

In response to questions/comments received at gccomments@garrettcounty.org related to the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget, the following answers are provided for the frequently asked or commented on questions.

- **School Resource Officer**

In 2018 the Maryland General Assembly mandated that each school system conduct a risk analysis of each school within their district and make recommendations on adequate school security.’

The Garrett County Sheriff’s Department conducted the assessment for Garrett County Public Schools and determined that three (3) additional School Resource Officers (SRO’s) would be needed.

The Board of County Commissioners approved, and authorized funding for \$400,000 (non-budgeted) for three SRO’s. By law, the SRO must be a certified police officer and a certified School Resource Officer.

First year cost: Salary/Benefits -\$210,000; Vehicle/Equipment - \$196,000, Training - \$44,000. On-going annual cost is budgeted at \$250,000.

- **Emergency Medical Services**

In 2008, the County began providing paid EMS personnel to the volunteer rescue squads to supplement their volunteer staff. The original agreement was to provide one (1) paid EMT/Paramedic from 6:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. The squad was responsible for manning the ambulance at all other times.

Since then the program has evolved to include coverage when the rescue squads are unable to fill a particular shift. This means the County provided some level of emergency services coverage seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day.

Even with the increase in County staffing, we still experienced problems providing adequate volunteer coverage at the volunteer rescue squads and delays in providing adequate emergency medical services.

The Board of Garrett County Commissioners approved a county-wide approach to emergency medical services. The intent of the plan is to supplement volunteer staffing while encouraging continued volunteer support and to ensure citizens and visitors to the county continue to receive the best emergency care possible.

Beginning in FY 2017 the Public Safety/Emergency Services budget was increase by \$876,901 to \$1,517,854 as the County began working to develop a comprehensive plan to provide adequate emergency medical coverage for the entire County. Today, the County provides emergency medical services 24 hours a day/seven days a week at Southern Garrett Rescue, Northern Garrett Rescue and operates a County company in McHenry with a budget of \$1,733,523.

- **Balancing Budget with Reserve Funds**

The General Fund Budget is not balanced using “reserve funds”. Reserve funds may only be used on one-time capital projects. The County maintains adequate reserves.

- **Employee Health Care**

Garrett County Government has partnered with the Board of Education and Garrett College in a Health Care Coalition in an effort to manage and control health care cost. Over the past several years, County Government has instituted

changes in insurance co-pay and increased deductibles, wellness incentives and spousal surcharges (\$600). County employees pay a portion of health care premiums. Additionally, in 2018, the County modified the retirement plan and health care benefits are no longer offered to new employees at the time of retirement.

- **Consider increasing other taxes-gasoline, tobacco, sales tax**

Only the State of Maryland has the authority to tax gasoline, tobacco products and sales tax.

- **Property Tax Assessment-Disparity in Assessments**

Property is assessed by the Comptroller of Maryland’s Office of Assessment and Taxation, not by County Government. Properties are assessed every three (3) years.

- **Mandated Budget Expenses**

FY 2019 Budget	
BOE/College/Library	\$35,260,926
Sheriff's Dept	\$7,456,881
VFD-Rescue Squad	\$2,329,909
Health Dept	\$1,967,000
Community Action	\$1,634,727
State's Attorney	\$726,368
Tax Due Towns/Contingency	\$602,205
Circuit Court	\$531,153
Board of Elections	\$453,954
Assessment Dept	\$278,000
UM Extension Service	\$204,073
Soil Conservation	\$19,706
Orphans Court	\$16,170
	\$51,481,072
	64%

- **What makes up the remaining 36% of Budget**

FY 2019 Budget	
Public Works	\$17,112,810 - 21%
General Government	\$3,748,528 - 5%
Emergency Services	\$2,245,968 - 3%
Transfer to Other Funds	
Airport/DotCom/Solid Waste/ASCI/Capital	\$1,834,807 - 2%
Facilities Maintenance	\$1,769,778 - 2%
Retiree Benefits/OPEB	\$882,000 - 1%
Chamber of Commerce	

Accommodation Tax-Promotion of Tourism	\$825,000 - 1%
Miscellaneous	\$407,625

- **Close/Consolidate Schools**

The Board of County Commissioners has no authority to recommend, close or consolidate schools. The Garrett County Board of Education has sole responsibility over the school system.