




MCPB Date 10/19/2023
Agenda Item #4

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Artie Harris, Planning Board Chair 

FROM: Ilana Branda, Chief of Staff, Planning Board 
Karen Warnick, Management Services Division Chief, Planning Department 

SUBJECT: FY25 Commissioners' Office Proposed Operating Budget

DATE: October 12, 2023

Action Requested

Approval of the FY25 Proposed Budget funding and staffing levels.

Background

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM), reported that the assessable base for Montgomery County is estimated to increase by 3.2% in FY25.

The Commissioners' Office budget is included in the Administration Fund. The preliminary projections provided by DHRM require a tax rate increase again in FY25 for the Administration Fund, prior to the inclusion of new initiatives/critical needs. The leading drivers for the increase in projections are estimated increases in retirement costs (1.9%), Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) (7.6%) and health benefits (7.9%).

As the senior management staff in the Commissioners' Office just joined the Commission in September 2023, several senior staff from the Planning Department and Legal worked with the Planning Board Chair to draft the proposed work program and budget needs. The senior staff included the Principal Counsel and the Planning Department's Communications and Management Services Division Chiefs. When the Planning Board's Chief of Staff came on board, she was brought into this process. This group recommends the following budget requests for the Commissioners' Office for FY25.

The recommended Commissioners' Office FY25 proposed budget is \$1,373,821, which reflects the base budget plus two new initiatives, one new position, and one seasonal summer intern. This is an increase of \$141,657 or 11.5% above the FY24 adopted budget.

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE BASE BUDGET

Known Operating Commitments

The following lists major known operating commitments for the Commissioners' Office in FY25:

Salaries and Benefits*	\$(92,267)
CPI Increase for Supplies and Services	\$3,142
Chargebacks	<u>\$(36,009)</u>
Total of Major Known Operating Commitments	\$(125,134)

Salaries and Benefits - \$(92,267)

Personnel costs are adjusted based on changes in current staffing, annualization of the previous year's merit and COLA increases, retirement costs, and benefit cost changes. Savings were identified due to estimated salaries and benefit selections for the vacant positions when the FY24 budget was developed. As the office is now fully staffed, the FY25 request is based on actual salaries and benefit costs.

- * Note: The salary and benefits number does not include the FY25 compensation marker, OPEB PayGo and OPEB prefunding as these are included in the Administration Fund's non-departmental account. Any changes to retirement expenses will be refined in November when the updated actuarial report is released.

CPI Increase for Supplies and Services - \$3,142

The Commissioners' Office is requesting a modest increase of \$3,142 over the FY24 adopted budget for supplies and services.

Chargebacks - \$(36,009)

The Chargebacks to the Legal Department for two technical writers are adjusted based on actual expenses on behalf of the Commissioners' Office. Savings were identified due to right-sizing of actual costs expected.

NEW INITIATIVES REQUESTED FOR FY25

1. Training and Professional Development - \$10,000

The Commissioners' Office is requesting \$10,000 for staff training and professional development.

2. Strategic Communications Support - \$100,000

The Montgomery County Planning Board Commissioners' Office would benefit from strategic communications support from a contracted vendor. The recent appointment of a new Planning Board Chair and four Planning Board members provides opportunities for the Planning Board to be strategic in messaging, at public events and meetings and in interacting with the media. A firm would be able to help to provide support for the development of messaging and talking

points, building media relations and provide best practices for messaging around controversial community issues.

A contractor will be secured to complete the following activities: strategic communications counsel and support, press and earned media support, and thought leadership. This would include regular collaboration with the office through weekly check-ins to address critical matters before the board, development of public messaging on behalf of the Office, talking points and media preparation, speech writing, social media support, and development of an editorial calendar to curate the Commissioners' Office online engagement.

FUNDING and WORKYEAR for CAREER POSITION and SEASONAL FUNDING REQUESTED FOR FY25

Convert an Unfunded Part-time Position to Funded Full-time Position and Workyear - \$149,255 – Principal Public Affairs Specialist – Grade 26

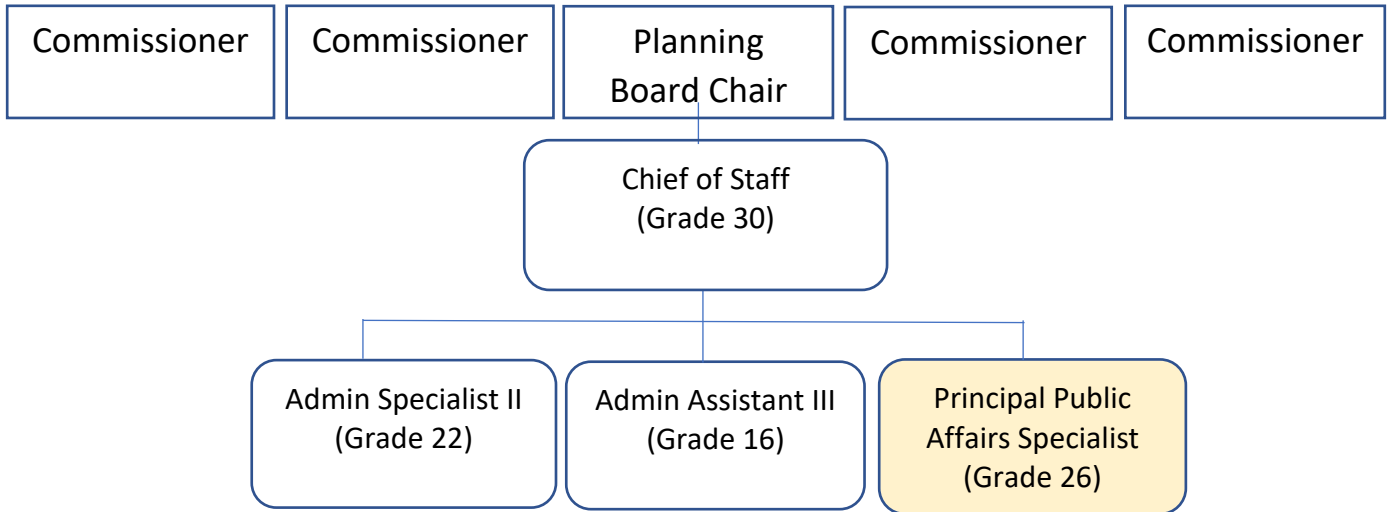
In FY24, the Commissioners' Office complement showed five part-time positions, each with 0.5 workyears. Four of the part-time positions are the four Commissioners. One of the part-time positions was unfunded.

For FY25, the Commissioners' Office is requesting to convert the unfunded part-time position to a full-time position with the funding of \$149,255 and one workyear for a Principal Public Affairs Specialist. This position will develop and assist with strategic communications for the Montgomery County Planning Board Commissioners' Office, with a focus on equitable, audience-centric communications. This includes educating a variety of audiences – including local decision-makers, members of the business community, state, county and municipal government officials, the news media, and the general public – about the work of the Planning Board and M-NCPPC and help encourage collaborative partnerships with those audiences. This position will handle many facets of community relations, news media relations, and public relations activities, including: managing social media accounts; writing and producing news releases; developing and writing web-based and electronic communications products; managing arrangements and support for community meetings, public hearings, special events, and other community outreach activities; providing news media relations support for the Planning Board; handling public inquiries; and providing exemplary customer service. This position will report to the Department Program Manager/Chief of Staff and will work in close coordination with the Montgomery Planning Communications Division staff and the Montgomery Parks Public Affairs Office.

Intern – Seasonal Part-Time – 0.15 wy - \$7,536

The Commissioners' Office is requesting 0.15 workyears and funding for a summer seasonal intern to work with the Commissioners' Office staff on special projects and to provide valuable work experience for the next generation of public servants.

Commissioners' Office FY25 Proposed Organization Chart
 (newly funded FY25 position in yellow box)



Commissioners' Office - Positions/Workyears
 (including the Planning Board)

	FY24 Adopted		FY25 Proposed	
	Positions	Workyears	Positions	Workyears
Full-Time Career	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
Part-Time Career	4.00	2.00	4.00	2.00
Frozen/Unfunded (Part-Time) Career	1.00	0.50	-	-
Career Total	9.00	6.50	9.00	7.00
Term Contract	-	-	-	-
Seasonal/Intermittent	-	-	-	0.15
TOTAL	9.00	6.50	9.00	7.15

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE
PROPOSED BUDGET FY25 – EXPENDITURES BY TYPE**

	FY23 Actuals	FY24 Adopted Adjusted	FY25 Proposed	% Change
COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE				
Personnel Services	780,360	904,115	968,640	7.1%
Supplies & Materials	21,108	24,457	25,690	5.0%
Other Services & Charges	93,359	40,375	152,284	277.2%
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
Other Classifications	-	-	-	-
Chargebacks	243,720	263,217	227,208	-13.7%
TOTAL	1,138,546	1,232,164	1,373,821	11.5%

PRELIMINARY FY25 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

		% Change
	FY24 Adopted Adjusted Budget	1,232,164
FY24 BASE BUDGET CHANGES		
	Salaries and Benefits *	(92,267)
	CPI Increase for Supplies and Services	3,142
	Adjustments in Chargebacks to Legal	(36,009)
	Subtotal - Base Budget Changes	<u>(125,134)</u>
		<u>-10.2%</u>
ENHANCEMENTS/NEW INITIATIVES/NEW POSITIONS		
	Training and Professional Development	\$10,000
	Strategic Communication Support	\$100,000
	Full-time Career Position and Workyear - Principal Public Affairs	\$149,256
	Seasonal Intern	\$7,536
	Subtotal - Proposed New Initiatives	<u>\$266,791</u>
		<u>21.7%</u>
	Net Change from FY24 Adopted to FY25 Proposed Budget	<u>\$141,657</u>
		<u>11.5%</u>
	*FY25 Proposed Budget	<u>\$1,373,821</u>
		<u>11.5%</u>

Notes:

* Salary and Benefits total does not include the FY25 compensation marker, OPEB PayGo and OPEB prefunding. They are budgeted in the Administration Fund's non-departmental account.