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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE**

Mission Statement

The Committee on Ways and Means (WM) is responsible for ensuring taxpayer dollars are expended prudently and equitably. WM will exercise regular oversight of the City's budget, expenditures, loans, and other financial matters. The committee's areas of jurisdiction include: budget & appropriations, taxation, financial services, consumer protection, audits, and the Comptroller's Office.

**The Honorable Eric T. Costello
Chairman**

PUBLIC HEARING

**THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021
5:00 PM**

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

TO BE TELEVISED ON CHARM TV 25

Council Bill 21-0081

Annual Property Tax – Fiscal Year 2022

TAXPAYERS' NIGHT

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

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John Bullock – Vice Chair
Mark Conway
Ryan Dorsey
Antonio Glover
Odette Ramos
Robert Stokes
Staff: Jennifer Coates

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Ryan Dorsey
Danielle McCray
Sharon Green Middleton
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Robert Stokes
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Erick Costello
Antonio Glover
Phylicia Porter
Odette Ramos
Staff: Samuel Johnson

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Sharon Green Middleton
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Mark Conway
Ryan Dorsey
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James Torrence
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Staff: Matthew Peters

RULES AND LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT (OVERSIGHT)

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Kristerfer Burnett
Mark Conway
Eric Costello
Sharon Green Middleton
Odette Ramos
James Torrence
Staff: Richard Krummerich



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Ways and Means

Bill: 21-0081

Annual Property Tax – Fiscal Year 2022

Sponsor: President Mosby at the request of the Department of Finance

Introduced: May 17, 2021

Purpose:

For the purpose of providing a tax for the use of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; and setting the semiannual payment service charge for that period.

Effective: July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022

Agency Reports

Not Applicable

Analysis

Current Law

I. Article VI – Board of Estimates

Section 3 et seq.

Baltimore City Charter

II. Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland (Section 10-210 – Tax – Property Article)

III. State Tax-Property Article, Section 10-204.3

Background

This Ordinance proposes a tax rate of \$2.248 on every \$100 of assessed or assessable real property in Baltimore City and a tax of \$5.62 levied on every \$100 of assessed or assessable value of:

1. Personal property; and
2. Operating real property as described in the State Tax Property Article – Section 8 – 109C.

The proposed tax rate is the same as proposed in fiscal year 2021.

Per State law, the Constant Yield Tax Rate for Baltimore City for fiscal year 2021/2022 must be advertised. As required, the advertisement was placed in the Baltimore Sun newspaper on Saturday, May 15, 2021. **A copy of the ad is attached.**

This hearing is also referred to as “**Taxpayers’ Night.**”

Taxpayers’ Night provide the residents of Baltimore City the opportunity to share comments and concerns about the City’s budget.

Note: The Committee/Council members listen to the speakers/citizens **but do not answer and/or respond to questions or comments during the hearing.**

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: The Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Property Tax **is the same rate as last fiscal year.**

Information Source(s): City Charter, Annotated Code of Maryland and State Law and Council Bill Numbers 20-0528 and 21-0081.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note:

Information Source(s): City Charter, Council Bill 20-0528 and Council Bill 21-0081.

Marguerite M. Currin

Analysis by: Marguerite M. Currin
Analysis Date: May 25, 2021

Direct Inquiries to: (443) 984-3485



300 E. Cromwell Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230
tel: 410/332-6000
800/829-8000

WE HEREBY CERTIFY, that the annexed advertisement of Order No 6925986

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Baltimore,MD 21202-3427

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May 15, 2021

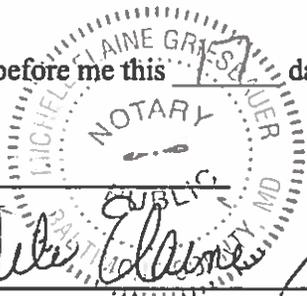
The Baltimore Sun Media Group

By B. Price, Legal Advertising

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15 day of May 2021,

By _____

Michelle Elaine Gray



Notary Public

My commission expires

10/5/23

BALTIMORE CITY NOTICE OF PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City Council of Baltimore City proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2021, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 0.66% from \$39,798,368,941 to \$40,059,137,565.

2. If Baltimore City maintains the current tax rate of \$2.248 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 0.66% resulting in \$5,862,079 of new real property tax revenues.

3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$2.2334, the constant yield tax rate.

4. The City is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$2.248 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 0.66% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$5,862,079 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held on Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. The hearing will be held remotely via video and audio teleconference. For information on how to view the video conference or listen via audio, or to provide testimony into the conference, please visit the City Council's web page at www.baltimorecitycouncil.com or use the following link: <http://bit.ly/Taxpayersnight>. This page also contains information on registering for public comment.

Participants who join the video conference will be enabled to speak. Speakers will be allowed to address the Council for two (2) minutes. Public comment may also be made by emailing:

<https://www.baltimorecitycouncil.com/testify>.

All electronic comments must be submitted by 1:00 PM on Thursday, May 27, 2021. Comments received will be read by Baltimore City Council staff during the public comment portion of the meeting.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call the Office of Council Services at 443-984-3485 or visit the Council's web page at www.baltimorecitycouncil.com, for further information.

MARYLAND

Several injured, one severely, in natural gas explosion in Pikesville

By Taylor DeVille and Alex Mann

A natural gas explosion in Pikesville left several people injured Friday afternoon and sparked a fire in the street, Baltimore County fire officials said.

At least one person was critically injured and taken to Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center for treatment, said Elaine Armacost, a Baltimore County Fire Department spokeswoman. As of 9 p.m. Friday, the victim's condition was unclear.

Baltimore Gas & Electric workers were among the injured, said Stephanie Weaver, a spokeswoman for the utility company. One worker was taken to a hospital and another was treated at the scene, near the intersection of Stevenson Road and Jansellen Drive.

The BGE crews had been working on a "steel gas main" in the area when fire erupted, Weaver said.

Armacost said several structures, vehicles and power lines were damaged by the fire. Firefighters responded around 3:49 p.m., the department said in a tweet. Two hours later, they still were battling the blaze, but the fire was knocked out around 7 p.m. after BGE was able to shut off the gas main, Baltimore County Fire Director Tim Roszkowski said.

Rubin Schechman and his wife Donna Cary, who live directly across the street from where the explosion occurred, were outside in their yard when they heard a loud boom and saw a flash of light.

"All of a sudden there was this big explosion," Schechman said. "A fireball went probably 50 feet in the air."

The couple and their cat were evacuated by firefighters. As Schechman described seeing one of the injured workers laid out on his lawn by firefighters, Cary became tearful, covering her mouth with her hands.

Schechman said he called BGE to report the smell of gas twice over the last several days. Both times, BGE responded quickly. Sherri Keller, who lives in the Stevenson Ridge-Halecym neighborhood across from where the fire occurred, came outside after hearing a helicopter over her home.

Gas leaks aren't unusual in the community but "this was something different," she said, standing outside watching crews work to contain the flames.

Weaver said BGE was working to make the area safe, work that required the company to suspend gas service to about 200 customers.

"The process of restoring gas service to these customers will begin once repairs are completed," she said.

Corrections department offers snacks to spur vaccine interest in prisons

By Phillip Jackson

The Maryland Department of Correctional Services said it is offering snack packages and other food items as an incentive for inmates to sign up for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Department spokeswoman Latoya Gray said 14 items are available in the packages, including rice, tuna, cookies, crackers and chips. The packages also will be distributed to those who already have volunteered and received the vaccine, she said.

"This incentive is in addition to the outreach, education, and engagement by trusted leaders that the Department has offered and will continue to offer to assure our population is well informed as they make this critical healthcare decision," Gray said in a statement. "The contract healthcare provider will send each facility the names of all vaccinated inmates, and all will receive their commissary incentive packages."

Maryland's innovative approach mirrors a national trend by states, cities and businesses to drive up the number of people getting the vaccine. Ohio has offered a chance to win \$1 million to recipients, West Virginia is offering \$100 savings bonds, while Krispy Kreme is giving away donuts to the vaccinated and Uber is promoting free rides to drive people

to vaccine sites.

As of May 1, the most recent data available, about 70% of the state's 18,000 prisoners have received at least one vaccine dose. Of those, 8,348 inmates have received their first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, and an additional 4,527 have been fully vaccinated, according to a letter sent recently from Robert L. Green, secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, to two Maryland elected officials.

Green added that 1,237 inmates refused the first dose of vaccination and that the bulk of refusals occurred in April as eligibility was expanded from older and high-risk groups to all inmates.

The decision comes amid concerns from advocates about a coronavirus outbreak in a Baltimore city jail.

Earlier this week a Maryland federal judge, acting on a motion by the American Civil Liberties Union in an ongoing prisoner rights lawsuit, ordered the state to provide detailed vaccination data for inmates at the Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center. The state was given until May 31 to comply. The corrections department said there have been at 30 least inmate deaths across the state due to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

Topgolf to build complex near M&T Bank Stadium, Horseshoe Casino

By Lorraine Mirabella

The long-awaited Topgolf Baltimore is expected to open next year in South Baltimore's designated entertainment district near the Horseshoe Casino and M&T Bank Stadium.

Topgolf Entertainment Group announced this week that it will start building on nearly six waterfront acres in the Southern Gateway Entertainment District at Stockholm and Warner streets.

It will be the third Topgolf in Maryland, joining locations in Germantown in Montgomery County and at National Harbor in Prince George's County.

The Baltimore complex, envisioned as an anchor of the developing entertainment district and first announced in May 2018, will be designed with a central atrium with seating, yard games and a giant video wall.

The three-level venue will feature 90 hitting bays, year-round programming, private event rooms and a full-service

restaurant and bar. It is expected to employ more than 800 people.

Baltimore City, the Baltimore Development Corp. and Horseshoe's ownership group all played roles in the development, with Topgolf acquiring the site from the city for \$7.9 million. Under terms of the development agreement with BDC, Topgolf's purchase and an additional contribution from Horseshoe helped fund the relocation of the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, which had occupied part of the site, to a larger facility in Cherry Hill.

"The addition of Topgolf to the Warner Street corridor will provide more job opportunities for Baltimore City residents, broaden the city's tax base and serve as another source of entertainment for families around the area," Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott said in an announcement.

Topgolf, which operates 69 venues worldwide, is known for technology-driven entertainment and making the game of golf more accessible.

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**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 21-0081
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: The Council President
At the request of: The Administration (Department of Finance)
Introduced and read first time: May 17, 2021
Assigned to: Ways and Means Committee

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Annual Property Tax – Fiscal Year 2022**

3 FOR the purpose of providing a tax for the use of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for
4 the period July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022; and setting the semiannual payment service
5 charge for that period.

6 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That for
7 the period July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, a tax is levied and imposed for the use of the
8 Mayor and City Council of Baltimore on all property in the City of Baltimore (except property
9 exempt by law), as follows:

10 (a) except as otherwise specified in item (b) of this section, a tax of \$2.248 is levied and
11 imposed on every \$100 of assessed or assessable value of real property; and

12 (b) a tax of \$5.62 is levied and imposed on every \$100 of assessed or assessable value of:

13 (1) personal property; and

14 (2) operating real property described in State Tax-Property Article § 8-109(c).

15 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, That this tax shall be paid and collected in the
16 manner prescribed by law including the provisions of Section 10-210 of the Tax-Property Article
17 of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland.

18 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, That for the period July 1, 2021, through June
19 30, 2022, the semiannual payment service charge to be imposed under State Tax-Property Article
20 § 10-204.3 is 0.09%.

21 **SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, That this Ordinance takes effect on the date it is
22 enacted.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.