

Chair Miles' Recommendations for Budget Process Improvements

With the 2025 budget process complete, Chair Miles asked supervisors to reflect on their experience with this year's budget process and consider ways to improve our budget process for 2026 and beyond. These recommendations reflect suggestions submitted by board members and department staff. The objective is to make our process more efficient, transparent, and inclusive for the County Board, staff, and constituents.

Streamline Department Presentations and Process:

- Department head remarks limited to five minutes.
- Public comment limited to three minutes
- Start the meetings earlier (possibly 5:30 p.m.)
- Content guidelines for departmental presentations:
 - Highlight key budget impacts informing decision items, such as significant changes in revenue, changes in contractual costs, etc.
 - Provide an overview of decision items in the department's request.
 - Provide an overview of budget needs that fall outside of the County Executive's guidelines and, therefore, are not included in the department's request. Prioritize budget needs and justification for the needs.
- Department heads present departmental overview at their respective standing committee's budget meeting.

Optimize Public Engagement:

- Change the format of the department presentations/public testimony:
 - **Option 1:** Hold all departmental presentations scheduled on a given agenda first, followed by public testimony. (Continue the practice of holding a public hearing on multiple days over which the number of departments are split.)
 - **Option 2:** Hold departmental presentations and public testimony on separate evenings (e.g., one or two meetings for department heads and one hearing for public testimony).
- Hold a separate public hearing for HHN departments at the AEC.

Provide for County Executive Involvement at the DCHS budget presentation meeting with the County Board (departmental requests are for County Executive consideration in budget proposal development). Invite the County Executive to be present and provide remarks alongside the DCHS Director, as previously practiced years ago.

Chapter 7 Revisions (requires a 2/3 vote of the board, except at the County Board's organizational meeting in April of even-numbered years when rule changes require a simple majority):

- Require each standing committee to schedule at least one meeting to consider budget proposals (two are currently required). Committees can hold more than one meeting if needed, but it would not be required.
- Public comment limited to three minutes at public hearings related to the budget.