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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
WAYS AND MEANS  
COMMITTEE**

*Mission Statement*

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

**The Honorable Eric T. Costello  
Chairman**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2021  
10:00 AM**

**VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING**

*Council Bill 21-0072*

**Local 911 Telephone Fee - Revision**

# CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

## **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ECD)**

Sharon Green Middleton, Chair  
John Bullock – Vice Chair  
Mark Conway  
Ryan Dorsey  
Antonio Glover  
Odette Ramos  
Robert Stokes  
*Staff: Jennifer Coates*

## **WAYS AND MEANS (W&M)**

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Kristerfer Burnett  
Ryan Dorsey  
Danielle McCray  
Sharon Green Middleton  
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer  
Robert Stokes  
*Staff: Marguerite Currin*

## **PUBLIC SAFETY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (SGO)**

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Kristerfer Burnett  
Zeke Cohen  
Erick Costello  
Antonio Glover  
Phylicia Porter  
Odette Ramos  
*Staff: Samuel Johnson*

## **EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND YOUTH (EWY)**

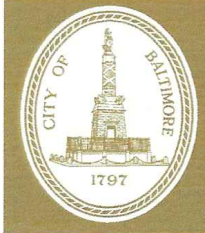
Robert Stokes – Chair  
John Bullock  
Zeke Cohen  
Antonio Glover  
Sharon Green Middleton  
Phylicia Porter  
James Torrence  
*Staff: Marguerite Currin*

## **HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY (HET)**

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Mark Conway  
Ryan Dorsey  
Phylicia Porter  
James Torrence  
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer  
*Staff: Matthew Peters*

## **RULES AND LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT (OVERSIGHT)**

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer, Chair  
Kristerfer Burnett  
Mark Conway  
Eric Costello  
Sharon Green Middleton  
Odette Ramos  
James Torrence  
*Staff: Richard Krummerich*



**BILL SYNOPSIS**

**Committee:** Ways and Means

**Bill:** 21-0072

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**Local 911 Telephone Fee - Revision**

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

**Introduced:** *May 3, 2021*

**Purpose:**

**For the purpose of** revising the local 911 telephone fee; and providing for a special effective date.

**Effective:** **July 1, 2021**

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**Agency Reports**

Law Department	<i>None received as of this writing</i>
Fire Department	No Objection
Department of Finance	Favorable
Police Department	<i>None received as of this writing</i>
Baltimore City Information and Technology	<i>None received as of this writing</i>

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**Analysis**

**Current Law**

Baltimore City Code – [Article 28 – Taxes – Subtitle 26 – 911 Telephone Fee](#) outlines the rules, regulations and mandates for the fees imposed the city’s 911 services.

**Background**

If enacted, Council Bill 21-0072 will increase the current monthly fee by 25 cents; **from 75 cents to \$1**. Also see the Department of Finance’s agency report for a broader history about the laws and changes, etc. associated with the legislation *(A copy is attached)*

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## Additional Information

**Fiscal Note:** Per the Department of Finance:

- Special Fund Revenue will increase by approximately \$1.6 million in the next fiscal year; fiscal 2022.

**Information Source(s):** City Code, Council Bill 21-0072 and all agency reports received as of this writing.

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*Marguerite M. Currin*

Analysis by: Marguerite M. Currin


Direct Inquiries to: (443) 984-3485

Analysis Date: May 21, 2021

# **Council Bill: 21-0072**

## **AGENCY REPORTS**

**SEE ATTACHED**

FROM	NAME & TITLE	<b>Niles R. Ford, PhD, Chief of Fire Department</b> <i>NRF</i>	CITY OF BALTIMORE  <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	<b>Baltimore City Fire Department 401 East Fayette St.- 21202</b>		
	SUBJECT	<b>City Council Bill #21-0072 Local 911 Telephone Fee – Revision</b>		


**TO**      **The Honorable Nick J. Mosby, President  
And All Members of the Baltimore City Council  
City Hall, Room 408**

DATE: **May 11, 2021**

**FOR the purpose of revising the local 911 telephone fee; and providing for a special effective date**

**The Baltimore City Fire Department has no objection to City Council bill 21-0072.**

*Robert Cennamo*

<b>FROM</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	Robert Cennamo, Budget Director	CITY of <b>BALTIMORE</b> <b>MEMO</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432, City Hall		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	City Council Bill 21-0072 – Local 911 Telephone Fee-Revision		

DATE:

**TO**

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

May 17, 2021

**Position: Support**

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 21-0072, Local 911 Telephone Fee-Revision, the purpose of which is to increase the current monthly charge from \$0.75 to \$1.

**Background**

The Maryland General Assembly established “911” as the primary telephone number for persons seeking the emergency assistance of police, fire, or ambulance anywhere in Maryland in 1979. This legislation created the Local 911 Telephone Fee, a \$0.10 monthly fee to be collected from all telephone subscribers for a three-year period from July 1, 1980 through June 30, 1983. This fee was divided and disbursed to counties according to population and provided funding for counties to implement a “911” emergency system or enhance their current system. This distribution was ultimately discontinued.

Since then, the General Assembly has passed additional legislation increasing the maximum fee local jurisdictions can implement. The fee was raised to \$0.30 per bill per month in 1983, to \$0.50 per month in 1990, and to \$0.75 per month in 2003. The City last updated the local fee in 2004, increasing it to the prior cap of \$0.75. In 2013, this fee was extended to purchases of pre-paid wireless services, with a onetime \$0.60 charge. The City receives 75% of the pre-paid wireless fees.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 339, which increased the local portion of the fee up to \$1.50 per month and changed the fee from per bill to per line, if the proceeds of the current fee did not cover the county’s annual operational costs for its “911” system. In April 2021, the City notified the State of its intent to increase the fee to \$1.00 in accordance with this new legislation since the revenue generated by the current fee and the projected revenue from the increased fee is not sufficient to cover the operational costs of the City’s “911” system.

**Fiscal Impact**

The increase in this fee would cause a direct increase in Special Fund Revenues used to offset the operational and upgrade cost of the City’s “911” system. This cost includes all personnel costs relating to the “911” system. Based on Calendar Years 2020 receipts, the Department of Finance projects that by increasing the fee \$0.25, Special Fund Revenue in Fiscal 2022 will increase by \$1.6 million.

Year	Wireline	Wireless	Total
<b>CY 2019</b>	\$1,130,240	\$1,904,465	\$3,034,704
<b>CY 2020</b>	\$1,821,145	\$2,862,329	\$4,683,473
<b>FY 2022*</b>	\$2,428,193	\$3,816,438	\$6,244,631

\*With Fee Increase

The Fiscal 2021 budgeted operational cost of the “911” system, including personnel cost is \$16.1 million. Currently, the General Fund is required to cover a majority of the operating costs of the system. Even with the projected revenue increase, this fee would not be sufficient to cover the operating costs and a General Fund contribution is still required.

#### **Other Considerations**

Five other Maryland jurisdictions are increasing their fee this year. Caroline, Carroll, Garrett, and Worcester Counties are increasing their fee to the \$1.50 per line per month maximum. Wicomico County is increasing their fee to \$1.00 per line per month. The City would not be the first to increase and would not have the highest fee.

#### **Conclusion**

Maryland law currently allows for an increase in the Local 911 Telephone fee if current revenue does not exceed or meet operational cost of the “911” system. The operational costs exceed the current and projected revenue. Increasing the local fee will reduce the burden on the General Fund to fill the gap and make resources available for other priorities.

**For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance supports City Council Bill 21-0072.**

cc: Henry Raymond  
Natasha Mehu  
Nina Themelis



**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 21-0072  
(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: The Council President  
At the request of: The Administration (Department of Finance)  
Introduced and read first time: May 3, 2021  
Assigned to: Ways and Means Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Fire Department, Department of Finance, Police Department, Baltimore City Information and Technology

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Local 911 Telephone Fee – Revision**

3 FOR the purpose of revising the local 911 telephone fee; and providing for a special effective  
4 date.

5 BY authority of  
6 Public Safety Article  
7 Section 1-311  
8 Maryland Code

9 BY repealing and re-ordaining, with amendments  
10 Article 28 - Taxes  
11 Section 26-1  
12 Baltimore City Code  
13 (Edition 2000)

14 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
15 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

16 **Baltimore City Code**

17 **Article 28. Taxes**

18 **Subtitle 26. 911 Telephone Fee**

19 **§ 26-1. Fee imposed.**

20 In accordance with State Public Safety Article § 1-311, an additional charge of [75¢] \$1 per  
21 month is levied and imposed on all current bills rendered for switched local exchange access  
22 service, wireless telephone service, or other 911-accessible service within Baltimore City.

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

**Council Bill 21-0072**

1       **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That the catchlines contained in this Ordinance  
2 are not law and may not be considered to have been enacted as a part of this or any prior  
3 Ordinance.

4       **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on July 1,  
5 2021.

**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
Committee Hearings**

Committee: **Ways and Means Committee**

Bill Number: **21-0072**

Date: **Tuesday, May 25, 2021**

Time: **10:00 AM**  AM  PM

Room:  Chambers  Reeves  Curran  Other  
(Virtual Mtg.)

Move For Suspension of Rules:  10-2 (Required Agency Reports)

10-3 (Announce after 2<sup>ND</sup> Thursday)

**Bill #21-0072**

**Local 911 Telephone Fee - Revision**

**For the purpose** of revising the local 911 telephone fee; and providing for a special effective date.

As the request of: the Department of Finance

*Introduced: May 3, 2021*