

# HEARING NOTES

**Council Resolution: 20-0194R**

**Informational Hearing – Baltimore’s Strategic Response to the Wuhan Coronavirus**

**Committee:** Health

**Chaired by:** Kristerfer Burnett

**Hearing Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2020

**Time (Beginning):** 6:30 PM

**Time (Ending):** 9:10 PM

**Location:**

**Total Attendance:** Approximately 70

**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**

**Video 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: Councilmember Henry**

**Seconded by: Councilmember Burnett**

**Final Vote:……………………………………………………………..Favorable with Amendment**

**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

* Letitia Dzirara, Health Department
* Adena Greenbaum, Health Department
* Jeff Amoros, Health Department
* Michael Harrison, Police Department
* Michael Sullivan, Police Department
* James Matz, Fire Department, EMS
* Timothy Cullen, Fire Department
* Sonja Santelises, Baltimore City Public School System
* Sunny Schmitzer, Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management
* Tisha Edwards, Mayor’s Office of Children and Family Success
* Michael Braverman, Department of Housing and Community Development
* Alice Kennedy, Department of Housing and Community Development
* Janet Abrahams, Housing Authority
* Bill Wells, Housing Authority
* Chris Ryer, Planning Department
* Holy Freishtat, Planning Department
* Jerrianne Anthony, Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services
* Daniel Ramos, Finance Department

## Major Issues Discussed

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1. President Scott, primary sponsor of the Resolution gave opening remarks. “He thanked all agencies for their great work and teamwork and stated, I’m looking forward to hearing the updated information this evening.”
2. Health Commissioner Dzirara and several of the Department’s employee testified. **A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is in the bill fi**le. In her opening remarks she stated, “A lot has changed since the last update given on March 5th; we are still learning about the virus.”

* Some of the discussion, highlights and/or topics between the Health Department representatives and the committee/council members were:
  + Contact tracing and Outreach efforts
    - What is the plan for these two issues? And, have some demographic concerns
    - Talked about the policies and processes in place for contact tracing
    - How is the Department doing with outreach in those hard to reach neighborhoods?
    - Talked about community outreach processes
  + Quarantine
    - Comment: For many city residents quarantine is not an option (several people residing in dwelling)

1. Police Commissioner Harrison testified.  **A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is in the bill file.** He talked about what is involved with enforcing the Police Executive Order.
2. Several representatives from the Fire Department testified.  **A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is in the bill file.** Chief Matz stated, “he plans for the worst and hope for the best!”

* Some of the discussion, highlights and/or topics between the Fire Department representatives and the committee/council members were:
  + Talked about the policies and processes in place to deal with virus
  + Has transported over 200 people who tested positive
  + Clean-Up Efforts – What is the clean-up plan for in-service vehicles?
  + Staff Shortages – Does the Department have a plan for “a potential impact on staff for now and in the future?
  + Are there any concerns about running out of “People Protection Equipment” (PPE)?

1. Several other agency representatives testified. Some of the discussion, highlights and/or topics between the representatives and the committee/council members were:
2. Baltimore City Public School System

* Dr. Santelises testified.
  + Talked about food distribution and feeding
  + Technology Update
    - Increased digital access
    - There is still a large group that feedback is still needed from
    - Distribution of books and laptops
    - Internet access is still a challenge for the city as well as for other counties within the State
  + Letter was sent to Congress asking for more federal resources
  + The BCPSS is looking at best practices across the world
* Question: What is the status for students for the rest of the school year? What is the plan?

1. Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management
   * Sunny Schnitzer testified:
     + Talked about the mission of the Office
       - 1. What it does
         2. What it maintains
         3. Type of support given, and
         4. Partnerships
     + Gave an update on processes associated with the pandemic
   * Question: Has your Office talked to our counter partners about their emergency operation centers?
   * Concern: Staff fatigue
   * What are the public safety needs of the city?
2. Mayor’s Office of Children, Family and Success
   * Tisha Edwards testified:
     + Stated, “This is truly an interagency initiative
     + Talked about the importance of team efforts
     + Stated, “This is a multi-agency approach
   * Question: How do you track who gets meals?
3. Department of Housing and Community Development
   * Michael Braverman testified:
     + Stated, “The Department’s action plan is on their website along with several other informative documents
     + Has repositioned staff to support meal distribution
4. Housing Authority of Baltimore City
   * Janet Abrahams and several agency representatives testified:
     + Have done a lot of outreach but there are a lot of things that need to be done on the HUB side
     + We will not evict tenants if he/she is affected by the virus (such as: layoffs, etc.)
     + 95% of their staff is working from home
     + Talked about the distribution of wellness checks for the elderly and disabled
5. Planning Department
   * Chris Ryer and several agency representatives testified: **A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is in bill file**.
6. Mayor’s Office for Homeless Services
   * Jerrianne Anthony testified:
     + Statement: There are members of the community that are disproportionately affected by the virus
     + Things the Office has undertaken:
       - Moved 150 people into hotels
       - Move one (1) emergency shelter to a new location
       - Over the past few weeks have been involved in hospital discharges
       - There are clusters of homeless people who have tested positive; been proactive and will continue to do so
       - Talked about outreach and engagement efforts
7. Finance Department
   * Daniel Ramos testified:
     + Statement: The City has spent approximately $20 million thus far on virus related expenditures
     + Some of those expenditures included:
       - Hotels for the homeless
       - People Protection Equipment (PPE)
       - Premium pay
       - Telework and
       - Expanded testing
     + The new budget for fiscal year 2021 will be released on May 6, 2020
8. The chairman talked about a proposed amendment. The proposed amendment is to remove “Wuhan” from the title of the Resolution. The amendment passed, a vote taken and the bill will move to 2nd reader on Monday, May 11, 2020.
9. There was no public testimony. Hearing concluded.

## Further Study

**Was further study requested?  Yes  No**

**If yes, describe.**



Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff Date: May 4, 2020

cc: Bill File

OCS Chrono File