
CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR



ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES
NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR
100 N. HOLIDAY STREET
BALTIMORE MD, 21202

HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0060
AGENCY BUDGET HEARINGS – DAY 1

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

Committee: Budget & Appropriations
Chaired by: Danielle McCray

Hearing Date: 5/28/2025 – Day 1

Agency: Finance/BBMR
Time (Beginning): 9:15 AM
Time (Ending): 11:30 AM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 40

Agency: Visit Baltimore
Time (Beginning): 11:35 AM
Time (Ending): 12:10 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 40

Agency: City Administrator's Office
Time (Beginning): 1:00 PM
Time (Ending): 4:05 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 65

Agency: Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs
Time (Beginning): 4:15 PM
Time (Ending): 5:00 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 40

Agency: Department of Public Works
Time (Beginning): 6:00 PM
Time (Ending): 9:50 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 85

Committee Members in Attendance (Day 1):

Danielle McCray Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer Sharon Green Middleton
Paris Gray Antonio Glover

Bill Synopsis in the file? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Attendance sheet in the file? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Agency reports read? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Evidence of notification to property owners? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Final vote taken at this hearing? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Motioned by:
Seconded by:
Final Vote:

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Laura Larsen, Budget Director, BBMR
- Michael Mocksten, Director, Department of Finance
- Adam Manne, Chief Procurement Officer, Department of Finance
- Ashely Meyer, Director of Grants Management, Department of Finance
- Janelle Rogers, Bureau Chief for Treasury Management
- Al Hutchinson, CEO, Visit Baltimore
- Kareem Swinton, VP of Sales, Visit Baltimore
- Calvin Young, Chief of Staff
- Faith Leach, CAO
- Shamiah Kerney, Deputy Director of Performance Management
- Alan Robinson, Assistant City Administrator for Operations
- Elizabeth Tatum, Acting Chief Recovery Officer
- Khalil Zaied, Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Matthew Garbark, Department of Public Works
- Yvonne Moore Jackson, Department of Public Works
- Steve Sharkey, Department of Public Works
- Toya Sykes-Coates, Department of Public Works
- Sophia Hosain, Department of Public Works
- Marco Merrick, Department of Public Works



Major Issues Discussed

Councilman Gray opened the hearing for Chair McCray, introduced the bill and the agencies testifying to the Council.

A presentation was given by **Bureau of the Budget and Management Research (BBMR)** Director Larsen [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Outline's Service 708 – Operating Budget Management
 - 3 teams – 19 positions
 - Revenue and Long-Range Planning
 - Expenditure Team
 - Policy and Planning Team
- Major highlights include:
 - Budget transfer of \$60,000 to Corporate and Revenue Compliance
 - Publish 5 management research reports
 - Revenue forecast accuracy of 2%
 - Turnaround time for BOE approvals within 3 days

The floor was open to questions from the Council Members:

Questions/Comments from Council	Response from Agency
CP Cohen: The Department of Finance overspent its budget in FY24 by \$4.2 million, what fiscal controls are in place? Heading into FY26 do you think we will have tighter control over agency overspending? For agencies that overspend in FY25 what controls will be in place for FY26. Concerns about supplementals being approved on the backend and to ensure there is honesty in budgeting.	Director Larsen: Approach to oversight is based on the quarterly projections process where we review a budget to actual forecasting for the first, second, third quarter – and trying to predict where we're going to be at the end of the fiscal year. Complete these projections internally and collaboratively work with city agency fiscal and operational staff. This allows us to discuss corrective actions. Additional controls may be placed with purchasing and authorization regarding spending and tighter controls on overtime and contract spending. Implementing new technology to support tighter controls. FY24 increased spending was caused by backlog from FY23 due to the Workday implementation.

	Redoing workflows for FY26 that will be implemented July 1: - Personnel actions - New controls for purchasing - Budget checks 12 agencies were projected to have a deficit. Working with the agencies since mid-March to determine the cause of the overspending. Additional reviews are put into place to evaluate position costs and that there are sustainable plans in place.
Councilwoman Middleton: Are we going back to contractual services? The Council and the Mayor supports apprenticeship and internship programs. We need to focus on career governmental positions.	Director Larsen: Committed to working with City agencies to retain and create permanent positions. Additional investments in apprenticeships (ex: Fire Department and the Fleet Team). When we talk about contractual services – variety of services for outside support – We look at it as supplement for project-based tasks.
Councilman Schleifer: Follow up to last week’s hearing of OT and Vacancies. When can we get a full list of Fees and Fines in Group 1? How do agencies raise a salary for a specific position? Is that done by reallocating money from a vacant position? Is the information public or internal?	Director Larsen: BBMR is working on comprehensive review. 2000 fees/fines that are divided in 3 groups. Currently looking at Group 1. The evaluation includes the following: - Benchmark the fees – review what the fee looks like vs nationally - Working with City agencies – the cost related to providing the services - Who is burdened with the fee - Who benefits from the fee - What is the cost associated with fee There are HR related policies that must be followed (depending on the union contract). If there is an upgrade to a position or change in position – BBMR looks to ensure this action is net neutral within their budget. This information lives within various Workday processes that cannot be easily distributed. However, for FY26 there will be new functionality in Workday.

Councilwoman Ramos: Do we integrate the updated reassessments when properties get reassessed? And the amount of dollars we're getting during the last 2 years with those rehabs? <i>See Committee Request for follow up on the vacant properties that have been rehabbed over the last 2 years.</i> <i>See Committee Request for follow up on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.</i> What is the impact of the State's Budget regarding lowering the bond rating in Maryland and the changes to the income tax brackets? What is the impact of the loss of Federal workers?	Director Larsen: In terms of forecasting property tax – the big data point for that is the assessment growth information from SDAT that usually comes in December/January. The property tax file is reviewed on a monthly and quarterly basis. In addition, we look at other changes to the property taxes outside of the SDAT assessment (such as vacant properties coming back online, assessment appeals, assessment losses). It is important to note that over \$2 million worth of property tax revenue was taken out of the general fund starting in FY 26 so borrowing can be issued in the newly approved non-contiguous Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Additional incremental value from future vacant properties that are being rehabbed will move to the TIF to be able to support the revolving borrowing. The city has its own bonding authority, and the new brackets will come into effect FY27. Working with the Comptroller to build that forecast for the FY27 budget. This analysis would be shared in early Fall. The income tax projection was reduced by \$5.9 million to reflect slower growth.
Councilman Gray: Has the City analyzed fining littering issues such as "Buy Houses" signs and "Campaign" litter?	Director Larsen: This is more of an issue of enforcement as a revenue collection pathway. We are looking at specific fines that have not been increased in number years – reviewing quality of life issues. And looking at the fine structure to deter behavior and working with agencies to determine that they have capacity related to enforcement.
Councilman Conway: Like to follow up on lines of questioning. Stems off regarding OT. In FY25 \$76 million	Director Larsen:

for OT but projected to spend \$144 million in OT. At what point does BBMR become aware of the overage? At what point do you notify that of the Council? Concerns about adjusting the budgets and approving supplementals each year.	BBMR notes this in the quarterly forecasts. For agencies that are overspending, we are coordinating with those agencies monthly. BBMR flags this information for the Council at the quarterly briefings. This is also something to discuss with agencies about operational decisions about service delivery and capacity.
CP Cohen: <i>See Committee Request regarding changes to internal process for quarterly spending and impending supplemental briefings to the Council</i>	Director Larsen: Suggests having those conversations in July and August.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chair McCray introduced the **Department of Finance**.

A presentation was given by Director Mocksten [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Director Mocksten introduces his entire team
- Outline's Service 148 – Revenue Collection
 - Largest Department and responsible for all fines and fees
- Outline's Service 150 – Treasury and Debt Management
 - The City has taken advantage of the historically high interest rate over the past few years – generating a strong investment return
 - Updated the City's Investment Policy with the Board of Finance (Aug 2024) in line with the state and national best practices
- Service 699 – Procurement
 - Proposed revisions to the City Code and Amendments to the City Charter
- Service 704 – Accounting
 - Challenges in hiring, however, have been recently interviewing several former federal employees
 - Slight improvements to the FY 2024 ACFR and Single Audit both published earlier in May
 - Cleared findings
- Service 913 – Finance Grants Management
 - Newly broken out service is expanding its role

The floor was open to questions from the Council Members:

Questions/Comments from Council	Response from Agency
Councilman Gray:	Director Mocksten/Chief Adam Manne:

Consistently fall short on our goals in procurement (ex Recs & Parks/ DOT). Residents feel that that cannot trust the government to deliver. What are ongoing steps that are being taken to correct the barriers with procurement? Excited to See the new service for Grants Management. How will you support Agencies?	Was a sore spot for Baltimore City (was slow – lots of rules and not enough people). A couple years ago reviewed what other cities did, brought in new leadership, and changed up. Positive change – seeing the process speeding up (we should see results soon as these are being worked through each agency). 1. Realigning efficiencies 2. Procurement teams to support the work 3. Tech improvements 4. BBMR is being brought into the Procurement cycle (anything over \$25000) 5. Staff is getting certified and earn national certifications 6. Business partners with National Procurement Officer training 7. Project management software – entered into a system to see live cycle Director Mocksten/Director Ashely Meyer: Will vary from agency to agency to develop approach based on agency needs. Using a portfolio approach and positioning our team as the resource center for agencies managing grants. Is a challenge since there are so many agencies – but will work to increase capacity.
Councilwoman Ramos: Need for payment plans - last year there was a commitment to have payment plans by October 2025. Is there an update on the timeframe? There is an urgency to get this done. Impact of the Bond Rating for the State?	Director Mocksten: Progress is underway, but the timeline is difficult to update at this time. DOF will maintain communication with the Council. Director Mocksten/Chief Rogers The Bond rate is separate from the State. We will continue to monitor the situation, but the City's credit rating remains DoubleA and the State's declined bond rating should not impact the City.

Councilwoman Porter: What is the Project management software used in Procurement? Is there a consultant with Workday to assist with this? Concerned that it's an open system and the continuity of the data.	Chief Adam Manne: Using Mondays.com as the project management software to help track the staff and deliverables. Workday does not have all those functionalities currently. Yes, there is a health check with Workday Consultant. There are sometimes additional advantages to using an inexpensive supplemental system. Monday.com is only used to track our work, all business is being completed in Workday. It allows us to limit inefficiencies and bottlenecks.
Councilman Blanchard: What are the challenges with Bids? Are we seeing any improvement.	Chief Adam Manne: Non-capital/ non-professional – website, states system, and advertise in 3 Some of the challenges: 1. <i>Issues with payment (issues with culture)</i> 2. <i>City Restrictions (minority business claus)</i> 3. <i>The right category code</i> 4. May depend on the market/economy. No one answer. Yes, we are issuing the best value – proposal system (seeing an uptick) changes from IFP method.
Councilman Conway: Performance measures regarding off-cycle checks – what is the fluctuation in the different FY? If off-cycle checks is not a good performance measure – what is a good performance measure? How often change orders in Procurement is captured.	Director Mocksten: This is a process to clean up payroll – issued more off-cycle checks. Adjustments, promotion, retro, these are not a sign of problems. This may not be the best way to evaluate signs of problems. It is a nimble use of payroll. Commitment to determine what is the more effective measure to determine when there are issues with paychecks. Chief Adam Manne:

	The City doesn't track change orders. This is a normal process in construction and some IT projects. These orders are tracked per project and goes to the BOE. Commitment to review if the technology allows us to track this.
Councilman Jones: What are the rules in change orders? Overview of the budget process?	Chief Adam Manne: Tracked within each project. These are captured in Workday. The goal is to stay within the budget or go back to BOE. Director Larsen: This is a 12-month cycle. The summary section of the budget book goes into detail on this process.
Councilman Parker: Procurement transformation process – and progress made. What is the actual progress? <i>See Committee Request regarding Rubric for the Best Value Bid.</i>	Director Mocksten: Reduced the following: 1. Number of requisitions 2. Number of days in procurement 3. Overall length of time (under 150 days). Each quarter the numbers improve the procurement processes. Increased efficiencies, more staff with smaller number of procurements

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chair McCray introduced CEO of **Visit Baltimore**.

A presentation was given by CEO Al Hutchinson [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Outline's Service 820 – Convention Sales and Tourism Marketing
- CIAA is pending a proposal (June 11)
- Kareem Swinton will be interim CEO effective July 1

The floor was open to questions from the Council Members:

Questions/Comments from Council	Response from Agency
CP Cohen: Concerned we are not telling an adequate story of Baltimore's comeback (specifically	CEO Hutchinson/Swinton: Leading with Baltimore numbers in public safety (specifically with convention crowd).

seeing the decline in violent crime). What are we doing to change the narrative? What is timeline for the strategy. <i>See Committee Request regarding meeting with CPs Team.</i>	The ARPA funds are working on a regional campaign to ensure the 5 surrounding counties visit Baltimore. Sense of urgency to working on this strategy.
Councilwoman Middleton: Suggests being involved with the Maryland Association of Counties and National Association of Counties – and for Visit Baltimore to do a session at the next conference.	CEO Hutchinson: Yes, will partner and collaborate with the City Council.
Councilwoman Porter: How do we leverage micro influencers?	CEO Hutchinson/Swinton: Social influencers helped rebrand – work very closely with them. We do a meet-up twice a year and compensate for their time and effort. One of the greatest assets.
Councilwoman Ramos: How do we get people who visit and stay here in Baltimore? What is the partnership with Live Baltimore?	CEO Hutchinson/Swinton: There is a relationship, and the team is committed to increasing the collaboration.
Councilman Jones: Ensure the new strategy includes “Who Baltimore is.” Do we use software to determine who is coming to Baltimore?	CEO Hutchinson: Yes, use AI software to track who comes to Baltimore.
Councilman Blanchard: What are the plans for the visitor center?	CEO Hutchinson: Working with the City on what is next for the center. There are very low numbers on how the building is utilized. Working with MCB Real Estate to ensure the center is part of the redesign.
Councilman Glover: Provide details on the \$2.7 Million loan?	CEO Hutchinson: Final year of the loan will be paid during this FY26 budget.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chair McCray opened the hearing from a previous recess introducing the bill and the agencies who would be testifying to the council.

A presentation was given by the **City Administrator's Office**, Faith Leach Chief Administrative Officer [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

The floor was open to questions from the Council Members:

Questions/Comments from Council	Response from Agency
CP Cohen: Concerned about service delivery & service workers: deaths and injuries among city workers – what improvements have been made to health and safety? Glass spraying from trash compactors for DPW – how do we make sure front-line workers get the right safety materials Misc. category in Mayoralty – large amount going to capital improvements what is \$38 million going to? <i>See Committee Request regarding Special Project Fund.</i>	CAO: Currently in negotiations with unions regarding heat safety. Drafts have been sent to MOSH (State OSHA). Include cooling breaks. • Monitoring the impacts of the plan with operational needs • Setting up cooling centers for outdoor workers over the summer. • Monitoring workplace injuries – created injury committee to review cases. • Workplace safety stat to review implementation of workplace safety policies, policy changes, operational challenges. Deputy Mayor of Operations to help streamline the effort to get appropriate materials such as work boots, goggles, ect. Moving from a deficit thinking for agency and operational leadership. Director Larsen: The remaining is actually \$44 million that don't have a clear home at a City Agency (i.e. stadium authority payments, SDAT, Brownsfield Tax credit, annual contribution to Rainy Day fund, independent auditors, citywide membership fees, various special events, legal fees with outside council).
Councilwoman Middleton: Concerns about challenges with cleanliness and dumping issues. What are we doing to continue to progress in this area?	CAO: Shift in the culture in the administrator and the city. Looking at delivery models and evaluating staffing models. The next phase is looking at industry standards (ex: recycling). Working with OPI and CityStat teams to driving change.

Councilman Gray: What triggers a multiagency response – how is that communicated? How does the CAO work with agencies to complete these projects?	CAO/Alan Robinson: In an active public safety incident – the incident commander is responsible for the response protocol. Deputy Admin works with BPD, MONSE, DOT, DPW and others regarding responses. There are frequent meetings with council members and other stakeholders. The multi- agency inspection task force is responsible to coordinate the resources – weekly engagement and debrief on the week’s activities. These are triggered by statistical analysis from BPD or OPI. The city is working with agencies to improve project management.
Chair McCray: Where are we in filling the Deputy Mayor of Operations	CAO: The pin has been moved and is expected to be filled in early July.
Councilman Glover: When are we expecting to see the pay raise for DPW employees.	CAO: Active negotiations with Union partners. Working on the implementation of a 20-step scale. There should be a significant increase for solid waste workers that will be more equitable.
Councilman Schleifer: Concerns about the instability in leadership positions. Should leadership positions be able to serve in an acting capacity for long periods instead of permanent positions (ex: DPW)?	CAO: The current bureau head in solid waste is acting but has been with DPW for 27 years. The right candidate will be appointed when they have been found – will not rush recruitment. Employees in the acting capacity title varies on why they are acting.
Councilwoman Ramos: Concerns for funding for services for immigrant community in the city. How can we fix the Permits Office – it is an urgent situation?	CAO: This administration is committed to ensure immigrant communities are safe and protected – and that they have funding and resources they need. Working to stabilize by: • Recognizing that there have been issues with implementations of systems in other areas – Workday and Accela

	• Deploying a tiger team – digging into the system to ensure we are looking at the user experience, designing, operational implementations, process mapping. Determining the data issues as well and working towards shifting the system implementation. • This is going to result in a multiyear delay which is unacceptable – what is happening now? BCFD has been moving their permit team. • CAO committing to an update at July permit hearing and regular updates following.
Councilwoman Porter: What is the process of negotiating with our unions and how that impacts the budget process? When wages are subsequently increased as a result of union negotiations, where do we find those funds to support that increase in OT?	CAO: At the table with every single City union. Negotiations begin in January before the end of the contract. The Budget is based on estimated offer of the admin – but negotiations came in higher for BPD & BCFD. This cost was not included in the passed budget. Competing timeline of budget negotiations versus the timeline of the contract ratifications. Overtime costs more and union contracts and MOUs have different kinds of overtime which changes the amount of money. Admin must identify an offset to allow for higher offers.
Councilman Parker: Will the CAO commit to using general funds for legal aid to support immigrant communities.	CAO: The administration is committed to having more conversations regarding investment.
Councilman Blanchard: Why was the administration looking to raise fines and fees to increase the City's revenue? What is the administration's stance on contracting verse pins.	CAO: Understand that this is not a sustainable way to increase the City's revenue. More importantly this decision was made because it has been 2 decades since a Fine and Fee study was completed – this is a comprehensive look at the City's fee

	structure. Opportunity to review the fee structure and study/compare Baltimore to its peers in a way to modernize. Working to shift jobs into permanent positions. Training workforce to lessen dependency on contractors.
Councilman Jones: How are we balancing the budget – does this impact our residents? Union negotiations – are we being clear with them on what the City can offer upfront?	CAO: It's balanced and made in a way to help address cuts from the federal level. Several city agencies are heavily grant supported – health & MOHS as examples. Many city agencies are at the table in these negotiations, and it is a process which the admin has and will continue to unfold.
Councilman Conway: Working to create strong systems – Passed the CityStat Bill in 2023. Can you provide an update on where we are with that? <i>See Committee Request regarding an audit of phone answering by agency & division.</i>	CAO/Kerney: Significant progress has been made in implementing this bill – what has been done is the addition of a delivery are – civic design team. 6/7 of the primary agencies have been stood up. Issued the OPI report which we share with Council last month. This is a mechanism to understand how agencies are performing but also understand performance management (identifying challenges and opportunities to collaborate and coordinate among agencies).
CP Cohen: \$6.6 million for special projects in Mayor's budget – what is that for? Overtime and supplementals - Looking for a path forward what would be a realistic timeline for reducing backend supplemental. Looking for a commitment to address overspending by agencies. How do we reduce the reliance on OT work and limit supplemental budgets? Concerned that Council signs off on a budget with the knowledge that there will be overspending in	Director Larsen: Supports a lot of requests from the council members. A breakdown will be provided. We need to determine what is the staffing needed to provide the service – long term vacancies do not negate the need for staffing. We have had to update FTEs in agencies. CAO: Is committed to work with Council/CP to engage in this conversation. Can have

certain agencies. Looking for a commitment to work collaboratively on addressing this issue with budgeting.	further discussions about the quarterly reports.
Councilman Schleifer: Will the proposed increases in fees impact the city's bond rating? Requesting a list of the fees and increases and what the timeline would be to receive that. State law indicates that the Board of Elections maintain an office and warehouse in the same location and former Director advocated this need – Is this in the budget? <i>See Committee Request regarding the budget for new location.</i>	Director Larsen/Chief of Staff Young/CAO: It should not hurt but could possibly help because it may diversify revenue streams. Expected to be completed this summer, and will be presented to the BOE and Council. Every fee is being studied in DOT and DHCD. Lease cost is included in the budget for Board of Elections and actively working with Board to identify locations. Have not currently identified a location that meets the need.
Councilwoman Middleton: Provide a brief overview of the hiring process for the Deputy Mayor for Operations? Residency requirement – ensuring that we do not lose institutional knowledge.	CAO: FY26 budget worked to reclassify/reallocate position because there was no position for Deputy Mayor of Operations. After budget passes, anticipate hiring someone in July/August. Agree, need to ensure that we need to keep institutional knowledges – must value and lift employees that have longevity at the city.
Councilman Gray: How does overtime impact the bottom line – specifically for public safety agencies? What are the different types of overtime? How do you monitor overtime utilization in public safety? How interagency communication with 311?	CAO/DM Barksdale: Union contracts dictate the parameters around overtime, and some contracts build in a maximum amount of overtime someone can generate. Volunteer/General Overtime= 1.5x pay Call-back Overtime = 1.5x pay (with nuance of getting a guaranteed 4 hours of pay even if you work less) *Additional nuances with Police and Fire – for example H days/Commissioner days (city-recognized holidays) Conducting AdminStat (7/16/24) – admin team comes in and reviews the data on high earners to ensure accountability.

	Steps are broken down in 311 so residents can see the progress of the request (example: Illegal dumping). Looking at the number of requests that are closed, what needs to go to investigation (reduced investigations by approx. 60/70%).
Councilwoman Ramos: Page 91 of the budget book – this hasn't changed since the mayor's first term. The City's 10-year plan – Addressing vacant properties must be a critical component. Will this type of priority be included in the plan?	CAO/Dir.Kerney: Action plan that 5 pillars – will continue into the 2nd term. Director Kerney will be working on the strategic plan and vision. Spending time this summer with agencies and partners on the plan. Vacant housing plan from the mayor is a top priority – and will be a connection in the 10-year plan. In addition there is a separate vacant housing plan.
Councilman Schleifer: Fully agree with the CAO about the most qualified person should be hired for the job. Revenue proposals are increase in taxes? Concern that these increases will be offset to the residents.	CAO: Redistributing taxes – such as the bag tax and taxicab is for companies.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chair McCray opened the hearing from a previous recess introducing the bill and the agencies who would be testifying to the council.

A presentation was given by the **Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs (MORP)**, Elizabeth Tatum Acting Chief Recovery Officer [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- MORP – 4 years since the creation of the office and the start of the ARPA implementation. - Organizational structure – 11 FTEs
 - ARPA – met the federal obligation deadline was met (12/31/2024) and approximately 70% of funds have been expended.
 - Monitoring capital projects closely (due to federal/market instability)
 - Opioid Restitution Fund – currently 22 named entities receiving funds
 - MORP is responsible for the grant monitoring and financial oversight for grantees

The floor was open to questions from the Council Members:

Questions/Comments from Council	Response from Agency
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Chair McCray: Lessons learned from ARPA – what will you apply to Opioid Restitution Funds.	Director Tatum: Grant implementation guidance that was developed for ARPA (such as detailed guidance on indirect costs, budget templates, time tracking guidance – technical supports).
CP Cohen: Concerns from the Opioid Restitution Board about the small number of grants going out? How are we going to improve this so more organizations in the frontline of this work have an opportunity for grant funds.	Director Tatum/Director Kerney: This money in the FY26 budget of \$2 million is within Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Overdose Response (BCMOR) – so MORP will assist them in developing the RFP process and to implement, the strategy is under their jurisdiction. BCMOR (strategy component) is a separate office from MORP (grant management). Working on the strategic plan before releasing additional dollars.
Councilwoman Ramos: What is happening with the Housing Accelerator Fund? <i>See Committee Request on Capital Projects.</i> Can we get some more details about the positions that are funded through ARPA?	Director Tatum: The bulk of the funds are going to 9 capital projects. The executed agreements were not completed until late 2024. At the beginning of the fund, it was clear that the City would not be able to keep all staff positions. MORP is working with agencies to determine how some staff and programs will continue/transfer to GF or different grants.
Councilman Torrence: Concerns about the budget, planning, and strategy around the crime prevention through environmental design program that is being administered by DHCD. <i>See Committee Request on CPTED.</i>	CoS Young: Follow up with councilman.
Councilman Jones: Are there conversations on which program will continue after ARPA ends?	Director Tatum: Conversations within agencies to determine how to continue programs. Discussion about what aligns with the City’s Priorities – what

	worked, performance measures, reviewing qualitative data and the program evaluations.
Councilman Blanchard: Why was it decided that there would be flat funding each year for the 15-year plan for the Opioid Restitution Funds?	Director Tatum: Request councilman to follow up with the budget department. However, notes that there is still a lot of planning going on to determine what will work best.

Chair McCray opened the hearing from a previous recess introducing the bill and the agency who would be testifying to the council.

A presentation was given by Director Zaied of Department of Public Works [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

The floor was open to questions from the Council Members:

Questions/Comments from Council	Response from Agency
CP Cohen: Thanked Director Zaied for participating in the “ride-along.” Concerned about the culture of safety. What are the improvements? Do the workers have the basic protective gear?	Director Zaied: Safety is the biggest priority. Acknowledging the concerns and multiple reports. Establishing a heat and safety plan for DPW that is being adopted citywide. Changed emergency protocols and significant number of trainings (all types) – we are focusing on training with accountability. Yes, workers have all the protective gear and materials needed to protect them. However, not everyone is using this gear – we are still working on training and training supervisors to manage this.
VP Middleton: Provide an update regarding the billing process for the Water for All Program and the appeals process (including language barriers/technology barriers – to include immigrant community). What practice/process if the Water Billing has not resolved the issue on a large bill. Are there enough employees?	Director Zaied/Mills/Marco: Work with the water advocates to work through the challenges and barriers. There is a process in place and workflow regarding an issue with an erroneous water bill. - Appeals - Customer Service - Access through community centers

	- Referrals from community partner Each dispute is reviewed and communicated with the resident. Working with the finance department to determine staffing. A full communication plan is also in progress.
Councilman Glover: Emphasizes the importance of training and access to protective gear. What specific customer service improvements should residents expect in this fiscal year? <i>See Committee Request on contract budget.</i>	Director Zaied: On a daily basis have meetings to review customer service numbers – how fast we respond to our performance metrics. Highlighted some temporary services such as street sweeping that are currently on a contract until the new equipment/fleet is obtained. Additionally, we want to ensure all services continue while we hire permanent employees.
Councilman Gray: The SOS Program - <i>See Committee Request regarding data request on Sewage Back Ups.</i> What is the city's plan to improve diversion and recycling rates without funding new infrastructure. Concerned about lack of education piece on recycling and composting.	Director Zaied: Approximately spent \$1.4 billion since 2002, and anticipate spending close to \$2 billion by 2030/2031. Every year we budget \$2 million each year – pending DOJ approval (eager to announce this). There is some money coming from a capital perspective and a significant portion will focus on composting. We are looking at what it means to expand the life of the landfill to determine what the impact is on the city.
Chair McCray: Was the initiative on tagging cans ever started? <i>See Committee Request regarding "Opps" Tags.</i>	Director Moore-Jackson/Hussein: Using the program in the school recycling programs. Challenges with implementing tagging cans – possible to do random checks in a sample size. DPW is committed to looking into this and the education component.
Councilman Conway:	Director Zaied/Director Larsen:

What progress are we making on zero waste (noting the increase in tipping fee)? Concerned that residents are not happy about the lack of effort towards zero waste. Moving \$5 million into contractual hauling. <i>See Committee Request regarding cost analysis.</i>	Increase in the tipping fee (the city has the lowest tipping fee compared to the other local jurisdictions). This should reduce outside dependence on the landfill. Secondly, the biggest thing is looking at P3 Transfer Station – where you can separate trash and recycling. Only using contractual support until we can hire permanent employees.
Councilwoman Ramos: What are the timelines of establishing the Oversight Board? <i>See Committee Request regarding WAEA.</i> Residents are not getting bills consistently – what is DPW doing to address issues regarding billing. Will have a hearing on Water for All in the future.	Director Zaied/Sykes: Committed to following up regarding the Board. System upgrade in June 2024 – have been addressing the glitches – operations meeting 3x/week. The trend for issues with billing has decreased. Sending out high consumption letters to residents that may have leaks
Councilman Parker: Service 671: With six (6) positions being moved – How do plan to continue adequate services for water management, especially for the water line breaks? Service 671: Are current service levels maintained? Is DPW seeing a surplus in FY25? Is this an opportunity for expanding zero-waste initiatives? <i>See Committee Request regarding curbside composting.</i>	Director Zaied/ Garbark/CAO: Balance on maintenance and reconstructing lines. Goal of 15 miles of new water lines each year to keep up with the need. Some of this is funded through Capital Projects. The 6 positions is just a shift in accounting and no decrease capacity. The enhancement request was \$4.3 million to have a separate service for yard waste and \$5.2 for solid waste. Our recommendation was to increase the crews (with limited resources). Learned lots of lessons about adding new services. Administration is interested in a curbside composting pilot but needs the research and strategy behind it.
Councilman Torrence: How does DPW office of engineering construction monitor performance and	Director Zaied: Provides a detail on the difference in street cuts and cold patches.

compliance of contractors working on capital projects? What systems are in place? Would like the city to look at the restoration of the roadways after the water projects in-house. <i>See Committee Request regarding change orders.</i>	There is an internal citystat to review this – hired 5 new engineers and 6 inspectors (inspectors will be getting more/better training).
Councilman Blanchard: 675 – Debt Service is the largest service line for DPW. What is the debt that the City owes from revenue bonds on water and wastewater. What is the deferred maintenance estimated? Concerned about the significant amount of money (9/10 billion) owed and important to flag in the 10-year plan. Why have we increased the spending on the incinerator?	Director Zaied: 5 billion in debt from revenue bonds. Approximately \$4 billion. The volume of use has increased. The study that DPW is planning to determine next steps. Starting the study now and most likely the results within 6 to 12 months.
Councilman Jones: Explain the process when a resident has a leak and access to rebate program? Concerned that residents may not know how to access their online bill or may not know that is what is expected of them. Cannot blame the residents if a bill is not received. What is the timeframe of resolving a bill?	Director Sykes-Coates: Several policies for adjustments when it comes to leaks. Policy that directly correlates with how the adjustment is applied if there is a silent leak or an internal leak there is a policy that we apply that would allow our staff to look at the highest 3 bills during the time frame which that leak was active – then DPW uses a formula to calculate the amount of relief that's provided. Residents are encouraged to create a profile on site to review their bills monthly. Resolving the dispute a response is given up to 7-10 days, but doesn't mean that the issue is resolved within that time. Director Zaied/ Garbark: Signifies the importance of looking back at the public awareness and education component.

	Clarifies what counts as a bill. If a bill is not sent out for a month, the amount due goes to the next month (etc.) – and that constitutes as 1 bill (so it can have multiple months on it).
Councilwoman Porter: Increase in the cost of chemicals and why? Are there any alternative chemicals that we can use?	Halman: Increase due to COVID and most recently in tariffs. Cost of methanol has gone up 230% - so spending upwards of \$8 million (on that single chemical) and there are about 6/7 different chemicals needed within the wastewater treatment process. Yes, technically there are other chemicals, but those would need to be evaluated.
Councilman Schleifer: Can you explain the 9% rate increase? What are the consequences about not paying the water bill?	Director Zaied: The increase starts July 1 and is 9% water, 9% for waste water, and 3% for storm water. Increases are due to inflation, compliance, and the capital projects needed to fix the infrastructure. We have been recouping the commercial piece and looking into what needs to be done with the residential.
Councilman Gray: What are steps taken modernize DPW's fleet? Concerned about the \$5.3 million allocation to contract street sweeping.	Director Zaied: Large investment from the mayor for DPW. The entire fleet was not completed, so a contract was needed to get the spare vehicles.
Councilman Conway: Follow up on the Zero Waste. What are we doing to address rats in the City and reduction in the performance metrics. Cleaning metrics – provide more details.	CAO: Looking at a study/pilot, but cannot commit to the timeframe at this time. Need to understand the operational impact regarding all the steps. Commitment to follow up with the councilman. Jackson-Moore:

	The rat rub out program is working. Inspections are increasing, but the rat barrels are decreasing. The poisons are working, and 2 pilots for the rat contraceptive program to ensure they do not breed. Increased more crews that increased targets to 100%.
Councilman Parker: Do you track how many miles that are not swept due to cars parked? Provide additional details to footnote on page 309?	CAO: Coordinating with DOT, updating signage, and engagement process. CleanStat program looking at this problem. Separate items –FY 26 budget is the 10 that were previously ARPA funded are being transitioned on a recurring basis uh to the general fund (crews already exist).
CP Cohen: How much money was provided by the worker's compensation? Concerned about the number of injuries and ensuring that workers get compensated adequately. <i>See Committee Request on Heat Safety Plan.</i> Challenge in the opt-in function on health insurance plan.	Director Larsen: Just under 3.2 million. CAO will review this issue and follow-up with CP. Director Zaied: Provides as overview of the standards and how the supervisors will handle these plans. Part of the plan includes mandatory breaks and supervisors are being held accountable. These plans will be implemented and tested. Increased the sessions on health insurance plans – currently 100 out of 134 that did not have are now enrolled.
Councilman Blanchard: Provide an update on the enterprise fund.	Director Zaied: Will be meeting with the Finance Dept to review all the impacts of this in the next couple weeks.
Councilman Jones: Provide an update on facility renovations?	Director Zaied: Starting reconstruction/ moving staff in trailers. New locker rooms and trailers, while renovations happen. Late this year/next year – Phase 1 and Phase II of constructions.

Councilman Torrence: <i>See Committee Request on inspections.</i> Concern about the delivery of Customer Service and customer service delivery from DPW Inspectors and from the Contractors. Additionally, the large amount of change orders for projects. There should be a standard (customer service) for the Inspectors as well as for Contractors.	Director Zaied: 72 inspectors funded. Committed to working with Council on improving on how the City does business. Working with the legal team regarding collecting IDs (safety around identity theft).
Councilwoman Ramos: <i>See Committee Request on Greenmount.</i> Collections from the surrounding Counties in terms of the reimbursement?	DPW: County sets their rate but we concur with it - obligated to charge them at cost for water per state law in our agreement with them from 1973.
Councilman Torrence: Importance of communications and educators about recycling. Need to go back to the basics and go to schools/senior centers. Simple things that can be done to ensure that we are doing this correctly.	CAO: We are looking at education models and increasing awareness.
Councilman Schleifer: Big Truck Day to include Sunday? Describe the Equity at DPW? What is the impact of this? <i>See Committee Request on Equity.</i> Have we recruited from the Clean Corp Program.	Director Zaied: Will look into this with Public Works Experience that plans the event. Director Marco: Looking at equity internally and having comprehensive training. Looking at safety through an equity lens. Partnering with the Health Department as well – and there is equity change groups too. There is a full curriculum about equity. Shifting the culture at DPW – evolved the new employee orientation. Every employee has gone through trainings. When the Clean Corp Program ends, DPW will absorb that.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe.

#	Agency Hearing	Member	Fulfill Request	Date requested	Finalized Request
1	BBMR	Ramos	BBMR	18-Jun	The number of properties where the VBN was removed (Use and Occupancy established) that were reassessed in 2023 and 2024. Then the amount of revenue from this reassessment. Coupled with if these are in the roughly 7K of the properties that were approved for NCTIF revenues as well as the reassessment for the debt service. It was not my understanding that all the properties rehabbed would have those additional revenues go into the TIF debt service.
2	BBMR	Ramos	BBMR	18-Jun	What is the revenue into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for FY2025 and anticipated for FY2026? What is the current balance of the fund from these revenues (not the capital fund that is obligated)
3	BBMR	Cohen	BBMR	1-Jul	Asking for a follow-up meeting with CP & Chair McCray on changes to internal process for quarterly spending and impending supplemental briefings to the Council
4	BBMR	Schleifer	BBMR	TBD	The full list of all the Fines and Fees in Group 1. To include the current and proposed costs.
5	DOF	Conway	DOF	4-Jun	If we are not using off cycle checks as an indicator for discrepancies when paying vendors what are we using to find discrepancies and how are they being addressed.
6	DOF	Conway	DOF	TBD	Request for DOF to update the service 703 Performance Measure for the number of off-cycle checks to something that more accurately identifies whether the city promptly pays employees. DOF to add change orders as a metric to the procurement process
7	DOF	Parker	DOF	18-Jun	Provide the scoring rubrics for the "best value" solicitation method used in procurement.
8	Visit Baltimore	Cohen	Visit Baltimore	5-Jun	Plan for promoting city/ tourism communication plan (looking for a meeting between VB & CP Teams)
9	CAO	Cohen	DOF	18-Jun	For the Special Project Fund (under the M-R Miscellaneous Fund), please detail (1) what these funds are spent on and on whose behalf. (2) the process for spending these funds and who decides to spend them. (4) Requesting a meeting between the Council President, Budget Chair, CAO, & DOF on this fund.
10	CAO	Conway	CAO	18-Jun	Requesting an audit of phone answering by agency & division. What percentages of workers that have Mitel licensing and set up
11	CAO	Schleifer	BBMR	18-Jun	What was the budget for a new Board of Elections location in FY24 and how much was the proposed location?

12	MORP	Ramos	MORP	18-Jun	List of all projects in the Housing Accelerator Fund. Provide information on 1. spending in the Inspire Developer Incentives. 2. The 9 developments getting this funding, what are they, and where are they located?
13	MORP	Torrence	MORP	11-Jun	1) Provide a copy of DHCD's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) project plan (budgeted at \$2 million). 2) Provide a detailed description of the actual expenditures to date. 3) Provide DHCD's/the City's cohesive plan around CPTED. Provide a response to 1 & 2 within 2 weeks, and response to 3 will need to be confirmed.
14	DPW	Glover	DPW	18-Jun	How much of the total budget is dedicated to contract services in DPW.
15	DPW	Gray	DPW	11-Jun	Provide data for FY 23, FY24, FY25: How many 311 calls were made regarding sewage backups in people's homes (during both dry and wet weather events). 2) Of these Calls, how many were deemed to be an issue with the City's Infrastructure after investigations (during both dry and wet weather events). 3) How many applications were received for the SoS program? 4) Of these applications, how many were denied support? 5) How much money was disbursed in FY23, FY24, FY25, and 6) Where does the unspent money go?
16	DPW	McCray	DPW	18-Jun	When do you expect to expand using the "oops" tags for recycling citywide to curbside pick-up?
17	DPW	Ramos	DPW	18-Jun	When will the Committee for Oversight for WAEA be established
18	DPW	Conway	DPW	18-Jun	Provide a month-by-month analysis of the \$5 million budgeted in funding for solid waste services (This funding to support 6 months of continued contractual solid waste staffing for the first half of Fiscal 2026 and creation of 15 additional solid waste crews for the latter half of Fiscal 2026).
19	DPW	Parker	CAO	18-Jun	Requests the CAO/DPW to follow up with the City Council about the next steps with Curbside Composting.
20	DPW	Cohen	CAO	30-May	How is workers' compensation calculated for DPW workers? CAO committed to providing a status update by the end of the week.
21	DPW	Cohen	CAO	18-Jun	Provide the heat safety standards for DPW
22	DPW	Torrence	DPW	18-Jun	Provide the following data: 1) How many inspectors are currently employed within DPW, and does it compare to the volume of active construction projects under DPW purview. 2) Number of projects distributed to each inspector. 3) Number of times each inspector must visit each site 4) Details on the 6 new inspectors hired and what training is being provided.
23	DPW	Torrence	DPW	30-Jun	Requests a meeting on how we are tracking visits to transfer stations/dumps

24	DPW	Ramos	DPW	18-Jun	We would like the details on this project on Greenmount in terms of what the project entails. We just got conduit, water, and seems like everything else installed during the pandemic and it really hurt our businesses and residents. We want to make sure this does not happen again. PRJ002959 WC-1419 Greenmount Avenue 36" Water Main Rehabilitation.
25	DPW	Schleifer	DPW	18-Jun	How is DPW measuring equity and diversity. Provide a breakdown of the demographics in the equity analysis as it relates to hiring at DPW?
26	DOF	Ramos	DOF	18-Jun	Page 106 Service 700 Surplus Property - The target for the number of pieces of property to be auctioned is 10,000 compared to last year, which was 104. I think 10,000 is a typo. Do we really have 10,000 pieces of property to be surpluses? Why do we auction to the highest bidder, instead of working with DHCD in particular for use in our whole block strategy of revitalizing our neighborhoods? Increase in housing? We should rethink how this is working; can I follow up with this. Page 62 Fees and revenues - RC0085 Building Permit Fees went down in FY2025, and we predict only a slight increase in 2026. It seems to me that DHCD/Finance are anticipating rehabbers not using permits! This should be increasing significantly as we continue to provide the tools and the funds to rehab properties, please explain. RC0332 Baltimore County Collections of water bills are doing. What explains this? Are we getting the difference from the County of what we're owed.

Committee Vote: N/A

Paroma Nandi, Committee Staff

Date: 5/28/2025

Cc: Bill File

HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0060
AGENCY BUDGET HEARINGS – DAY 2

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

Committee: Budget & Appropriations
Chaired by: Danielle McCray

Hearing Date: Thursday, May 29, 2025 – Day 2

Agency: Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)
Time (Beginning): 9:05 AM
Time (Ending): 9:50 AM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 90

Agency: Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts (BOPA)/Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture, & Entertainment (MOACE)
Time (Beginning): 9:55 AM
Time (Ending): 10:25 AM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 90

Agency: Capital Budget
Time (Beginning): 10:25 AM
Time (Ending): 12:00 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 90

Agency: Law
Time (Beginning): 12:35 PM
Time (Ending): 1:30 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 40

Agency: Department of General Services (DGS)
Time (Beginning): 2:31 PM
Time (Ending): 4:12 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 90

Agency: Baltimore City Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA)

Time (Beginning): 4:33 PM
Time (Ending): 5:31 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 40

Agency: Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD)/ Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
Time (Beginning): 6:07 PM
Time (Ending): 9:10 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 61

Committee Members in Attendance (Day 2):

Danielle McCray Isaac "Yitzzy" Schleifer Sharon Green Middleton
Paris Gray

Bill Synopsis in the file? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Attendance sheet in the file? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Agency reports read? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Evidence of notification to property owners? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Final vote taken at this hearing? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Motioned by:
Seconded by:
Final Vote:

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Colin Tarbert, President/CEO, Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)
- Ira Kowler, Managing Director, BDC
- Calvin Young, Chief of Staff to the Mayor
- Robyn Murphy, CEO Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts (BOPA)
- Linzy Jackson, Director Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture & Entertainment (MOACE).
- Chris Ryer, Director Department of Planning
- Andrew Aleshire, Director of Mayor's Office of Infrastructure Development (MOID)
- Ebony Thompson, Director/Baltimore City Solicitor, Law Department
- Stephen Salisbury, Deputy Director Law Department
- Berke Attila, Director, Department of General Services (DGS)
- Abrar Abukhdeir, Fleet Management, DGS
- Julia Kalloz, Public and Private Energy Performance, DGS
- Marwan Alkarajat, Capital Project Division, DGS
- Rebecca Witt, Director, Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA)

- Joey Henderson, Director of Emergency Management (OEM)
- James Wallace, Chief of Fire Department
- James Matz, Assistant Chief of Emergency Medical Services

Major Issues Discussed

Vice President Middleton opened day two of the Budget & Appropriations hearing on behalf of Chairwoman McCray. VP Middleton welcomed members of the council and introduced the Bill, committee rules, and goes over the agenda.

A presentation was given by **Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)** President/CEO, Colin Tarbert [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Outline's Service 809 – Retention, Expansion and Attraction of Business
 - Highlights # of jobs created or retained in Baltimore City
 - FY26 Target of 1,900 (FY24 Actual 1,700)
- Outline's Service 810 – Real Estate Development
- Outline's Service 813 – Technology Development – Emerging Technology Center
 - Highlights the Made in Baltimore Business certifications and education programs.

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Thanked BDC for development around the CFG Arena and the partnership with the Boost Program, which emphasizes the importance of the entrepreneurial spirit.
- How do you address infrastructure?
 - No allocations of funding, however, BDC advocates for funding – examples provided:
 - Tax Increment Financing Program and the Commercial District Assessments (CDA)
 - CDA – partnering with 10 commercial corridors in the first round (Brooklyn, Holland's Market, West Baltimore Street, Market Center, Charles Street, York Road, 2 separate portions of Harford Road, West North Avenue, and Wavery Main Street).
 - First part of this program does not come with funding – but a partnership with expertise and data sharing
 - On the ground survey work (2 surveys)
 - BDC is willing to provide more detailed briefings.
- Redevelopment of the Inner Harbor – What does that mean for the Made in Baltimore Stores.
 - No current conversations about this, since development is not scheduled until at least a year + from now.
- Allocation of \$125,000 to BDC last fiscal year – no consultation with council – moving forward with those funds requests that councilmembers must be consulted.
- Brochure – “New Frontier” – 2003 publication that talks about the development of the Downtown Westside – what will be different in the future.
 - Progress has been slow, but we are now working with smaller developers and there has been progress throughout the years. “Hole in the Donut” – Howard/Lexington is sitting vacant and until there is investment that is needed to see the real change.

- Requests that BDC set up future meetings with Council members to discuss the individual areas of the need.
- Transition plan for the new CEO.
 - Mayor's Office references an announcement is forthcoming in the next 2 weeks.
- Service 813 – what are the changes in the target
 - Possibly a conservative number/already exceed and anticipate more growth.
- What do we know about what talent is needed for job creation?
 - Score high on the talent piece – large percentages of people with higher degrees
 - Ex: HomeChef – hired 400 people and had no challenges with hiring.
 - Need for CDL and building trades

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Vice President Middleton transition to the **Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts (BOPA)/ Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture & Entertainment (MOACE).**

Chief of Staff, Calvin Young provided a brief statement prior to the presentation [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Last October the BOE approved a termination of the City's contract with BOPA due to concerns about the organization's financial health. Following the cancellation, a new relationship between the City and the newly formed BOPA took place with the leadership of Robyn Murphy – the partnership with the City is back on track.
- BOPA – at the intersection of creativity, community, and civic partnership
- Highlights the success of 2025 Artscape – demonstrated the power of collaboration and creativity within Baltimore
 - Record-breaking attendance – 35% higher than last year.
- Conducted listening tours with artists and community partners to rebuild trust – secured numerous funding awards to include a 3-year funded partnership agreement with the TRowe Price Foundation and Mercy Medical Center.
- Partnership and Coordination between BOPA and MOACE (new office within the Mayor's Office).

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Congratulations to the success of Artscape – focus on the Art and Artist and ensuring they are in the center of it all.
 - Featured the diversity of artists
- Clarification of BOPA's relationship with the City
 - BOPA had too many projects unrelated to their mission such as parades and holidays – new focus is on the Artist and preserving the arts culture. BOPA is continuing to stabilize their work. New BOPA contract went to BOE (yesterday)
 - MOACE is focus is on promotion and arts – and coordinating events and logistics.
- Emphasize the importance of including Baltimore Artists
- Sustainability and Preservation of the Art Culture – what does this look like? Challenge you to work with Visit Baltimore to uplift and promote smaller institutions such as the Great Blacks in Wax Museum
 - Artscape Park as an example

- Transformed the columns under the JFX and mural on the retaining wall to include artistic lights for future use.
- Creating that next level of artist engagement in the museums and elevating the artists after the festival.
 - Sondheim Awards – works art are showcased in the Walters and the Peele Museum

Councilman Gray transition to the **Capital Budget**. A presentation was given by Department of Planning Director Chris Ryer [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Emphasizes the release of the 10-year plan that for the first time notes the challenges of the deferred maintenance in the Capital Budget and the need to address the shortfalls and capital investment. The importance of the restored HUR funds to the City and the increase of GO Bonds – one of the most flexible sources of funding for capital.

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Provide details on the Greenway Trail – How will we spend the \$14 million allocated this year and understanding of the partners (see committee request)
 - Part of the Green Network Plan – it was designed in a time when the City was downsizing - creating a lot more greenspace that was open and not designated for anything. This space is a composite of right of way and rec and park space. The trail was away for us to bring this altogether.
 - Planning Department was overseeing this project and needed to purchase the Norfolk Southern Property.
 - The Federal earmark also required a NEPA process (Environmental Review) – which is a 2-year process – which pauses the project until completed. The NEPA process is now completed and funding restored (and additional funding received) - Negotiations will be able to start soon. Additionally, DOT and MOID have stepped up in this project.
- Emphasis on ensuring that State and Federal dollars are spent wisely and timely.
- DPW requested funding for infrastructure tied to the Less Waste Better Baltimore Plan – Why are we stepping away from sustainability programs?
 - Large capital infusion in DPW since COVID – multiple investments and priorities at this time specifically related to health and fleet. Anticipate this will pick up and currently there is a Waste Reduction Strategy.
 - East Baltimore Transfer Station – this would support the compost facility
 - This is driven by a Federal Grant that the City must match – This will be a pilot project for DPW.
- Need for a community pool in District 8 – and what will it take?
 - What this should look like – Rec and Parks should put this project in the CIP so it's in the pipeline.
- Comment – that the timeslot for the Capital Budget should be longer – review projects in district and oversight
- How is spending monitored – and delays in spending?
 - There are several projects where there is limited or little spending. We have new analyst to monitor spending. MOID does a more detailed monitoring of projects – 53 projects within their portfolio.
 - Dept of Planning can work with Council on specific projects.
- What is the \$121 million reserve in Quarter 3

- The reforms will be reflected in the Quarter 4 – and this report will be more accurate.
- Additionally, the consolidation balances will make this more manageable
- Looking at improving reports to Council
- What is the process for reallocating funds – Requires BOE and Planning Commission approval.
- What is Council's role in the Capital Budget – concerns about how little influence Council has on the Capital Budget
 - Collaboration with different agencies, but City Council was not listed.
 - The amendment gave authority to the Council to transfer funds within the General Fund. What this means for the Capital Budget is that the general funds would include the PGO and would still need to be compliant of the HUR funds.
- Climate of Federal and State Government – Cost of materials and other changes will impact agencies
 - Tariffs could impact projects, and City must closely monitor projects. New policy to fund the full project will ensure timely spending.
- 6-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – elaborate how this plan is created with the anticipated revenues
 - Work closely with the Finance Department to anticipate funding
 - Example – HUR and the drop off of HUR; GO Borrowing and Base Pay as You Go Capital Funding.
- Deferred maintenance vs. year-round capital project maintenance
 - Get better at delivering Capital Projects – standardize capital procurement and contracting.
- How do we prioritize projects? Water Main Replacements – how do you prioritize which will be replaced?
 - Project specific accounts and bulk accounts
 - The DPW watermain replacement which is in various locations
 - Is there a way set aside funds to ensure projects that are connected can be prioritized – ex: real estate projects that are on hold because of waterline issues.
 - Best way to return to agency to understand prioritization.

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing until after lunch.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Law Department**. A presentation was given by City Solicitor, Ebony Thompson [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- workers comp – in FY 24 there were 313 claims – how much was paid out in FY 24 & how much has been paid in FY25 year to date. Also asking for a breakdown of claims by agency.
- How does the Law dept work with risk management to reduce workers' comp claims?
 - Law dept has seen their role increase in these cases particularly with DPW and Risk Management. Working with Agencies to reduce the number of cases via increased emphasis on workplace safety

- When do we enlist contract firms in cases vs keep it in house?
 - If there is a conflict (i.e. between workers and the city) or if there is a specialized area where the Law dept may not have the required background.
- Request for additional positions to support service 861 for consumer protection?
 - Yes, and this is appropriate to keep more of this in-house with the Law dept.
- Have we seen an uptick in claims, and what are the results for consumer protection.
 - Can't speak to active or pending litigation – but dept is working to develop these cases.
- Police complaints – why has there been such a big jump in cases from FY 24 target to FY 24 actual
 - This is a result of a backlog that the Law dept has been working to clear through
- What is the role of the two controversies lawyers in the budget?
 - For condemnations – previously funded by ARPA
- Consumer protection – separate office, where is that going to live in the budget – will law dept attorneys go there?
 - No, it will be a separate office and the Law dept will manage litigation
- Law dept review of items for the BOE – where is the logjam and what can we do?
 - Often a last-minute item from the agency – it goes through the contracts team to the BOE.
 - Staff who help with legislation – delays on bill reports getting reports on times

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Department of General Services**. A presentation was given by Berke Attila, Director of DGS [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Highlights in the presentation include:
 - Clean and Safe Environment for DGS employees
 - Installation of water management system in all 3 courthouses downtown
 - Implementing focused precautions and protocols for how we work in extreme heat for workers
 - DGS Fleet division was created and implemented programs in Baltimore City high schools – and currently have apprenticeship programs
 - Plans to right size facilities portfolio to optimize the city's footprint - DGS is the steward of city resources
 - Energy division continues to receive grant funds to ensure energy use is more efficient across the board
 - Capital projects are a priority
 - Focus on DEI training and recruitment across all City Districts

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- 731 Facilities Management – the standards are very low?

- Must be realistic to our actuals and want to increase each year. In an environment where the buildings are in good condition this would be higher – the City's assessment under the standards – Baltimore is the lowest.
 - Average Facilities Condition Index is 153
 - 5 million square feet
 - 150 buildings – that need approximately \$1.2 billion to fix
 - Approximately receive only \$18 million a year
 - History of underinvestment in the buildings and infrastructure
- For the corrective work requests completed on time – what is the average time?
 - Track by problem type – ex: roof vs doorknob
 - Complex calculation to determine compliance
- Charging stations and distribution across the city
 - City must meet this deadline by 2030
 - Partnered with consulting firm IFC to do a study of the fleet to determine the number of charging stations and places.
 - Need for approximately 500 chargers; 908 ports to charge – and 1100 vehicles – spread through 44 primary locations - and that's 132 total locations.
 - Looking for grants to cover the costs – at this time secured \$5 million in funding
 - Planning 2 pilot locations next year at Rec & Parks and DOT
 - Only responsible for chargers for City Vehicles
 - 51 vehicles already have EVs – and 9 chargers
- National recognition at MACO and NACO – pushing abstracts
- How can the Council help with projects in our Districts? How can we be involved with the Capital Improvement projects.
 - 1) Working with Council if working in the district
 - 2) Provide some influence during decision making – to determine what are the priorities for agencies
 - Monthly check-ins with each councilmember
- War Memorial Building Team
 - Hosted Baltimore City Human Trafficking Collaborative – resource fair citywide with over 60 vendors
- How many vehicles expected to be decommissioned (concerns about Federal Tariffs and increased costs in the future)
 - Any replacement should mean that the vehicle should be slated for decommission – only exception would be load packers (under the number of assets currently needed).
 - 226 Assets this year
 - CAO/Budget Office increase the master lease funding to replace these assets – approximately \$37/\$38 million for master lease replacement
- Solar Panels – reducing city's utility cost and potentially selling utilities back.
 - Need 35,000 square footage of roof top for solar panels to be profitable/effective.
 - Active project working with DPW on Reedbird – but many other ways to increase energy efficiencies
 - 1-megawatt solar plant – Back River

- 10-megawatt power purchase agreement in Harford County
 - Community Solar opportunities
- Apprenticeship programs in high schools for mechanics and promote opportunities at DGS – “City can’t run without us”
- Importance of energy efficiency
 - Example testing films for windows on historical buildings to improve energy efficiency
 - Black top/tar rooftops – replacements to white to reduce the heat island impact
 - Energy savings contracts – for more creative contracts
 - Looking at sustainability and how to implement changes.
 - How can the City look at its carbon footprint – DGS is promoting looking at sustainable measures – even small changes to make difference
 - Citystat program – DGS is doing this internally.
- Analyzing the current downtown footprint
 - How many agencies are on private leases – how can we bring them in and utilize space better
 - Space playbook – standardized what a place looks like
 - DGS has developed this that includes a space allocation model – creates a blueprint
- Support the 10-year financial plan – partnering with other city agencies
 - Looking at the buildings holistically
- Changes in staffing – New organizational charts to support this work
 - Fleet division & Accounts management
- Salary study that will help recruit for trade positions
 - Positions are being reclassified – proactive for vacant positions
- Building review – ADA compliant – OSHA/MOSHA – Vacant Buildings
 - Specifically surplus school buildings
 - Pilot Program – using deterrent systems, smart cameras to prevent individuals from breaking in
 - We use a portfolio assignment for building management
- Park Heights Library - sustainability is part of the designs
 - ARPA – HVAC replacements that are most sustainable and efficient heating & cooling systems.

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing until the next presentation.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals**. A presentation was given by Rebecca Witt, Director of BMZA [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Highlights in the presentation include:
 - Quazi judicial agency – apply the City Code to review zoning and other municipal (alley/footway) appeals.
 - Not a court, and proceedings are informal
 - Enhancing the appeal process for self-represented appellants – new educational resources and expand access for residents with limited English proficiency
 - Adding 1 Zoning Officer (transition from ARPA funds to General Funds)

- BMZA is required to enforce the Code consistently
 - Contact the Council when applicable

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Moving the Zoning Administrator from DHCD to Planning – Will the move impact the BMZA?
 - Function of the office will remain the same
- Zoning Code that has been there for a century – standard at the time and City has not wanted to change anything
 - Bulk & Yard legislation to give residents more authority over their property
 - Case law supports changing legislation not individual variances
 - Cause of many illegal dwellings for multi-family homes – which can prevent property from being used.
- Performance metric about days for hearing is difficult to predict based on volume and external factors such as the economy
- Meetings are broadcast through CharmTV based on their availability
- Need for residents to be able to build additions on their homes
 - 2nd stories do not require a variance
 - Council Bill 25-0006 would allow individuals to add a 2nd story to a nonconforming structure
- Under ADA – BMZA can approve for changes for reasonable accommodations
- Elimination of the Consent Docket (which allowed the BMZA to approve variance requests en masse in a single vote without discussion as long as no member of the public objected)
 - Administration was aware of the decision, but BMZA had the authority to end the docket.
- Transparency with cases – and consultation with council
- Importance of the Council to work on solving issues within the Code
 - To ensure the Code is helpful and clear
- What training does the Board go through – Standard Maryland Board Training
- How is the work shifting of the Board:
 - Approximately – half is conditional use and half variance (but many conditional uses will also come with a parking variance).

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing until the next presentation.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Office of Emergency Management**. A presentation was given by Joey Henderson, Director [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Highlights in the presentation include:
 - Major strides in citywide emergency preparedness, response, and community engagement
 - Active role in various workshops and exercises such as severe storm, winter preparedness, cyber security, Artscape, and extreme heat exercises.
 - Vital in strengthening cross sector collaboration and ensuring community approach to emerging management.
 - 90 new certifications completed this fiscal year

- Expanded in community engagement – National Night and 2 events in each district.
- Response to major incidents – Operational standpoint activated 25 times for incidents and events in the City
 - Storms at Artscape, Camp Small Fire, North Charles Street underground fire, citywide winter storms, citywide internet outage, seven alarm fire, Mayday protest, EF1 tornado
- FEMA grants – fund 8 positions – anticipate some cuts

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Challenges of federal cuts – what are next steps?
 - Discussions are ongoing with the Mayor's Office. FY 25 funds from feds are delayed and OEM is expecting cuts which will result in staff cuts. Some unfilled positions can help with that funding. May combine positions to help attract candidates. No deadline to hear about FEMA currently.
- Emergency text system – are we still signing people up and how do we reach the less tech savvy.
 - Canvassing is ongoing also going to senior events to help sign people up.

Chairwoman McCray transitioned to the **Baltimore City Fire Department**. A presentation was given by James Wallace, Chief of the Fire Department [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Highlights in the presentation include:
 - No injuries at the latest seven alarm fires or Camp Small fire.
 - Increased call volume – rethinking how to serve Baltimore with agility, foresight, and care
 - Transformative upgrades in department and self-contained breathing apparatus and hire hoses
 - ARPA funding enabled critical infrastructure improvements at fire stations.

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Current number of vehicle collisions in FY25?
 - 260 as of the end of April (July 2024-April 2025)
-
- Acknowledgement of losses in the department – gratitude to all the firefighters who serve and the entire department.
- Overtime – vacant positions – what controls are put into place to control overtime and recruit EMTs and Paramedics into the dept?
 - BCFD need 242 as a daily staff and EMS needs 65 – total 307. Tele staffing team works to even out overtime and try to assign roles so that minimal overtime is used.
 - BCFD is working on big recruiting push – including materials on emergency vehicles allowing BCFD to reach out to over 1k potential applicants.
- Emergency exit drills in older adult buildings – has this been implemented?
- Whole blood (includes plasma and platelets) - Use is expensive and not implemented yet in the City or County
- Public Safety Apprenticeship Program and the expected annual report - money has been set aside – but no recruits asking now for a increase in this for less recruits than stipulated in the ordinance.

- Follow up on the allocation from FY 23 & 24 and what has happened to it. How are we ensuring that this will reach kids all over the city
- Moving 35 kids to fire academy via youth works others to other programs
- Reaching out to agency members to start mentoring programs in the schools.
- Commitment from CAO to follow up on program and confirm funding
- EMS transports – are we improving
 - Pretty level results – an effort to come in and make a regional policy to coordinate times across counties and the city.
 - Money recouped from EMS transports – \$78 million in EMS revenue budget which covers the cost of service. FY24 nearly covers the full cost of service
 - Increase in fee should help to cover cost of service – this will help with other services also provided by EMS
 - *List of all items that will be included in the calculation for updated cost of service.
- Overtime issue as a factor of shortages of paramedics – what can we do to incentivize EMT to become paramedics
 - BCFD short 28% paramedics – new HR director perusing aggressive strategy and working with EMTs – EMTs are interested in taking the course to become Paramedics.
 - BCFD is covering tuition – problem is scheduling.
 - Becoming a paramedic program is becoming a recruitment tool.
 - 1800 hours to become a medic – it's a high-level course that not everyone persist in.
 - BCFD is working with BCCC recently picked up 6-7 paramedics, but some went to become firefighters
 - * Plan to create an internal training program – what would be a good internal timeline 30 days.
 - Is fire dept receiving restitution funds? Yes, for contracted EMS, tele 911, nurse program
- Inspector civilization in the Fire Marshal office
 - Moved pins from sworn to civilian
 - Need to work in the civil service system
 - Looking to move to about 35 inspectors
- Inspections and permits. Increases in inspectors from 28 – 33
 - Increases in inspectors from 28 – 33 with some also working as plan reviewers
 - 4 current plan reviewers with an additional 4 sworn reviewers
 - 500k in budget will create 2 new positions
- How do we determine the needs of the city for response
 - Based on the number of apparatus w/ national recommendations and analysis on response times so that the dept can hit certain response time metrics
- Will the BCFD have sufficient budget to cover fiscal year or will the dept come back for a supplemental

- Most likely yes – Admin is working to right size the budget as a part of the 10-year plan
- Several items currently impacting the budget – i.e. higher labor cost, pressure on EMS staffing ect... but with some reforms will help bring the budget closer to alignment – but this is a multiyear process.
- How are we supporting the mental health of the BCFD members –
 - Training on trauma informed care
 - Rebuilt the chaplaincy corps -5 female chaplains & LGBTQ chaplains
 - Peer support team
 - Critical incident stress management team
 - Referring to members out in necessary cases
 - There has been a shift in culture where members reach out instead of requiring them to be found.
- What tech does 911 need?
 - 911 is leading in several tech areas – i.e. geo fencing ArtScape
 - Admin looking into updating the dispatch system
 - Why is 311 housed in BCIT?
 - Admin has brought 311 back to the office and is bringing them closer to 911
- Code X properties
 - 40 fires per quarter at the code x / vacant buildings – collaborating with other agencies – BCFD is currently tracking and sharing them.
 - Pre policy 11 maydays to 2 in these structures – non since 2023. This has been a marked improvement.

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing until tomorrow.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If yes, describe.

#	Agency Hearing	Member	Date requested	Final Request
1	Capital Budget	Cohen	9-Jun	1) Request for a written report on the information of all current partners for the Greenway Trails project. 2) A clear understanding of the status of each segment of the project and how the \$14 million allocated in the Capital Budget for FY26 will be spent. (MOGR will first consult with MOID by Monday and will then reach out to CP's office.)
2	Law	Cohen	9-Jun	Worker's Comp: 1) In FY24, how many claims were there, and how much was paid by the city on worker's comp claims? 2) How much has been paid out YTD in FY25? 3) Break down claims for both FY 24 & FY 25 by agency
3	Law	Gray	5-Jun	Can you provide us with a snapshot of complaints and status of resolution for consumer protection?
4	DGS	Gray	5-Jun	Requesting the number of how many assets will be decommissioned in FY 25-28
5	BCFD	Gray	12-Jun	Provide copies of the FY 23, 24, and 25 Public Safety Apprenticeship annual reports. Details of what has happened to the allocation from FY23 & 24 for the apprenticeship program
6	BCFD	Cohen	5-Jun	How many applicants have been identified using the new recruitment tool (QR Code)? Asking for those who have gone beyond an initial stage
7	BCFD	Middleton	9-Jun	have the 3x yearly fire drills for older adult homes been implemented
8	BCFD	Schleifer	5-Jun	Provide a list of all items that is included in the calculation for providing EMS services (to determine if the updated fee increase would truly cover the cost of the increase in the service cost of service for EMS .
9	BCFD	Conway	30-Jun	Provide a proposal for a new intern training program specifically for paramedics.
10	BCFD	Ramos	9-Jun	Requests a follow up to go out for a Wednesday walkthrough of the BCFD CodeX data

Committee Vote: N/A

Paroma Nandi, Committee Staff

Date: 5/28/2025

Cc: Bill File

HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0060
AGENCY BUDGET HEARINGS – DAY 3

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

Committee: Budget & Appropriations
Chaired by: Danielle McCray

Hearing Date: Friday, May 30, 2025 – Day 2

Agency: Board of Liquor License Commissioners (BLLC)
Time (Beginning): 9:21 AM
Time (Ending): 10:25 AM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 40

Agency: Baltimore Convention Center (BCC)
Time (Beginning): 10:33 AM
Time (Ending): 11:15 AM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 30

Agency: Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC)
Time (Beginning): 11:19 AM
Time (Ending): 11:43 AM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 30

Agency: Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
Time (Beginning): 11:45 AM
Time (Ending): 12:50 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 65

Agency: Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS)
Time (Beginning): 1:40 PM
Time (Ending): 2:40 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 65

Agency: Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)/Live Baltimore

Time (Beginning): 2:45 PM
Time (Ending): 6:00 PM
Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex
Total Attendance: Approximately 65

Committee Members in Attendance (Day 2):

Danielle McCray Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer Sharon Green Middleton
Paris Gray

Bill Synopsis in the file? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Attendance sheet in the file? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Agency reports read? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Evidence of notification to property owners? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Final vote taken at this hearing? ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Motioned by:
Seconded by:
Final Vote:

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Douglas Paige, Executive Secretary, Board of Liquor License Commissioners (BLLC)
- Michelle Wirzberger, Esq Deputy Executive Secretary (BLLC)
- Mac Campbell, Executive Director, Baltimore Convention Center (BCC)
- Peter Little, Executive Director, Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC)
- Isabel Cumming, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
- Ernestina Simmons, Director, Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS)
- Alice Kennedy, Commissioner, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Meghan McCorkell, Executive Director, Live Baltimore

Major Issues Discussed

Councilman Gray opened day three of the Budget & Appropriations hearing on behalf of Chairwoman McCray. Councilman Gray welcomed members of the council and introduced the Bill, committee rules, and goes over the agenda.

A presentation was given by Board of Liquor License Commissioners (BLLC) Douglas Paige, Executive Secretary [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Responsible of enforcing and regulating liquor license establishments – beyond just licensing but collaborating agencies.
- This last year put regulations in place and worked with community
- This summer will refresh the rules in the MPIH to address violations and strengthen violation cases

- Increased transparency – started posting information on the website - Hearings are being held in the new hearing room

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Thanked the Board about the work they have been doing to support the community – and appreciates the newsletter that Council staff receive
- Signage – establishments cover all the windows (law about % of windows that can be covered) – what type of enforcement is happening?
 - It's an information and communication issue – we need to address that with these establishments
 - Safety issue because no one can see in the buildings
 - BLLC will take this on for this upcoming FY
- Package good stores/lounges that are houses that remain to be issues. Is there work being done to relocate these businesses?
 - Issues with 7-day package good stores/ they must have the tavern open
 - Changing of licenses.
 - Will specifically follow up with about Park Heights
 - Bus stops near these establishments – we need to have a look at bus stops and moving them away from every liquor establishment
 - Board doesn't have authority but has worked with community and MTA to move bus stops.
- Notification system to the Council when new licenses are being requested in each district
 - A docket is sent out that lists out the licenses/violations in the districts.
 - Is there an issue with direct notification
- What capacity needs do you need to get this education and awareness and training completed? Increased staff
 - Matt (liaison) part time contractual – need to be able to full time
 - Community liaison to help business
 - Did not get the necessary funding (\$202K request)
- Allowing the sheriff to act as the enforcement side – what will the interaction be with the City Liquor Board and the Sheriff's office?
 - If they don't have a liquor license – the Board doesn't have authority
 - Partnership goes into effect 10/1
 - Address the illegal parties
- Worst offenders just pay the fine, but don't go to the hearings (frequent flyers?)
 - Some violations are eligible for the MPIH
 - Sexual obscenities, selling to minors, discrimination, gambling, safety issues, cannot have more than 2 in 4 years, admission of guilt
- Is there collaboration with Human Trafficking operation or the health department? Are you participating in the training?
 - Part of the Sex Trafficking Task Force
 - All inspectors go through the training and go to the conference
 - If there is connection to sex trafficking and turn over information over

- Contractual positions within the Liquor Board – are these individuals getting benefits/health insurance?
 - There is only 1 contractual position – working on requesting this contractual position into a full-time permanent position – requested an enhancement (\$70k) from the administration.
- Collaboration with Baltimore City Police Department regarding the nuisance businesses specifically around padlocking a business?
 - Anxiety around shutting businesses down
 - Partnership with the Sheriff's office will help reduce acts of violence.
 - Lend support to the licensees that are not contributing to the bad behavior
- BMORE Fast Initiative coming online – one of the components is permitting - what does that timeline look like?
 - To be more efficient/ easier for collaboration
 - Easy fixes to make the process simpler
- Fines/Fee – Liquor Board fees are regulated at the state level.
 - New legislation - building out rules and regulations on the issuance, revocation, and denial of 1-day liquor license.

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing briefly to transition to next agency hearing.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray began the hearing introducing the Baltimore Convention Center.

A presentation was given by the **Baltimore Convention Center** Mac Campbell, Executive Director [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- BCC's mission is to generate positive economic impact, create jobs, and serve the community.
 - FY24 impacts of the convention center operation generated over \$5.7 million in city tax, \$15.1 million in state tax, and total of \$273 million between direct and indirect spending
- Part of HB1016 – continue the work of BCC Governance Task Force to make recommendations for the guiding documents and funding sources
- Activate over \$30million in planned capital projects throughout the year while minimizing impact on the attendee experience
- Upgrades to Convention Center include
 - Launch new interior and exterior digital signage package to add value
 - Upgraded fire safety system
 - Renovated restrooms
 - And rehabilitated pedestrian bridge connecting to hotel

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Maryland Stadium Authority – completes and economic impact statement

- Historically the Convention Center has been a 4 to 1 return on investment for the state and always a positive impact on the city. After COVID 1 to 1 return and FY 24 2 to 1 return on investment.
- FY 26 what the economic impact is not available until study is complete
- Sourcing out RFPs for business out to 2042
- How much revenue are you looking to generate with the new signage?
 - Management contract that will do interior and exterior signage
 - Better assets in house – sponsors can advertise
 - Currently the RFP is with Procurement – would like to see revenue in FY26 (might be smaller this year)
- Parking at the convention center
 - People avoid it because Parking is so challenging.
 - How do we get onsite parking (couple 100)
 - PNC building (parking) that is being redeveloped
 - Shuttle services
 - Working closely with stadium authorities/ how can we offer and subsidize parking
 - Collaboration with rideshares to offer discounts?
 - Can reach out to colleagues across the country to see if it's financially feasible
- Love the digital murals. What other programming is being put in place to ensure the convention center is the gateway to the rest of the city?
 - Public art, neighborhood representation by district with legend to incorporate iconic civic attractions, connection with restaurants – overall telling a story
 - Continue to partner with Visit Baltimore
- Last legislative session there was effort to create an Authority that would support downtown and the Convention Center - Why didn't that bill pass? Hotels have signaled that they will not invest in themselves until there is investment in the Convention Center.
- The Bill was amended – instead of creating the Authority it extended the work of the task force from last session to go further with the bylaw creation, the funding mechanisms – the goals haven't changed – only the Task Force is responsible instead of the Authority and there is a plan to go back next session
 - The CC has an opportunity to be a catalyst.
- Parking – conversations with both stadiums to use either parking lots – and use a shuttle?
 - CC brokers that conversation – but then the stadium Authority has the conversation with the vendor.
 - Plan is to no longer broker the conversation, but to have the conversation.
- Circulator – part of the plan was to help connect to downtown.
 - All transportation models to include circulator are part of the Client Kits that are created with Visit Baltimore – go out ahead of time and on the website

- That information is available, however need to lean in more.
- Taskforce – the report is due 12/1. What are the types of findings? What will we learn when it is published?
 - 1) What is the employment mechanism 2) What does the funding look like
 - How do we fund a sustainable convention center, build bonding capacity for future projects, and how do we make sure we keep our workforce
- Old infrastructure – Ensure that the infrastructure needs are a priority

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing briefly to transition to next agency hearing.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Parking Authority of Baltimore City**. A presentation was given by Executive Director Peter Little [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Quasi Agency – Small team (51 members)
- Find and create parking solutions – Resource for all things parking
- Installation of new parking access and revenue control equipment at 11 of the 12 city-owned/leased parking garages
- Implemented a new residential permit parking online permit system
- Process of implementing multiple mobile payment apps and text-to-pay options at metered spaces
- Will be completing capital projects at the garages that includes structural repairs and replacing lighting for more energy efficiency.

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Enforcement & revenue trends - Can you talk through meter revenue trends over the years. Do you think the challenges with enforcement resulted in a reduction.
 - Decreased during COVID, but has risen back up to \$10 million after the pandemic
 - Seeing increased enforcement as of late
 - Provide an estimate of the lost revenue due to the lack of compliance with parking meter requirements (presumably because of a lack of parking enforcement). Trend data for parking enforcement revenue.
- Updates and partnerships – Disability Parking signage? There are some areas where the disability parking signage, but the resident is no longer there.
 - Renew the application for that program annually – typically 20-35 monthly removed
 - Get calls from neighbors/families saying the person moved/deceased
 - Some may remain until the annual renewal cycle
- Has a council rep been designated for the Parking Authority – Yes, Councilman Blanchard
- Convention Center Parking?
 - Most of the garages close to the convention center are privately owned. PA has contacts with all the privately owned garages.

- Updated list of owned and leased garages
 - 10 that are owned/2 that are leased
- Recertify the applications for disabled residents
 - Yes, removed the recert from the doctor required as part of the process– had to go through a regulatory
- Within the code requires petitions from neighbors – working with Mayor's Office to remove that requirement for petitions.
- Could you explain the process of obtaining/valet parking zone?
 - Outlined in City Code
 - Would apply for valet parking and then work with DOT to determine if that is possible. Application fee, public posting required
 - Valet operator – would also have to apply and would have to show that you have a place to park the cars. Must be properly insured, registered with the state.
 - They are not allowed to park the car in an open city spot/but that is citable offense.
 - If PA gets complaints, they notify DOT to send enforcement

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing briefly to transition to next agency hearing.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Office of the Inspector General**. A presentation was given by the Inspector General Isabel Cumming [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Committee to investigate allegations of waste, fraud, and financial abuse this includes violations of criminal law, civil statutes, regulations, ethical laws, and standards of conduct.
- OIG does not report to the Mayor, but has a citizens based advisory board.
- Numerous reports to include 6 reports into DPW, including water situation, the work conditions, health insurance, false reporting, culture of work, and into the death of an employee this year.
- Exceed number of complaints this year (over 800 in 4 years).
- Need for at least 1 new investigator position at \$75K (plus benefits)

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- What does an investigator do?
 - Starts with the hotline - receive complaints and vet complaints and also refer questions
 - Each investigator carries 3/5 cases at a time – looking at root causes and includes efficiency processes (ex: DPW number of route stops)
 - Interview process with agencies, employees, and subjects of the investigation – information gathering
- Do you track complaints by agencies?
 - Yes, we track and log each complaint

- Some complaints are sent to us because people are aware of the Office, but sometimes the Agencies themselves can assist so in those cases those are referred back
- Staffing allocations for the Office
 - FY14 only 6 positions, FY26 there are 18 positions (stayed level since FY22)
 - Submitted an enhancement request as part of the budget proposal and are reviewed by the Mayor
 - There was an \$85 million budget shortfall, which meant that very few enhancements were funded
- Written response on where there are unclarity/ambiguity in the ethics code and a roadmap to clean them up (next 6 weeks).
 - The City has to reflect the ethics law of the state of Maryland and the law in the City or in any other Maryland jurisdiction
 - Disclosure of elected and public officials
- When will the nomination to the Ethics Board be submitted?
 - 18 months open – make this appointment as soon as possible, submit an update for where the Mayor's Office is on this nomination (committee request – update on where we are to nominating someone)
- Caseload: Is your caseload comparable to other jurisdictions? How will an additional position help with your backlog?
 - 33 current cases – will we get a report for all 33 cases? No, not all will warrant a report – maybe of the 33 you would get 20 reports (and this will take time)
 - And there are another 23 current cases that are vetted but need additional staff capacity.
- Jurisdiction of the OIG when it comes to oversight and investigation
 - Anytime money from the City goes to something – OIG has the jurisdiction to investigate – parts that we don't we will turn it over to FBI, DEA, and many different agencies

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing for lunch.

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the **Mayor's Office of Homeless Services**. A presentation was given by the Director Ernestina Simmons [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Priority is to make homelessness rare and brief
- Realigning our agency/organizational chart
- Adding on program compliance and accounting staff – to ensure our highly regulated funding from the State and Federal government are supported
- Served over 21,000 households through programs
- Rely on the City of Baltimore Budget on Outreach services
- Diversion program through partnerships with libraries

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Budget allocation has significantly decreased for Eviction Prevention/Rapid Rehousing – yet still people are still struggling with resources

- Heavily relied on ARPA funding – served over 400 households – and there is still a huge need for this programming
- Always a space that has not been funded – we have an increase in the FY26 budget
- Trying to build up capacity through shelter
- Rely on Federal programs in order to pay rents – increase amount in rents (Fair Market Rent) and increase in utilities – looking for additional resources
 - Stakeholder engagement – bring together all the nonprofits doing this work to leverage resources
 - 4 sessions altogether and will continue these conversations
- Concerned about the KPI for Homeless Prevention – 1 employee and 600 households
 - 5-person team, 1 is only funded through General Fund/ 4 others are funded through ARPA (and will continue into FY26)
 - Will expire in FY27 budget
- Committee requests regarding rent prices
 - Received FMR determined by HUD
 - How much is the homelessness problem being that rent is too expensive
 - How does this impact new households entering homelessness or being at risk of homelessness
 - Avg household being served is annual income of \$15,000
 - Need for affordable housing
 - Housing options and opportunities legislative package is needed
 - Flexibility to build more affordable housing
- Security Deposit Relief Act – Helps at the beginning
- Group Homes - How do you work with Code Enforcement for issues surrounding group homes?
 - MOHS does not have any Group Homes in the portfolio
 - Only congregate space is WHRC shelter
- Federal Funding - 77% of your budget is from federal funding – this is of concern. What is the plan to serve over 2,000 plus homeless people if funding is reduced? Would like feedback from MOHS on the impact will be if funding is reduced
 - 5,000 households served through CoC, HOPWA, and HABC
 - Power of voices
 - \$55 million in rental assistance dollars
 - Emergency Housing Vouchers – a result of COVID – Housed 291
 - These dollars were committed until 2030, but this funding will end in 2026
 - Philanthropy will not fill this gap
 - Is there information on why people enter into homelessness – data can be shared
 - What interventions can support these households.
- Operating and service provider contracts for the City – 47% increase in shelter operating costs – what is the strategy and approach to measuring value and accountability. How do we track people who are behind 1 to 2 months on rent before being evicted?
 - Increased funding – more shelter beds
 - Implemented a participation agreement
 - Shelters are required to start diversion work (within 3 days in entry)

- Budget line items to get them resources to get them out of the shelter as soon as possible
 - CoC projects – those are households that are housed – how do we ensure that payments are timely – close work with DOF
 - Challenges with BOE process that were addressed
 - CoC projects are tenant based rental assistance
 - Must pass HQS inspections
 - Landlords must be held accountable to meet the safety standards of the units
 - CoC and City General funds work together to provide services
- Safety protocols in shelters
- 2 shelter spaces for families
 - Reviewed all policies, practices, and training
 - Move training modules in-person
 - Included Trauma Informed Care
 - Monthly shelter meeting
 - Increased conversations about concerns
 - Some challenges – services cannot be mandated at the shelter for participants
 - Rules and standards at the shelter – many people are not willing to stay
 - Expanding what outreach services
- Talking points for when groups get together to request more funding.
- Is there a list of the Providers for permanent housing for the homeless and is the list up to date?
- Lack of funding for case managements – HUD funding does not fund supportive services the way the City needs.
- Changed some of the budget outlooks to ensure the services matched the programming.

VP Middleton recessed hearing briefly to transition to the next presentation

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed the Department of Housing and Community Development. A presentation was given by the Commissioner Alice Kennedy [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- Promote thriving neighborhoods through community revitalization investments, supporting homeowners, funding critical programs and neighborhood stakeholders, creating and preserving affordable housing and ensuring safe conditions through code enforcement.
- Reduce number of vacant and abandoned properties - \$3 billion commitment – 15 year plan
 - 20% reduction (12,593 vacant properties)
 - Addressing permits – challenges and rollout of the new permit system
 - 4 months replaced the permit software – its an ongoing process and part of the BMORE Fast Initiative
 - Since the launch date have been addressing the mayor areas of impact
 - Intake backlog

- Customer service
 - Workflow between agencies
 - Communications with active permit applicants
- Reduced 15 permit categories down to 5 (but will increase to 6)
- CAO and OPI have a Tiger Team Audit of intake processes
- Increase community engagement
- Publish the first ever citywide housing plan

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Permits – BMORE FAST program – Bottlenecks in BCFD & Accela System. How will we fix Accela, when will it be ready?
 - Fast track system running by end of June
 - Intake backlogs – hiring additional staff to assist with backlog
 - Pivoting other staff to the walk-in traffic which increased by 200% increase
 - Prioritized the list of improvements that DHCD is working towards – and acknowledges that it is not perfect – but understand the importance of the system working properly
 - Concerned about this process - Asking for meeting with DOT, DHCD, BCFD, Council, & Permit Czar in advance of July 17 hearing before the end of June Plan and meeting by July 1
- Vacant housing – since announcement in 2023 how many reductions in vacant
 - 908 VBNS abated or rehabbed in FY 24
 - Requesting data pull from December 23 – today – 1700 VBNS abated and rehabbed
- Working with communities processing through the permit process
 - Community sessions did happen – still working on process. Materials are available in English & Spanish online.
 - Training sessions for application creations
- How does budget address vulnerable populations with support services
 - Division of Homeownership – service 750
 - Realignment in divisions to better serve seniors and vulnerable populations - increasing coordination
- Service 742 (Promote homeownership) how do we define low- and moderate-income?
 - Defined at 80% area median income and below – specifically to support first-time home buyers which is funded 100% by Community Development Block Grant funds
 - Why is target for FY 2026 is at 60%? Would like to see a higher target for FY 2027
 - Increased over the last several years
 - Committing to reevaluate grants and monies to this service
- Landlord and tenant cases – what are we doing to support tenants in these disputes.
 - Supporting MD Legal aid with additional block grant

- Housing Assistance Program – Why is there a reduction in funding in FY 2026?
 - Relaunched an emergency mortgage and homeowner assistance - Exact number of what is carried over and in budget for service
 - Advocate for CDBG funds and apply for additional grant funds
- BMORE FAST – and overall concerned about the system
- Staffing for In Rem & Foreclosure – are the new positions for In Rem?
 - *Data request on staffing report from
- Inspector staffing - Asking for update on staffing in 30 days and 3 months
- Rental properties
 - Is there a way to track rentals to register properties?
 - New 311 rental licensing service request
 - Awareness campaign and use data to determine where people are renting
- Scamming of tenants
 - Gathering information and resources that the city can make available to educate on this
 - States Attorney and Attorney General do some work on this as well
- Illegal Squatters – dangers and using utilities – several fires have been set
 - Using vacant building notices – boarding up buildings and authority to vacate the property
 - Boarding Pilot is being developed
- Code enforcement – what is the attrition rate- still very high among new people in probation
 - Training inspectors and supporting them through onboarding
 - Concerns about the follow-up on the concerns/issues

(transitioning to the next presentation)

Chairwoman McCray welcomed Live Baltimore. A presentation was given by Meghan McCorkell, Executive Director [See PowerPoint in Bill File].

- One service in the Budget – mission to attract residents, retain residents, and support healthy housing markets – Proud to see the first population increase in the last decade.
- 1 in 6 Baltimore homebuyers was a Live Baltimore Customer

The floor was open to questions from Councilmembers as summarized below:

- Relationship with Visit Baltimore?
 - Live Baltimore has a staff person sitting on the market committee at Visit Baltimore
 - Uniform way of talking about our city
- 2 years ago, the budget was increased
- Highest revenue source for the City is Property Tax
- Buy back the Block – Good policy and good politics – How much would it cost to sustain that for a year?

- Pace with the housing market and would need 1 additional staff – would need \$1million annually
- Are there concerns about funding?
 - Core work is sustainable based on proposed budget
- How are we telling Baltimore's Story and how much would that cost?
 - Best assets are our citizens and sharing their stories through video is very impactful.
 - An estimated cost would be around \$100K

Chairwoman McCray recessed hearing until Monday, June 2, 2025.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If yes, describe.

Agency Hearing	Requesting Member	Date Requested	Request
Parking Authority	Blanchard	6-Jun	Provide an estimate of the lost revenue due to the lack of compliance with parking meter requirements (presumably because of a lack of parking enforcement). Trend data for parking enforcement revenue.
Parking Authority	Middleton	6-Jun	Provide an updated list of all the city owned or leased parking garages.
OIG	Cohen	11-Jul	Provide a written response on where there are unclarities or ambiguities in the ethics code, and provide a roadmap to clean them up
OIG	Cohen	5-Jun	Provide an update on where the Mayor's office is in the process by nominating someone to the Ethics Board. Note: this would be the Council President's nominee (Stephan Fogelman) who was submitted on March 28
MOHS	Ramos	9-Jun	Talking points that the stakeholder group put together to help advocate for more funding. Director Simmonds offered to provide a breakdown of households experiencing homelessness (e.g. % experiencing 1st-time homelessness).
DHCD	Cohen	1-Jul	Asking for meetings with DOT, DHCD, BCFD, Council, CAO & Permit Czar in advance of July 17 hearing before the end of June - Plan and meeting by July
DHCD	Ramos	9-Jun	Please outline the specific staffing: 1) 16 positions created mid-year: Position title for each position and which division. 2) 1.2million for 13 positions (as it says in budget book): List the position titles for these. 3) In Rem capacity: Please tell us the current lawyers, title attorneys, paralegals. Please outline the staffing that is needed to fulfill the goals. 4) Disposition capacity: list current positions, send us the growth in

			positions expected next fiscal year. What the need is to fulfill the 120-day timeline
DHCD	Gray	30-Jul	Have the exact amount of funding for what is being carried over and what is being reallocated for FY 26 for the emergency mortgage assistance program
DHCD	Porter	7-Jul	Requesting that DHCD develop educational materials for the public on fraudulent landlords and housing listings
DHCD	Conway	30-Jun	Asking for update on inspector staffing in 30 days and 3 months
DHCD	Torrence	30-Jun	A meeting with code enforcement, law enforcement, and labor department for a plan of action on housing inspectors, increased hours, powers, & enforcement.
DHCD	Torrence	30-Jun	Asking for the draft of the housing plan referenced by Rubins with connection to schools zoning models & typology by block and enforcement.
DHCD	Torrence	30-Jun	Meeting to discuss the bills, adequate school pop meetings with City Schools. When we talk to planning to see a map to do targeted zoning and upzoning.
DHCD	Blanchard	6-Jun	follow up on Committee Request from March Hearing
MOHS	Ramos	9-Jun	A breakdown of households experiencing homelessness (e.g., % experiencing 1st-time homelessness)

Committee Vote: N/A

Paroma Nandi, Committee Staff

Date: 5/30/2025

Cc: Bill File