



# City of Bowie

15901 Excalibur Road  
Bowie, Maryland 20716

## REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2017

### CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the Bowie City Council was held on Monday, May 1, 2017 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Mayor Robinson called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

### QUORUM:

In attendance were Mayor Robinson, Councilmembers Esteve, Glass, Marcos, Polangin and Trough; City Manager Lott, Assistant City Manager Fitzwater, City Attorney Levan, City Clerk Hernandez, Staff, the Press, and the Public.

### CITY BOARD AND COMMITTEES:

#### A. Appointments/Reappointments/Swearing-In:

1. Councilmember Polangin moved the appointment of Grace Alheri Abdu as a member of the Diversity Committee for a 2-year term. Councilmember Trough seconded the motion and it carried 6-0. Mayor Robinson swore-in Ms. Abdu.

### CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Lott reported: 1) Spoke with Project Manager for MAGLEV and they are working on a date to come and brief Council on the project. 2) Application in process for easement license for the installation of a fence along the Amtrak railroad tracks in Old Bowie.

### CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilmember Polangin moved the approval of Consent Agenda Items: A) Approval of March 6 Meeting Minutes; B) Approval of March 20 Meeting Minutes; C) Approval of April 3 Meeting Minutes; D) Approval of April 12 Meeting Minutes; E) Approval of April 17 Meeting Minutes; F) Approval of Proclamation P-10-17 Proclaiming the Month of May 2017 as National Bike Month; G) Approval of Proclamation P-11-17 Proclaiming May 19, 2017 as Bike to Work Day in the City of Bowie; H) Approval of Resolution R-23-17 Authorizing the City Manager to Enter Into an Agreement With Mansfield Oil Company for the Purchase of Diesel Fuel in Truck Transport and Tank Wagon Quantities; I) Approval of Resolution R-24-17 Accepting a Bid Proposal for Heritage Trail, Phase I, 12<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Councilmember Glass seconded the motion and it carried 6-0.

**MAYOR** G. Frederick Robinson    **MAYOR PRO TEM** Henri Gardner

**COUNCIL** Michael P. Estève ♦ Courtney D. Glass ♦ James L. Marcos ♦ Diane M. Polangin ♦ Isaac C. Trough    **CITY MANAGER** Alfred D. Lott  
City Hall (301) 262-6200    FAX (301) 809-2302    TDD (301) 262-5013    WEB [www.cityofbowie.org](http://www.cityofbowie.org)

OLD BUSINESS:

A. FY 2018 Budget, CIP and Constant Yield Tax Rate – Mr. Rodney Yancey representing the Bowie Financial Advisory Committee read the committees' report on the FY 2018 budget (copy of report attached). Finance Director Matthews reported that municipalities are required by State law to place an advertisement in a local newspaper and to hold a public hearing on the Constant Yield Tax Rate. The City has complied with those requirements and is considering not decreasing the current tax rate of \$0.40 per \$100 of assessment.

**Public Hearing:**

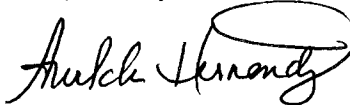
Since there were no speakers signed up to speak, Mayor Robinson declared the public hearing to have been held.

Councilmember Glass made a motion to keep the current tax rate at \$0.40 per \$100 of assessment, Councilmember Marcos seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Trough moved to adjourn the City Council meeting and move into Budget Worksession #4. Councilmember Marcos seconded the motion and it carried 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Awilda Hernandez, MMC  
City Clerk



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## The Financial Advisory Committee The Proposed FY 2018 Annual Budget

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To: The Bowie City Council  
From: The Financial Advisory Committee  
Date: April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Re: The Proposed FY 2018 Annual Budget

The Bowie Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) has reviewed the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2018. We are glad to see a healthy budget that still maintains a high level of service to the community, which makes the City of Bowie such a desirable place to live. The Committee also commends the Council and City Staff for keeping the property tax rate consistent each year, considering increased capital investments, expanding services and aging infrastructure. Finally, we wish to highlight the City Council for expertly managing to ensure that the budget is in keeping with the city's overall strategic plan.

The FAC takes pride in having the opportunity to be the first to review and formally comment on the budget each year. The city has operated at such a high level of financial prestige over the years, and has financially outperformed many other cities in the area and around the country. This is reflected in the recent award from the Government Finance Officers Association's presentation of a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the FY2016 Comprehensive Annual Fiscal Report (CAFR). Bowie won this award for the 42<sup>nd</sup> time. No other municipality in Maryland has won the award that many times. For this outstanding performance, we are thankful and grateful to the City staff, managers and leadership. Each year the FAC attempts to highlight trends and details in the budget that we believe may warrant a closer level of investigation and/or may require a future strategy to mitigate a potential liability to the budget or the services provided to our citizens.

This year's review has focused on 4 main aspects we hope will draw attention and spark further conversation with leadership in these areas:

- **Community Services / Historic Properties**
- **Public Safety / Police Department**
- **Strategic Plan / General Fund and Revenues**
- **Capital Improvement/Sports Complex**

### Community Services / Historic Properties

#### Historic Property:

Considering our 100 years of history, we believe it remains important to continue to preserve the deep, rich history of this region. One of the historic properties goals is to work with graphic designers to develop an Old Bowie Walking Tour Brochure. The Financial Advisory Committee fully supports this effort and appreciates the additional allotted funds to make the walking tour path attractive and ensure it is updated biannually. We support continued investments to make Historic Bowie a tourist destination to attract businesses and increasing revenue to the city when possible. We appreciate the work of the city to preserve the historical sites in the city. Given our rich history it is important to maintain key historical areas.

**Golf Course:**

As described in the City Managers Executive Summary, it seems that the city has forgiven and released the Golf Course lessee from the lease obligation for the remainder of the contract term through 2021. The resulting loss of revenues over 3+years at the rate of a previously budgeted amount of \$69k per year is a substantial loss. In this case, the FAC suggests billing the lessee for at least a percentage of revenues collected. This is of importance since we are now budgeting \$250,000 for upkeep and improved infrastructure. We should develop a plan to ensure that the golf course does not become an eye sore and that we are not taking on the bulk of the upkeep expenses.

**Senior Building:**

Public Buildings and Grounds added funding for a full-time HVAC specialist when previously this position did not exist. Remembering the air conditioning breakdown and subsequent repair at the Senior Center in June 2016, we commend City Council for addressing this need for our senior population and the community at large.

**Personnel Cost**

Housing Inspection and Code Compliance Supervisor has increased from a 0.5 Part Time position to a 1.0 Full Time equivalent without a substantial increase in the work covered by performance indicators. Is there another reason or benefit to this increase? As we work to fund the Indoor Sports Complex it is important to be conservative.

**Bowie Play House**

The Bowie Play House rental hours decreased from 1,347 in FY13 to 950 in FY17, however the revenue increased from \$47,714 to \$52,200. Since the rates are lowest for residents while the expenditures for all Parks, Recreation and Culture areas are increasing, this seems in line with fiscal responsibility and we appreciate this trend.

**Youth Services:**

Youth Services Bureau is an important service to the community. Youth and Family Services provides many services to young people under the age of 18, as well as families in crisis. Since 89% is funded by the city and youth services are essential to both the city and county, continued consideration should be given to this as an area where grants and other resources can be leveraged.

Kenhill Center expenses increased from \$166,000 to \$194,000. Revenues are at \$178,000, this is barely breaking-even. How effectively is the city with maximizing revenues (commensurate with the cost to upkeep this building)? There is always the need for public space for rent. While this building is managed out of the general fund; depreciation and profitability are not issues. Our perception is that any excess generated will contribute towards the fund balance in general and any future potential crises associated with the building.

**Public Safety / Police Department**

The Bowie City Police Department continues to serve the citizens of Bowie with an outstanding level of integrity and professionalism. Police Department expenditures represent nearly a quarter of city budget expenditures. Police Department services and staffing continue to expand. As noted in previous years by the FAC, while these expansions are represented in the Department's strategic plan, it is unclear

when the Department will be 'right-sized'. The city should consider benchmarking the performance of our Department, as well as size and services offered against other cities of similar size. This information would be helpful in identifying innovative ways to conserve spending on public safety. Especially since workload indicators do not appear to increase with additional resources. In fact, workloads appear to be decreasing, which runs counter to needing additional staff resources. The proposed budget calls for several increases in personnel cost and continued increases in the police budget. As we increase the number of officers in the city the associated costs of benefits, insurance, vehicles, vehicle maintenance, etc. will also increase. Running a state-of-the-art Police Department is an expensive endeavor, and one that continues to make Bowie a desirable place to live. While the benefits of a city policing program are evident, we also owe it to taxpayers to ensure public safety costs are reasonable and justified. Partnerships with Prince Georges Police Department should continue to be encouraged and possibly expanded as they share costs for training and service provisioning.

### **Strategic Plan / General Fund and Revenues**

Total Revenues appear to be increasing at a moderate rate, and expenses appear to be increasing at a rate that far surpasses that of Revenues, while the population growth shows little movement over the current and projected years. Any suggestion to arrest/fix the declining fund balance issue, must have a balanced approach which includes:

1. Consideration of boosting revenue
2. Consideration of efficiencies or cutbacks to ballooning expenditures

The Property Tax rate is 0.40. This budget year represents the eighth consecutive year without a tax increase. While the Revenues from Bowie Market-Place; Melford and Karington were expected to contribute to the increasing expenses, the report acknowledges that the rate of growth in expenses surpasses the rate of growth in Revenues. Thus, the decline in Fund Balance.

Since the city has begun discussions on raising the property tax rate, would it be appropriate to plan an incremental increase now? For example, a less than 1% incremental increase would have minimal impact on citizens. The longer we wait, the higher the increase(s) will be when imposed. We are not sure what justification the city needs to propose this, but certainly the fast-approaching unacceptable decline in fund balance seems a potent argument.

Although HR and Public information costs seem high, Public Information makes use of grant funding for capital outlays. We recommend that consideration be given to utilizing Green initiatives to reduce printing costs, binding and maintenance of copy equipment etc. HR's expenditures appear to primarily be relative to the number of recruitment actions. It also appears that health plan coverage specifically HSA enrollments, may be responsible for increasing per capita costs. In addition, the use of contracts for diversity and customer service training (which amounted to \$25K) might be reduced by "Train-the-trainer" courses for city personnel who could deliver training they have received more broadly.

### **Capital Improvement / Sports Complex**

Having completed our centennial and as we embark upon the next hundred years, the City of Bowie continues to demonstrate that its citizenry is the foundation upon which everything is based upon. This includes how the financial well-being of the community is determined. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) promises to continue providing the essential services as it has in the past, while at the same time maintaining a primarily healthy financial outlook for the city.

Of note and concern is the means of financing the approved Indoor Sports Center. As stated in the proposed budget, this is the largest project in the CIP at an estimated cost of approximately \$25M. In 2015, this project was expected to use borrowed funds equaling approximately 85% of the total cost, which was estimated at that time to be \$20.3M. Granted, the expectation was the construction would begin in 2015, but more recent estimates have caused other concerns specifically:

- **Increased construction costs from \$20.3M to \$24.2M (19.21% increase)**
- **Increased construction budget from 20.3M to \$25M (23.15% increase)**
- **Original project used approximately 85% borrowed funds (\$17M)**
- **Current projects uses 100% borrowed funds. (\$24.2M)**

As noted last year, we would like to encourage the city to develop a methodology that demonstrates the benefit of each of the infrastructure expansion projects in the capital projects list. We hope that this will shed light on the projects that generate the greatest benefit for their cost. Understanding the social and economic benefits will allow the Council and citizens to understand the cost-benefit ratio of our dollars spent. This will ensure we are maximizing the return on our investments when we expand facilities. This is the case for the Indoor Sports Facility. This project is a large portion of the city's budget, and a very important enhancement to the recreational opportunities within the city. This is a large part of the enhanced quality of life that the city offers. While the committee applauds the project and its benefit to the Bowie Community we ask that this be better explained, as it relates to the significant budgetary changes in a relatively short period.

Sincerely,

Patricia R. Peterson,  
Chairman  
City of Bowie Financial Advisory Committee