

**Updated 6/8/2024**

## **College Park 2025 Budget Considerations**

**The first Public Hearing to receive comments on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget is being held at the "Regular Meeting" on Friday, 6/7/2024.** This "Regular" Meeting, along with the Work Session, was rescheduled from its normal Monday evening date of 6/3//2024. This is the first of two public hearings scheduled to receive public comments. The second hearing will be held on June 17, 2024. These are great opportunities to say what you think of the proposed budget and ask questions. **In my 16 years of experience on Council, to my recollection, we have not limited the time an individual could speak, not limited the number of individuals who could speak, and not limited the total time allotted for comments/questions.** Since the new Council is frequently advocating for transparency, I would hope that this past tradition would be maintained. **Note that a presentation of the changes that were made to the budget since its introduction at the first "real" Work Session on May 1** (the earlier April Work Session was aborted) **is on the agenda for the 6/7/2024 Work Session. If you are planning to speak at the Regular Meeting (7:30 PM) you should watch the Work Session presentation.**

I have briefly reviewed the information in the Budget in the ePacket for the Work Session. Following are some of my thoughts:

1. Council is proposing to split \$3.8M dollars amongst the 4 Councilpersons to be spent in their wards, presumably as each councilperson sees fit. While this may endear them to their particular constituents, it could mean that some money will be spent on items in one ward that are not as needed as expenditures in other wards.

2. There are four unapproved expenditures on packet page 13 that are up for discussion for ~\$3.4M (e.g., pension cost increases). On packet page 15 there are six personnel actions to help fund them (e.g., not hiring 6 police officers and 5 firefighters). Why not reduce the ~\$3.8M of individual Councilperson "discretionary constituent benefit funding" from above by enough to cover some or all of the unapproved expenditures?

3. College Park has never "self-insured". Why are we doing this now. That would eliminate \$700K from the needs list on packet page 13. **Based on some comments at the 6/7/2024 "Regular" Meeting, it appears that insurers see a higher degree of risk due to recent events in College Park. This has forced the City to adopt a self-insured model.**

4. Is Council trying to create a need that would justify a property tax increase that would impact both home owners and (also ultimately) apartment dweller rental cost?