

BOARD OF ESTIMATES

1987

JUNE 15, 2015

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

THIS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ESTIMATES WAS CALLED TO
RECEIVE THE REPORT BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON THE ADOPTION
OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET
ORDINANCE AND TO CERTIFY THE REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY
TAX RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016.

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SPECIAL MEETING

Honorable Bernard C. "Jack" Young, President
Honorable Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor
Honorable Joan M. Pratt, Comptroller and Secretary
George A. Nilson, City Solicitor
Rudolph S. Chow, Director of Public Works
David E. Ralph, Deputy City Solicitor
S. Dale Thompson, Deputy Director of Public Works
Bernice H. Taylor, Deputy Comptroller and Clerk

President: "Good evening. This Special Meeting of the June 15, 2015 Board of Estimates, is now called to order. Before we proceed, I would like to give you a sense of how the meeting will flow. First, we will receive the report by the City Council on the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2016 Operating and Capital Budget Ordinance and second, the Board will Adopt and Certify the Real and Personal Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2016. At this time I would like to recognize members of the City Council who have joined me here today. Um -- Council Vice President, um --Ed Reisinger, Councilwoman Rikki Spector, Councilman Eric Costello, Councilman Pete Welch, Councilman Carl Stokes, Councilwoman Helen Holton, Councilman Jim Kraft. Did I miss any council members? Okay. Um -- at this time, I'd like to thank them for being here. I would like to recognize Councilwoman Holton, uh -- Chair of the Budget and Appropriation Committee, who will present the Adopted Budget to the Board."

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Councilwoman Helen Holton: "Thank you Mr. President. I come this evening number one, thanking you and thanking my colleagues, uh -- Vice Chair of the Budget Appropriations Committee, and the members of the Budget Appropriations Committee, Councilman Costello, that's' here with us this evening. Um -- we have worked diligently and hard, Madam Mayor, Madam Comptroller, and other members of the Board of Estimates. We are here to say this evening that we have worked hard and thank you for the partnership in coming to some revisions to make this a different budget than the one we originally received. And we are happy this evening to say that we passed the budget in chambers about an hour ago and at this time, uh -- we look forward to working together, and continuing to move along a continuum of collaboration to get more done and not less. It was a difficult budget year given the chain of events that occurred in the spring, and we continue to press our way through it to make a difference on behalf of all of the citizens of Baltimore City. So, I thank you and look forward to our continued working together."

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President: "Thank you. Uh -- Now I would like to recognize Mr. Andrew Kleine, Director of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research."

Mr. Kleine: "Good afternoon, Mr. President."

President: "Good afternoon."

Mr. Kleine: "Madam Mayor, Madam Comptroller, members of the Board. In accordance with Article VI, Section 7(c) of the Baltimore City Charter, I come before the Honorable Board to ask for your certification of the Property Tax rate requirement for Fiscal Year 2016. The General Fund appropriation proposed by the Board of Estimates for Fiscal Year 2016 was \$1,720,853,247.00. Uh -- as you heard, the Council passed the Ordinance of Estimates without reductions. The General Fund Revenue exclusive of Property Tax estimated by the Board of Estimates is \$863,668,817.00. Meaning that the Property Tax Revenue, required for this budget is \$857,184,430.00. The sufficient tax rates uh -- to achieve this level of revenue are real property other than public utility, \$2.248 per \$100.00 of assessed value and for personal property and public utility real property uh -- \$5.62 per \$100.00 of assessed value. I ask for the Board's approval uh -- and certification of these rates."

President: "Um -- At this time."

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City Solicitor: "Are you going to have a Motion?"

President: "No. Not yet."

City Solicitor: "Oh, I'm sorry."

President: "At this time I will open the floor to the Mayor or any other member of the Board who wish to speak. The Chair recognizes the uh -- Mayor of Baltimore City, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake."

Mayor: "Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you for all of your work uh -- during this budget season. Our Fiscal 2016 budget plan reflects a recovering economy. It continues the City's momentum towards fiscal sustainability. It boosts investment in infrastructure, much needed boost in infrastructure, but also boosts the investment in economic growth. It makes City services more proactive while trimming the workforce to its smallest size in modern history. We have always strived to do more with less and I think this budget reflects that. Thanks to my Ten Year Financial Plan, we have already cut the City's long-range structural bud -- uh -- budget deficit by more than half. Reduced the City's property tax rate more than 6% for tax -- uh -- for Baltimore City homeowners. We've pumped nearly \$100,000,000.00 new dollars into blight elimination and infrastructure projects."

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We've shrunk the City's unfunded pension and health care liabilities by \$850,000,000.00 and our 2016 budget makes responsible choices to continue this type of progress. Including, restructuring the Charm City Circulator to cut operation - uh -- operating costs and invest in uh -- fleet replacement. We're boosting our general obligation borrowing to a record \$65,000,000.00, while maintaining sound debt ratios. We are shrinking the size of the City's fleet, while continuing an aggressive vehicle replacement program to lower maintenance costs and to lower our fuel costs. We are eliminating unnecessary health benefit costs while improving employee wellness. We are strengthening the City's balance sheet by building reserves and addressing fund deficits that I inherited when I became Mayor. We are also providing a significant increase in funding for programs that support Baltimore's young people during and after school. And I want to thank again uh -- your Budget Chair, Mr. President, and the members of the Council who stood firm with you and with me uh -- to make this possible. Throughout this process, I have encouraged City agencies to find creative ways to make their services more proactive. Again, we have to find new ways to do more with less.

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We want to get ahead of the service uh -- service call backlogs that result in reactive, and what I believe is inefficient work. So, a smarter police patrol schedule matches deployment to crime activities and greatly reduces overtime costs. That is our goal. A new approach to EMS adds basic life support units during peak periods, speeding response times, and reducing the costs at the same time. Proactive street pruning -- street tree pruning, not street pruning. Uh -- even though it looked after my stint on the DOT um -- pothole crews that -- that the streets might need to be pruned. But, I -- I made it. But anyway, street -- uh -- proactive uh -- pruning of uh -- uh -- trees along our streets will improve the City's green infrastructure and head off emergency service calls and property damage due to fallen limbs. And, a rat rubout will transition from reactive to proactive with alleys inspected every 20 days cause -- because the -- the um -- the gross fact is that uh -- rats uh - procreate every 20 days they have a liter. So, we have to stay ahead of that. The budget plan also demonstrates the City's commitment to support our youth from cradle to career. This plan funds um -- home visiting services for first time and high-risk mothers and families throughout our B'More for Healthy Babies Initiative, which has shown great progress and great results.

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Uh -it places experienced monitors and coaches in Baltimore City's Head Start classrooms to make a direct and measurable impact on school readiness. It provides \$38.7 million dollars for the better schools initiative and \$1.1 billion dollars to modernize the City's -- the City's school buildings. The budget plan keeps all library branches open and maintains Sunday hours of operation to improve third grade reading and Kindergarten readiness. The plan opens new gymnasiums at CC Jackson and Rita Church Community Centers and continues our, our -- uh -- construction of new model centers at Cahill and Cherry Hill as well as newly renovated pools at CC Jackson and Druid Hill. The plan updates computer labs at the uh --City's two Youth Opportunity Centers, which give disconnected young people and out-of-school uh -- youth access to a full range of educational, occupational and personal support services in a one-stop safe and nurturing environment. Our plan helps us to work toward our goal of giving up to 8,000 young people uh -- summer job opportunities through our Youth Works Programs.

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Thanks to all of the partnerships with the members of the City Council, again, we were able to announce last week an additional \$4.2 million dollar investment in out-of-school time programming for our young people. Again, I want to thank the Council President and all members of the Council for helping to make this happen. As you can see, Baltimore is growing again. Despite our challenges and while some people just want to focus on our challenges. Yes, we have challenges. We remain confident that if we invest strategically and we if we work in partnership, true partnership, with all of those who love our City, there is no problem, there's no challenge that we cannot overcome. My firm commitment and my promise to the citizens of Baltimore was to use sound fiscal stewardship to put our City in position to grow. It is very uh -- we've demonstrated -- my administration has demonstrated that very clearly and succinctly year after year, and I am confident that if we continue down that road, we'll realize long-term sustainable growth for future generations. Thank you very much."

President: "Thank you. Uh -- Comptroller Pratt."

Comptroller: "Good afternoon. As with every year, coming up with a balanced budget that addresses the needs of our City is not easy."

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Therefore, I thank the -- I thank the Mayor, the President of the City Council, the City Council and the Department of Finance for the hard work on the Fiscal 2016 budget. When were briefed on the Fiscal 2016 budget, we were told that fixed costs are trending downward. As some of these costs are trending downward because of increased contributions of employees and retirees for pension and health care costs, it is my hope, that the city will continue its efforts to improve salaries for employees so that the actual net salaries are not decreased as a result of employee contributions. Government always works best when we work together to address the needs of our City. I am pleased that the additional \$4.2 million dollars will be made available for out-of-school time programming. As we all know, this is vitality important. Madam Mayor, Mr. President, and City Council, thank you very much. Working together with the Mayor, we plan to implement Voice Over IP, which will greatly improve voice telecommunications and result in savings to our citizens. My office has implemented telephone audits and a new billing system that will result in efficiencies and cost savings.

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While all critical service levels are to remain constant in the Fiscal 2016 budget, it will be important to monitor more closely spending on public safety to ensure that it is in line with the budget and that we work closely with our citizens to improve public safety. I look - look forward to the Body Camera Project that is planned to be piloted in Fiscal Year 2016. I am pleased that the budget is balanced and we will be able to meet service needs for our City and our citizens. Thank you very much."

President: "I thank you. Um -- I would like to thank um -- the Mayor, the Comptroller, the Finance Department, our hardworking City Council members, and to my staff who worked so hard with the passage of this budget. Um -- the City of Baltimore reaffirms its commitment to our children by making a down payment on a brighter future for more City students. This additional \$4.2 million for out-of-school time programming that's included in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget will provide more students with opportunities to access high quality instruction during out-of-school hours, some of the most critical periods of a child's development. I would like to again, thank Mayor Rawlings-Blake for being excellent partnering.

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Madam Mayor, I found you more than receptive to the City Council request for additional funding for our children and I would like to personally thank you again for that. Thank you to all of the members of the City Council for their hard work throughout this budget process. I would like to single out Councilwoman Helen Holton, the Chair of the Budget and Appropriation Committee and Vice Chair, um -- Councilman Kraft for serving the public's interest. Councilwoman Holton, thank you very much for standing up for the needs of our children and for being an excellent partner. And finally, I would like to thank the members of the public who participated in this year budget process. We are grateful for your participation and believe that your involvement is ultimately represented in today's budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Again, thank you very much and we're looking forward to working together as we try to build a better tomorrow for our children, and with that I will entertain your Motion to certify the Tax Rate."

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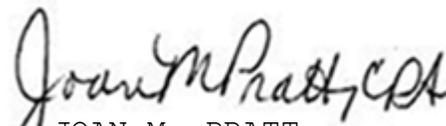
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City Solicitor: "Okay. Uh -- My pleasure to uh -- Move that we certify a sufficient Tax Rate to support all of the, all of the activities and matters described and provided for in the budget and described by my fellow board members. The sufficient Tax Rate being for Real Property other than public utility \$2.248 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation and for Personal Property and Public Utility Real Property \$5.62 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation."

Comptroller: "Second."

President: "I have a Motion and seconded to approve the certification of the Fiscal 2016 Tax Rate at \$2.248 per \$100.00 of assessed value for Real Property other than Public Utility and a Tax Rate of \$5.62 of 100 -- \$100.00 of assessed value for Personal Property and Public Utility Real Property. All those in favor say AYE. All opposed NAY. Motions carry."

There being no more business before this Board, this meeting is adjourned until its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, June 17, 2017-- 2015."


JOAN M. PRATT
Secretary