



COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

APPROVED

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland convened via video conference at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, February 8, 2022.

PRESENT

Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, President
Councilmember Andrew Friedson
Councilmember Sidney Katz
Councilmember Nancy Navarro

Councilmember Evan Glass, Vice President
Councilmember Tom Hucker
Councilmember Craig Rice
Councilmember Hans Riemer

ABSENT

Councilmember Will Jawando

The President in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Proclamation was presented by Mr. Albornoz and the full Council recognizing Bob Drummer for his years of service to the Montgomery County Council.

The Council recessed at 9:19 A.M. and reconvened at 9:30 A.M.

Mr. Albornoz stated that Mr. Jawando was absent due to a death in the family.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. **Announcement** – Ms. Singleton, Clerk of the Council, announced that a public hearing on the FY23 Capital Budget and Capital Improvements Program will be held on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 1:30 P.M.

(1) B. **Acknowledgement – [Receipt of Petitions](#)**

No petitions were received this week.

C. **Action – Approval of Minutes**

Approved the minutes of January 19, 2022, without objection.
Mr. Jawando was absent.

(2) **COUNCIL SITTING AS BOARD OF HEALTH**

A. **Update - [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and County Public Health Planning](#)**

Participating in the discussion were Dr. Bridgers, Acting Chief Health Officer, and Mr. O'Donnell, Program Administrator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); Dr. Stoddard, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; and Mr. D'Andrea, Chief of Staff, Office of the Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

Received information that the number of cases, positivity rates, and hospitalizations are trending downward; there is a modest increase in booster rates for all age ranges; parents are being encouraged to get their children vaccinated and DHHS is working with community and school partners to schedule vaccine clinics and to ensure pediatricians have access to the vaccine; and they are working with childcare providers on communication with families to provide updated guidance. Dr. Bridgers indicated a multi-level campaign regarding the pediatric vaccine is underway with equity at the forefront of planning. Testing and vaccine clinics are ongoing; rapid test kits and masks are being distributed through libraries and non-profit partners; and residents are encouraged to report positive test results on the County's portal. Noted that data, including data from wastewater testing, is used to guide public health practices. Updated guidance for quarantine and isolation practices will be provided on the website by tomorrow.

Dr. Stoddard said the County is rebuilding its stockpile of masks and rapid test kits to help ensure the County is prepared if another surge occurs. Executive Branch staff met with hospital representatives to discuss hospital bed capacity issues, particularly for mental health patients. He noted long-term health implications of the pandemic on managing health, especially for populations of color. They are focusing on post-Omicron services as the surge abates, and messaging will be shifted to focus on personal responsibility as the virus is considered endemic to maintain a manageable

level of illness. Dr. Stoddard commented that enforcement of the mask mandate is complaint driven, and houses of worship are included in the mandate. He reviewed a recent incident involving a synagogue where staff investigated a complaint received from a congregant. He indicated no citations are issued for a first offense and staff provides education on mask requirements.

Mr. Riemer suggested the County should have a wastewater monitoring program and that WSSC Water be invited to a future Transportation and Environment Committee meeting.

Dr. Bridgers and Dr. Stoddard said the DHHS outreach team is working with MCPS in response to recent incidents and are reviewing student health issues and developing additional strategies to address mental health crisis in schools. Mr. Hucker encouraged the County Executive to include funding in the FY23 budget to provide mental health supports and noted the importance of expanding Wellness Centers to all high schools. Mr. Rice noted that Dr. McKnight, Superintendent of Schools, has requested a follow-up meeting to discuss safety and mental health issues.

Mr. Alborno noted a Town Hall discussion on mental health issues is being planned for a future date.

(3) **BRIEFING - [COVID Rent Assistance and Evictions](#)**

Participating in the discussion were Ms. Harris, Chief, and Ms. Branda, Deputy Chief, Services to End and Prevent Homelessness, DHHS; Mr. Nigam, Director, Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA); Chief Deputy Uy, Sheriff's Office; Mr. Vitale, Supervising Attorney, Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.; and Mr. Vazquez, CASA.

Received a presentation from Ms. Harris on COVID rent relief efforts targeting resources to households at the most risk, spending by jurisdiction, and utility needs; noted that most recipients are families with children and that 77% of the applications for the current phase have been processed with almost \$59 million distributed to date, preventing over 9,000 evictions. All applications are expected to be processed by the end of February. Plans for the second phase of the Emergency Rental Assistance program will be for rental arrears only and to target extremely low-income households. The Department anticipates serving 2000 to 2500 households with the second phase and previous applicants may receive additional benefits. Increased fraud, both from tenants and landlords, is a concern. Regarding evictions, Ms. Harris said fewer than 8% of writs typically result in eviction. They have met with Secretary Holt regarding the reduced amount of funding to be received by the County for the next phase and encouraged the State to provide more resources to the County.

Mr. Glass, Lead Member for Homelessness and Vulnerable Communities, indicated he has already drafted a letter to the State to express the need for additional rent assistance for County residents, noting that 70% of applicants are making less than 30% of the area median income.

Received information from Mr. Nigam on DHCA's efforts to connect tenants with supports and resources to obtain and remain in affordable housing; from Chief Deputy Uy on current eviction statistics, noting that 37 evictions were conducted in January 2022; from Mr. Vitale that "failure to pay rent" court hearings will resume and that the court has been proactive in dismissing cases ahead of time; and from Mr. Vazquez on the importance of providing funds to community organizations to assist with landlord-tenant relations, the increase in self-evictions, that the lack of internet access is a significant problem for some residents, and the increase in calls from the East County area for legal support.

Mr. Hucker suggested a multi-layered professional government relations program, as other jurisdictions have, is needed to take advantage of all available State and Federal aid.

Mr. Albornoz requested additional demographic information pertaining to evictions in the County.

(4) **ACTION** - [Appointment to the Charter Review Commission](#)

Adopted **Resolution 19-1155**, appointing Ms. Anita Cox to the Charter Review Commission.

Mr. Riemer made the motion, which carried without objection.

(5) **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Approved the following consent calendar items listed below.

Ms. Navarro made the motion, which carried without objection.

A. **Introduced** [recommendation on Proposed Amendments to the Ten-Year Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan](#). A public hearing/action is scheduled for April 19, 2022, at 1:30 P.M.

C. **Received and Released** the OLO Report 2022-3: [Gender Equity in Local Sports Programs](#).

D. Adopted **Resolution 19- 1156**, [Spending Affordability Guidelines for the FY23 Operating Budget](#).

- E. Adopted **Resolution 19- 1157**, confirming the County Executive's appointment to the Human Trafficking Prevention Committee: Cynthia Defriece.
- F. Adopted **Resolution 19- 1158**, confirming the County Executive's appointments to the Library Board: Sana Ahmed Wilder, Holly Fiery, Kathryn Miller, James Montgomery, Marilyn Schiff.
- G. Adopted **Resolution 19- 1159**, confirming the County Executive's appointment to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee: Robin Barr.

The Council recessed at 12:38 P.M. and reconvened at 1:31 P.M.

- (6) **PUBLIC HEARING - [FY23 Capital Budget and FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program \(CIP\)](#)**

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed. Mr. Jawando was absent.

- (7) **PUBLIC HEARING - [Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY22 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Office of the County Executive - \\$400,000 for Business Advancement Team Life Sciences and Technology Centers \(Source of Funds: Current Revenue, General\)](#)**

The public hearing was conducted. Mr. Jawando was absent. Additional material for the Council's consideration should be submitted by the close of business on February 8, 2022. A Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for February 10, 2022.

- (8) **PUBLIC HEARING - [Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY22 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Department of Health and Human Services - \\$100,000 for Affordable Living Quarters \(Source of Funds: Federal Funds\)](#)**

The public hearing was conducted. Mr. Jawando was absent. Additional material for the Council's consideration should be submitted by the close of business on February 14, 2022. A Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee worksession will be scheduled at a later date.

- (9) **PUBLIC HEARING** - [Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY22 Capital Budget and amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Department of Housing and Community Affairs - \\$14,749,992 for Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation \(Source of Funds: Loan Repayment Proceeds\)](#)

The public hearing was conducted. Mr. Jawando was absent. Additional material for the Council's consideration should be submitted by the close of business on February 14, 2022. A PHED Committee worksession will be scheduled at a later date.

- (10) **PUBLIC HEARING** - [Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, County Offices and other Improvements, Dickerson Radio Tower](#)

The public hearing was conducted. Mr. Jawando was absent. Additional material for the Council's consideration should be submitted by the close of business on February 11, 2022. A joint Public Safety (PS) and Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for March 7, 2022.

- (11) **PUBLIC HEARING** - [Resolution to adopt the Economic Development Strategic Plan](#)

The public hearing was conducted. Mr. Jawando was absent. Additional material for the Council's consideration should be submitted by the close of business on February 28, 2022. A PHED Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for March 7, 2022.t.

- (12) **PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION** - [Special Appropriation to the County Government's FY22 Operating Budget, Conference Center Non-Departmental Account, \(NDA\) - \\$1,920,000 \(Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves\)](#)

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed. Mr. Jawando was absent.

Mr. Riemer, Chair of the PHED Committee, acknowledged receipt of a letter from the Montgomery County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) dated February 7, 2022, sharing concerns with the operations of the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center. Mr. Albornoz agreed that the issue should be discussed.

Adopted **Resolution 19-1160**, approving the subject special appropriation as submitted by the County Executive.

Mr. Riemer made the motion, which carried without objection.

- (13) **PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION** - [Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY22 Capital Budget and amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Office of Agriculture - \\$3,675,816 for Agriculture Land Preservation Easements \(Source of Funds: State Aid\)](#)

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed. Mr. Jawando was absent.

Adopted **Resolution 19-1161**, approving the subject supplemental appropriation.

Mr. Rice made the motion, which carried without objection.

- (14) **PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION** - [Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Montgomery County Government Department of Transportation Storm Drain General](#)

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed. Mr. Jawando was absent.

Adopted **Resolution 19-1162**, approving the subject CIP amendment.

Mr. Friedson made the motion, which carried without objection.

- (15) **PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION** - [Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Montgomery County Department of Transportation Storm Drain Culvert Replacement](#)

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed. Mr. Jawando was absent.

Adopted **Resolution 19-1163**, approving the subject CIP amendment.

Mr. Friedson made the motion, which carried without objection.

The Council recessed at 2:18 P.M. and reconvened at 7:31 P.M

- (16) **PUBLIC HEARING** - [FY23 Capital Budget and FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program](#)

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed. Mr. Jawando was absent and Mr. Hucker was temporarily absent.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 P.M.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Handwritten signature of Selena Mendy Singleton in black ink.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council