

# Quick Guide to the FY 09 General Fund Budget

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The combined Operating and Capital Budget books are a bit more than six hundred pages long and contain a great deal of information. This Quick Guide is intended to serve as a summary of important information and changes, as well as a tool for understanding and locating information in the budget books.

## Core Messages

- We began this process with slim margins in our Operating Plan and little flexibility.
- Changes at the State squeezed that flexibility.
- Changes in the economy and costs added even more pressure.

## The Operating Budget

### Revenues

The strong revenue growth of recent years is coming to an end. Real Property tax continues to post strong gains, largely due to assessments catching-up to market prices. Income Tax growth is expected to be down, and Recordation is projected to fall well below the FY 08 budget.

- The FY 09 Budget grows \$24.6 million or 7.5% from the FY 08 Budget; however, most of this increase is due to \$19 million of property tax returning from the CIP. Without that property tax returning, the FY 09 Budget would grow by only \$5.6 million or 1.6%.
- There are many revenue changes, but it is only necessary to talk about a handful of changes to understand the growth in the Budget.
- Though growth in Operating Real Property Tax is approximately 23%, the net growth of Real Property Tax in both the Operating and Capital Budgets is under 8%. This difference is due to the amount of one-time Property Tax directly appropriated to the Capital Budget. This amount decreased from \$19 million in FY 08 to \$0 in FY 09. Without that Property Tax returning, the Real Property Tax would grow by \$12.1 million or 7.9%.
- The Homestead Tax Credit, which is included in Operating Real Property Tax, is expected to decrease Property Tax Revenue by nearly \$11 million.
- Income Tax is up by \$4 million over FY 08, but the rate of growth is below expectations. The State's decision to increase the personal exemption amount and an overall economic slowdown combined for a growth rate of less than 4%. In a typical year Income Tax grows by 6%.
- Recordation is down \$5.5 million. The number of home sales has been dropping for a few years, and FY 08 is shaping up to be the worst year seen in quite a few years. What may be more troubling is prices are now starting to drop. Our original belief was that the housing market would start to recover in FY 08. We now believe the market will bottom out over the course of FY 08 and FY 09 with no recovery until FY 10.

- Interest is down nearly \$3 million. The Federal Reserve cut interest rates six times over the past six months. Interest rates have fallen over that time from 5.25% to 2.25%. That drop in interest rates, combined with a reduction in our portfolio due to the spending down of Property Tax dollars directly appropriated to the Capital Budget over the past few years, results in interest revenue falling below FY 06 levels.
- The change in the prior year surplus is a decrease of more than \$2 million.

## **Expenditures**

Where is the money going?

Total New \$	\$24.6
Public Schools - Operating	11.5
Debt Service – County	2.6
Fleet Management	1.7
Health and Fringe Benefits	1.5
Public Schools – OPEB	1.5
Economic Development	1.0
Facilities	0.8
Carroll County Public Library	0.6
Carroll Community College	0.5
Sheriff’s Services	0.5
Transfer to OPEB	0.5
Reserve for contingency	0.8

### **General Fund Appropriations – Summary of appropriations by major categories**

- The largest percent increase, 26.4%, is in Economic Development primarily due to infrastructure costs of two new business parks. An additional \$1 million is funded in both FY 09 and FY 10 from an expected \$2 million of budget savings in FY 08.
- Other notable increases are for Board of Elections at 25.8% primarily due to another new voting system mandated by the State; General Services, which includes Fleet and Facilities, at 18.1% primarily due to higher energy and fuel costs; Citizen Services, at 10.9% primarily due the Long Term Treatment Facility; Sheriff Services at 7.2% primarily due to three new positions; and, the Carroll County Public Library at 8.0% primarily due to the opening of the Finksburg Library.
- The largest dollar change, \$11.5 million, is for Public Schools. The increase includes operating impacts of \$3.3 million, primarily for Ebb Valley Elementary School.

### **Public Schools Summary – Summary of appropriations for the School operating budget and debt service on school construction**

- The School operating appropriation increases \$11.5 million or 7.7%. This includes planned growth of 5.5% plus operating impacts of \$3.0 million for Ebb Valley Elementary School and \$0.3 million for Manchester Valley High School.
- Debt Service decreases \$0.4 million or (4.0%).

- OPEB increases by \$1.5 million. The Board of Education designated half of their FY 07 surplus to its trust fund for future benefit costs for retired employees.

**Public Safety & Corrections Summary** – Summary of appropriations by agency

- The Circuit Court Masters increases \$0.1 million or 21.2% primarily due to the addition of a Judicial Assistant and a Legal Assistant.
- The Detention Center increases \$0.3 million or 4.7%.
- The Sheriff increases \$0.5 million or 10.6% primarily due to the addition of two Court Security Officers and one Warrants Administrative position.
- Resident Trooper program increases \$0.4 million or 7.7% primarily due to increase in indirect costs.
- Law Enforcement, a new budget that was established due to the uncertainty over the police issue, is budgeted at \$0.2 million. This budget includes funding for the addition of three certified law enforcement officers to maintain the ratio of 1.3 officers per 1000 residents.
- VESA increases \$0.4 million or 7.4%. The increase includes the planned growth of 5% plus additional funding for increased fuel and utility costs.

**Education Other Summary** – Summary of appropriations to the Community College, Library and Cable Regulatory Commission/Community Media Center

- The Community College increases \$0.5 million or 7.6% to maintain one-third of total costs.
- The Library increases \$0.6 million or 8.0% primarily due to the new Finksburg branch set to open in the fall of 2008.

**Public Works Summary** – Summary of appropriations by bureau

- Public Works increases \$0.4 million or 3.6%.
- Roads Operations increases \$0.2 million or 3.0%.

**Citizen Services Summary** – Summary of appropriations by agency

- Citizen Services increases \$0.85 million or 10.9%.
- The Long-term Treatment Facility increases \$0.4M or 50.1% due to the current service agreement for operating the County's Long Term Treatment Facility.
- Health Department increases \$0.3 million or 10.2%; however, the underlying increase is 5.0%. In FY 08 the Maryland State Department and Mental Health and Hygiene assumed all costs associated with retiree's hospital insurance for that year only. In FY 09 the obligation for these costs returns to the County.

**General Government Summary** – Summary of appropriations by department and bureau

- Economic Development Infrastructure and Grants increases \$1 million or 33.3% due to infrastructure costs of two new business parks. An additional \$1 million is funded in both FY 09 and FY 10 from an expected \$2 million of budget savings in FY 08.
- Board of Elections increases \$0.15 million or 25.8% due to the state mandated purchase of a new optical scan voting system.

- Facilities increases \$0.8 million or 10.9% primarily due to the operating impacts of four new buildings and increases in the cost of gas and electric.
- Fleet Management increases \$1.7 million or 32.1% primarily due to fuel costs and a new replacement grader.
- Health and Fringe Benefits increases \$1.5 million or 8.5% primarily due to medical and prescription cost increases.

**Debt, Transfers and Reserves Summary** – Summary of appropriations to Debt Service, Intergovernmental Transfers, Interfund Transfers and the Reserve for Contingencies

- Debt Service increases \$2.6 million or 12.1% due to planned bonding for capital projects in FY 09.
- Interfund Transfers decreases \$2.4 million or (14.7%) primarily due to reducing the transfer to the Capital Fund, decrease to LOSAP, and increase in the transfer to OPEB.