

Fair Access Committee for the Western County
FY 2024 Budget Proposal

Overview

This budget proposal requests a total of **\$95,000** for the work of the Fair Access Committee. It lays out what its main tasks will be for the coming Fiscal Year. We may need to shift focus as the year goes forward and as developments occur in the council and in other policy making bodies we influence. This happened last year as White's Ferry grew in prominence. That is the nature of the policy process, but our committee will, as always, keep the Commission informed of new developments and of needed changes in budget priorities to reflect any proposed or new initiatives. **The key to the success of the Committee has been community engagement and continually being a presence in major county and state policy and budget activities.** We have gotten notice and influence by regularly participating in the policy process with thoughtful input and testimony. We did not engage as much on social media as much this year, which is important to council staff in particular. A part of the budget proposal is for this purpose in the coming year. We also now have both more council members to influence – 11 versus 9 – and six new members who were just elected. We will need to spend a lot of time getting to know them and they us.

Summary of Key Initiatives and Activities for 2022-23 (As of January, 2023)

- Testified twice before BOE in support of expanded gym and new Wellness Center.
- Testified before the Council in support of budget requests for an enclosed pool, community center POR funding, White's Ferry operational support, expanded gym and Wellness Center.
- Joined coalition supporting Wellness Centers in all high schools and testified in support of legislation to build Centers.
- Successful Poolesville Day Breakfast with 40 candidates and electeds from state and county.
- Partnered with WUMCO to help sponsor Poolesville Day Health Fair.
- Sponsored, in partnership with PACC, three candidate debates for District 2 candidates, At Large Council candidates and County Executive candidates. Total of 15 candidates appeared.
- Helped plan and support PHS groundbreaking ceremony and after party/reception at Locals for political attendees.
- Sponsored holiday social attended by County Executive, several council members, District 15 members.
- Conducted 3 Muster campaigns (our email advocacy program) In 2022 with the following results:
 - New Gym for Poolesville High School, 304 advocates sending 2128 unique emails to MCPS BOE members.

- Finish the job! PHS students deserve a gym comparable to other high school gyms, 81 advocates sending 410 unique emails to MCPS BOE members
- Rally to reopen White's Ferry, 137 advocates sending a 2070 unique emails to County council and state delegates.
- We currently have 1,462 contacts (advocates) in our Muster database.
- Published Whites Ferry Editorial in Montgomery Perspectives and Letter to the Editor on the Ferry in the Post.
- Sponsored Rally on the Ferry to spur action by county leaders.
- Made several letter mailings for holiday greetings to members, to submit budget proposal, to inform them of key events coming up (five mailings).
- Continuing and ongoing email contacts with key members of the Council.
- Participated in regular calls with the council leadership and District 15 members regarding White's Ferry.

Key Goals

- *Work to protect project funding for Poolesville High School.* While we have secured an overall budget for the project, it is not uncommon for funds to be shifted and repurposed and we cannot assume the budget will not be subject to challenges. We will also need to push, if necessary, for any funding needed to ensure construction of the expanded gym and the Wellness Center. Preliminary budget figures from the county already show that this will likely be a much more contentious year than in the recent past and while it is unlikely we would see cuts to the high school project, it is not out of the question to see projects stretched out or delayed;
- *Promote and communicate a vision for the Western County that ensures equity in the services and facilities* that are made available by state, local and commercial entities in an ongoing effort to enrich the lives of all area residents, including white papers, messaging documents and presentations as needed;
- *Engage the Western County community in promoting the needs of our area* by effective communication, supporting informative events, and outreach to local community groups;
- *Continue ongoing communication and outreach efforts* to ensure that political leaders at all levels are aware of and do not ignore the needs of Western County residents, and do not deny them the services and programs that are provided to other residents in the county;
- *Promote county funding to place a "bubble" over the swimming pool* and allow it to be used as a year-round facility to benefit our swim team, seniors, families and people needing therapy for injury recovery;
- *Promote improvements in White's Ferry* that would require funding from the two counties affected as per the Report on White's Ferry which discusses a range of improvements that will help update the Ferry and improve its efficiency and safety;
- *Push for funding to design and build the community center;* and
- *Promote a new understanding of the economic, business and social structures of the Western County.* The Western County simply does not fit the metrics often used in the rest of the much more populated, suburban/urban county. We need to educate county

and state leaders about how our economy, businesses and social structures work and how they can support them to ensure a better life and a more thriving Western County.

Budget Programs

- Political Outreach Program
 - *Poolesville Day Breakfast and Booth Support* – Funds to purchase reserve space, cater the event, print signs, prepare printed signs/literature, award “Champion of the Western County” - **\$19,000**
 - *Muster Email Outreach Program* – Funds to continue supporting the Muster Email program which enhances the political impact of residents from our area and strengthens our voice with political leaders - **\$3,500**
 - *Promotion of the Naming of Major Facilities at the School* – Promote major event at the high school to highlight the naming of the gymnasium and the sports field in honor of coaching leaders from the school’s past. The event(s) would include catering for light snacks, professional videotaping and editing of the event into one 1-2 minute video, press and media promotion – **\$2,500**
 - *Celebration Event at White’s Ferry* (Either its reopening or an announcement about major improvements in the roadway and Ferry operational technology) - The event would include catering for light snacks, professional videotaping and editing of the event into one 1-2 minute video, press and media promotion – **\$2,500**
 - *Major Forum About the Economy, Business and Social Structures of the Western County Works and What to do to Help It Thrive* – Sound system for event, PR promoting and media promotion, catering with light snacks, professional video of the event, social media promotion - **\$2,500**

- Ongoing Media/Communications Support - Fovndry Consulting Contract
 - Monthly meeting attendance and minutes support, drafting and posting monthly social media content development, ongoing news media writing and outreach and interview/story coordination and placement on current topics (i.e., release of the FAC Health White Paper), paid media placement coordination (digital-Facebook and Plenty magazine), Muster content writing and support, strategic communication counsel/idea sharing, ongoing communications with Committee (billed by the hour) - **\$60,000**
 - Website support, digital and marketing/graphic design/printing projects (as needed) – billed by the hour - **\$5,000** (does not include out of pocket costs)