



## ROBERT G. CASSILLY

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Harford County Executive

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### **Harford Executive Cassilly Signs Fiscally Conservative FY25 Budget with No New Taxes; Prioritizes Public Safety, Education**

**BEL AIR, Md.,** (June 14, 2024) - Harford County Executive Bob Cassilly has signed legislation enacting the FY25 budget following its passage Tuesday by the County Council. The budget for fiscal year 2025 keeps total spending flat overall at \$1.2B and meets the county's needs without raising taxes. Public safety and education are the only significant areas of increase, funded by using savings and cost efficiencies throughout the county budget.

Operating funding for public schools will increase by \$6.5M, or 2%, for instructional salaries, bringing the total county funding to \$321M. This funding, along with cost efficiencies and the use of savings by the school board, will fully fund their negotiated salary increases for HCPS employees without reducing the total number of teachers countywide, and still leave the school system with an unassigned fund balance of \$24M that can be used to fund any other Board priorities.

Record level of funding for public safety includes eight first-responder positions to staff an additional county ambulance and salary increases for law enforcement and corrections deputies. The sheriff's office's overall operating budget increases by \$8,722,800.00 or 7.4%.

Major capital projects include:

Body-worn cameras, in-car cameras, and fleet replacement for law enforcement

Emergency	mobile/portable	radio	system	upgrades
Design funds for a new Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company station				

Public schools including the new Homestead Wakefield Elementary, Harford Technical High School's renovation, and Aberdeen Middle School's systemic HVAC renovation

"This budget year brought statewide economic challenges that we met by keeping expenditures in line with revenue growth and by keeping the public and the entities we fund informed as changes occurred in our revenue outlook," County Executive Cassilly said. "In the end, we protected taxpayers and prioritized public safety and education. I would like to thank my directors and all county employees for their dedication throughout this process. Special thanks to Budget Chief Kim Spence and Treasurer Robbie Sandlass and their award-winning teams for their professionalism and unassailable integrity as responsible stewards of taxpayer funds."

The final FY25 budget did not include the following capital projects, which were proposed by County Executive Cassilly but were cut by a majority vote of the County Council: site acquisition funds for a new Aberdeen-area elementary school, planning funds for C. Milton Wright renovations, repairs to the Harford County Detention Center to correct leaks that are damaging the walls, repairs to Citizens Care nursing home to allow the reopening of 22 beds, funds to relocate the State's Attorney's Office from the courthouse and an expensive leased property to a county-owned building, and funds to improve the security and operations of the Circuit Court.

These projects were eliminated by the County Council to reallocate funds to a project that would have moved police training from Harford Community College and added an additional sheriff's precinct. Both of those were proposed to be located in Aberdeen on a county-owned facility formerly known as the HEAT Center. However, that project will not move forward as the county lacks the approximately \$7M in additional annual operating funds needed for those proposed facilities. Moreover, an engineering firm hired by the county has advised against the project based on significant deficiencies in the design, structure, layout, and location. As funding becomes available, County Executive Cassilly's long-range budget calls for substituting that project with a public safety operating and training complex for all first responders at a different location that will include the sheriff's needs, local law enforcement agencies, Department of Emergency Services, and our volunteer fire companies.



*Harford County Executive Bob Cassilly signs the county budget for fiscal year 2025, joined by Director of Administration Rob McCord, Treasurer Robert Sandlass, Jr. and Chief of Budget and Research Kim Spence.*

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