


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Honorable Bill Henry, Comptroller of Baltimore City	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Office of the Comptroller, Room 204, City Hall		
	SUBJECT	21-0041 Board of Estimates - Basic Organization and Procurement Thresholds		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and
 Members of the City Council
 City Hall, Room 400

April 26, 2021

Position: Support with amendments

The Comptroller’s Office is reporting on City Council Bill 21-0041 Board of Estimates - Basic Organization and Procurement Thresholds. The purpose of this bill is to repeal the duplicative provisions of City Code Article 5, Subtitle 1: Comptroller; to assign the Board of Estimates (BOE) clerk duties to the Comptroller’s designee; and to set procurement thresholds for expenditures over \$50,000 and contracts over \$25,000.

Background

This legislation was introduced by the City Council President at the request of the Comptroller, in an effort to update outdated parts of City Code.

Comptroller’s Designee

City Council Bill 21-0041, §1-1 (*see page 2, lines 1-10 inclusive*) would allow the Comptroller’s designee to perform the duties of Clerk to the Board of Estimates. The Clerk is responsible for a variety of administrative duties relating to the Board of Estimates that are ministerial in nature. They include, but not limited to: receiving protests on agenda items and forwarding those protests to Board members; at the beginning of each Board meeting, reading into the record any corrections, changes, deferrals, or withdrawals of agenda items, as well as announcing any abstentions; drafting Resolutions of the Board as needed; and scheduling special meetings of the Board. The Clerk also receives bids submitted to the Comptroller’s Office,

Currently, the Deputy Comptroller is responsible for performing the duties of the Clerk of the Board of Estimates. Since December 2020, the Comptroller has been performing these duties with the support of his Chief of Staff. If passed, CCB 21-0041 would allow the Comptroller greater flexibility to manage BOE operations.

Thresholds

In August 2010, the Baltimore City Council passed a charter amendment to give the City Council sole authority to set the thresholds for the Board of Estimates. It was ratified by Baltimore’s voters in November 2010. Article VI, §11 of the City Charter gives this authority.

On December 22, 2010, the Board of Estimates passed a resolution to set a threshold of expenditures of contracts that must be formally advertised at more than \$50,000, and contracts for BOE approval at more than \$25,000. Page 2, lines 11-20 inclusive, of Council Bill 21-0041 seeks to codify this resolution. (Bill says the codification is required and/or called for in existing code – is that right and seems we should mention to kill the notion that this is just something we can keep setting at BOE?)

Conclusion

This legislation will offer greater flexibility in management of Board of Estimates processes, as well as codifying spending thresholds that support spending transparency, accessibility and accountability. The Comptroller's Office supports any and all measures that increase the transparency, accountability and build public trust in the functions of government.

The Comptroller's Office has reviewed the amendments in the Law Department's report is supportive.

For the reasons stated above, the Comptroller's Office supports the bill with amendments.