



BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON ADDRESSING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY'S STRUCTURAL DEFICIT

JUNE 13, 2016
MINUTES

The following Blue Ribbon Commission members were present at 11:09 a.m.

Blue Ribbon Commission Members:

Earl Adams, Jr.
Henry Mosley
David Harrington
Mark Tomassoni
James R. Estep
Desiree Callender
Gino Renne

Jamal Miller
John Rogard Tabori
David Van Dyke
Sherman Ragland
Ron Watson
Tom Himler

Council Members and Staff:

Howard W. Stone
Maurice Simpson, Jr.
Karen Campbell

Colette R. Gresham
Alex Hirtle

Other Attendees:

Dwayne Mingo
Scott Boetner
Sarah Cavitt

Alita Gaskill
Michael Lyles

OPENING REMARKS/REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Chair Earl Adams, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m. The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes from the May 16th meeting. The Chair welcomed everyone and discussed the draft letter to request an extension for the final report from July 1st to October 1st. The extension will give the Commission an opportunity to discuss any old or new topics with presentations at the July meeting. The last public hearing will be scheduled in September.

UPDATE ON COUNTY FINANCES AND BOND TRIP:

Lester Guthorn, Financial Advisor, gave an overview of the bond rating reports for the County from Standard and Poors, Moody's, and Fitch. The County has maintained its AAA rating and overtime has eradicated any deficit but not a structural deficit. The rating agencies look to see whatever challenges the County may face, what services the County is providing and at what level. The two largest expenditures for the County are public safety and education and the rating agencies would like to see

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improvement in OPEB and pensions. Mr. Guthorn expressed that the baseline question is what are the expenditures we wish to sustain and which ones we want to expand upon. The County has a limited tax pledge yet we were able to keep the AAA rating, which is very hard to do and speaks to the rating agencies confidence in the County. He stated that there needs to be an explanation of why the County needs certain things and what they may cost as well as noting where our expenditures are and where our revenue needs to be. This process would help to explain the culture of the government and what exactly is the case for being at a particular service level.

The Commission discussed the need for an objective, data driven analysis on expenditures and revenues as a means of addressing the structural deficit challenges. Commissioner Harrington recommended that the Maryland Economic Development and Business Climate Commission report should be shared with the Commission to get a better understanding of the business climate in Maryland. The Commission requested that members from various industries, i.e. builders, land use attorneys, and small businesses, give a presentation on the impact of the County's regulatory review process. There was also a suggestion that the County needs to strategically invest in an effort to increase revenues as well as the need to have presentations on the zoning rewrite and the homestead tax credit.

Discussion of the final report outline and process was deferred by the Chair to the next meeting. The possibility of having a half day retreat during the summer was discussed.

Meeting adjourned - 1:04 p.m.

Next Meeting – TBD