

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT, Mayor



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

LARRY E. GREENE, Director
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HEARING NOTES

Bill: 21-0112

Charter Amendment
Supplementary Criminal Apprehension and Conviction Fund

Committee: Ways and Means
Chaired by: Councilman Eric T. Costello
Hearing Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2021
Time (Beginning): 10:10 AM
Time (Ending): 11:00 AM
Location: Virtual "WebEx" Meeting
Total Attendance: Approximately 30

Committee Members in Attendance:

Eric T. Costello Kristerfer Burnett
Danielle McCray Ryan Dorsey

Out of Meeting: Robert Stokes, Sr. and Sharon Green Middleton - (vote reconsidered)

Table with 4 columns: Question, yes, no, n/a. Rows include Bill Synopsis in the file?, Attendance sheet in the file?, Agency reports read?, Video or audio-digitally recorded?, Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?, Evidence of notification to property owners?, and Final vote taken at this hearing?.

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Michelle Wirzberger, Police Department
Lt. Colonel John Herzog, Police Department
Robert Cennamo, Finance Department
Elena DiPietro, Law Department

## Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilman Schleifer, primary sponsor of the bill gave opening remarks. Some highlights from his conversation were:
  - Talked about a recent murder that occurred in his district; the reward amount was \$30,000 and because of the amount offered the phone rang off the hook with information
  - The suspects were apprehended quickly
  - The detectives were able to resolve the case quickly
  - He also talked about other positive examples that occurred when increased rewards are offered
  - He talked about what the Charter Amendment would do and said, “This is a solution to get people to come forward anonymously”
2. A representative from the Police Department thanked Councilman Schleifer for introducing the bill and talked about the role and/or responsibilities of the Metro Crime Stoppers.
3. Another representative from the Police Department stated that they support the bill and that currently not many people are coming forward. “Some people do not realize they can give information anonymously and don’t have to show up in court. We must do more marketing to get information out. There are outlets available to give tips. The bill will improve some of the barriers and he would love to partner with the Council on moving forward on the creating the fund.”
4. Per Councilman Schleifer, “this hearing as well as future meetings will help with the standardization of the fund. It will give a level playing field to others. This fund will be a lifesaver and have an impact citywide in many communities. Currently a lot of cases go unsolved; this fund will help with giving families closure. He also talked about inequities in some communities.”
5. Committee members made comments and asked questions. Some were:
  - What are the mechanics of the bill? Are they available now? **Answer: First the fund must be created then the mechanics.**
  - We want to make sure there is a need for the fund
  - How is the Baltimore Police Department assimilating information to the community for how to report crime anonymously? **Answer: Through posters and flyers**
  - How do the Baltimore Police Department determine the amount given for information received? **Answer: It is determined by the Metro Crime Stoppers**
  - **Requested by Councilman Burnett – Please provide how many crimes were solved over the past couple of years from the tips coming in.**
  - What are the two (2) programs mentioned in Finance’s report? Please elaborate about these programs
  - Conviction Funds in other jurisdictions
    - Has it helped with conviction rates?
  - There are almost 300 murders this year! How can we offer funds to solve these murders?
  - City’s Budget Season
    - During the budget season we (Finance) have the capacity to direct funds, could we direct more funds/money to this fund at that time? **Answer: Yes, we could but the funds would have to come from another source already appropriated elsewhere which would affect the budget.**
6. The representatives from both the Finance and Law Departments talked about their agency report in depth. Some highlights of same were:
  - **Finance Department**

- Clarified why the Department opposes the bill
  - Currently the city has already set-a-side funds to assist the Metro Crime Stoppers and there are ways people can make donations to them
  - Believes the current program in place is working as planned
  - **Law Department**
    - Opposes the bill
    - Statement: When you start mandating funds it limits the authority of the Council; the real problem would be the people legislating via Charter Amendment
    - The Department opposes the designation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> source stated in the bill, if the third funding option was removed from the bill (by an amendment) the Department could support the bill
7. Per Councilman Schleifer, "He plans to move all concerns expressed by the Law Department from the bill by an amendment. He also talked about the background and some issues with Metro Crime Stoppers when associated with funds set-a-side by the City; the funds are sometimes restricted. We need to set the standards across the City whereas each community can get the same type of rewards."
8. Councilman Schleifer gave closing remarks stating, "this is a low-cost solution for a big problem; we want long term solutions for this issue. Every single case in the city should be a priority!"
9. Hearing recessed. To reconvene at a later date.
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### Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes  No

If yes, describe. See requests noted in "Red" in the Major Issues Discussed section above.

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*Marguerite M. Currin*  
Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff

Date: October 21, 2021

cc: Bill File  
OCS Electronic File



## Baltimore City Council Committee Hearing Attendance Record

<b>Subject:</b> <b>Council Bill</b> – Charter Amendment – Supplementary Criminal Apprehension and Conviction Fund	<b>Bill #:</b> 21-0112
<b>Committee:</b> Ways and Means	<b>Chair:</b> Eric T. Costello
<b>Date:</b> Tuesday, October 19, 2021	<b>Time:</b> 10:00 AM
<b>Location:</b> WebEx Meeting	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY



First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	<b>Testify</b>	What is your position on this bill?		Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*	
				For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		<i>See hearing notes</i>					

\*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Ways and Means

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Tuesday, October 19, 2021

10:00 AM  
Virtual Webex Hearing: Phone: +1-408-418-9388, Access Code:  
2346 869 8648, Password: Public, Link:  
[https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/onstage/g.php?  
MTID=e567a90e70bdea46ecd415a5c746c3e2e](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/onstage/g.php?MTID=e567a90e70bdea46ecd415a5c746c3e2e)

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21-0112

#### CALL TO ORDER

#### INTRODUCTIONS

#### ATTENDANCE

**Present** 7 - Eric T. Costello, Kristerfer Burnett, Ryan Dorsey, Danielle N. McCray, Sharon Green Middleton, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, and Robert Stokes Sr.

#### ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

21-0112

##### **Charter Amendment - Supplementary Criminal Apprehension and Conviction Fund**

For the purpose of establishing a continuing, nonlapsing Supplementary Criminal Apprehension and Conviction Fund, to be used exclusively to supplement rewards offered to the public for information leading to the apprehension, arrest, and conviction of criminal suspects; providing for certain modes of appropriation to this Fund; authorizing the Mayor and City Council, by Ordinance, to provide for the oversight, governance, and administration of this Fund; and submitting this amendment to the qualified voters of the City for adoption or rejection.

**Sponsors:** Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, John T. Bullock

The hearing was recessed; to reconvene at a later date.

#### ADJOURNMENT