].

- The Planning Commission must annually submit a recommendation for the six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Board of Estimates
- Overview of the process to develop CIP and recommendations for Capital Budget

7. Chairwoman McCray opened the floor to questions from the committee members. Topics discussed in the hearing are as follows:

- Reviewing the Fy26-31 CIP Recommendations by Revenue Category (slide) – Why is there a significant drop in the HUR and Revenue Bond line items?
  - Those numbers will most likely change as we get closer to those years
  - A lot of variability in utility projects as they go through phases of design and construction
- Started the budget with a baseline of \$15 million – as the administration goes through the budget – 1 time purposes get designated to capital investment (ex: FEMA reimbursement in FY26)
- What schools are going to be demolished? DHCD, General Services, and Planning to find ways to reuse school buildings (in partnership with

communities). Where there is no viable use, those schools are recommended for demolition.

- Sarah Roach Elementary has been identified with no other opportunities
- West Baltimore Middle needs to be looked at
  - May have an opportunity for redevelopment since there are so many acers

8. Hearing called to a recess.

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### Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, describe.

Bill #	Committee Member	Request	Requested Agency	Timeline
LO25-0060	McCray	Due to the rate changes with the cost of water, what are the increases to funding affordability programs (such as Water for All) that serve residents that are struggling with their bills? To include: i. The exact amounts for FY25 (for all affordability programs) and anticipated in FY26. ii. The utilization of the programs, looking back at FY23, FY24, and year to date of FY25.	BBMR	5/22/2025

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**Committee Vote: N/A**

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Paroma Nandi , Committee Staff

Date: 5/15/2025

Cc: Bill File