

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
REAL PROPERTY TAX APPEALS COMMISSION



April 20, 2015

Councilmember Jack Evans
Chair, Committee on Finance and Revenue
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Councilmember Evans:

I am writing to provide responses to the Real Property Tax Appeals Commission (RPTAC) FY 2016 Budget questions. Please see those responses below.

- 1 Please list all program enhancements, technical adjustments, and reductions included within the FY16 budget. Please break down these costs by program. In addition, please provide a narrative description and rationale for each, along with associated dollar amounts and FTEs (if applicable).

The Real Property Tax Appeals Commission (RPTAC) has an FY 2016 proposed budget of \$1,636,856 which is a decrease of \$113,534 from the FY 2015 approved budget. The agency had no other enhancement requests, technical adjustments or reductions to its budget.

- 2 Please provide a list of all projects for which your agency currently has capital funds available, or for which capitals funds are requested in FY16. Please include in this list a description of each project, the amount of capital funds available for each project, a status report on each project, and planned remaining spending on the project. If capital funds have been reduced for a given project, please state the effect of the reduction.

RPTAC does not have any active budgeted capital funds or active capital projects.

- 3 Please provide a list of all space that will be used by the Agency, including: facility name, location, square footage, description, leased/owned designation, rent, and other fixed costs that are included in the cost of rent (utilities, security, etc.). Please note any space changes.

RPTAC occupies approximately 4,991 square feet of finished office space which is located on the 3rd floor (360N) at 441 4th Street, NW (One Judiciary Square). The partitioned space consists of three (3) hearing rooms, ten (10) private offices, one (1) kitchenette/lunch room, one (1) file room, one (1) general office area with four

cubicles, and a general waiting area with receptionist desk. The rent and utility expenses are paid by Central Management (DGS).

- 4 Will the proposed FY16 budget allow the agency to meet all statutory mandates? If not, please explain.

The FY 2016 proposed operating budget for the RPTAC will allow it to meet its required statutory mandates. These mandates include the staffing of the Commission with a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and six full-time Commissioners at an anticipated cost of \$799,028.16 for salaries and fringe benefits. In addition, the proposed budget will also fund the stipends for eight part-time Commissioners at an anticipated cost of \$270,000.

- 5 What does the caseload look like thus far, and/or your predictions for caseload?

According to a count provided by the Office of Tax & Revenue of the 1st level appeals as of April 20, 2015, and based on historical practices, RPTAC is expecting about 5000 appeals for TY 2016. This represents an increase of approximately 500 appeals over last year's caseload.

- 6 How many full or part time commissioner positions are currently vacant? Have an expiring term in 2016?

There are two Commissioner positions that are currently vacant – 1 full time Commissioner and 1 part-time Commissioner. There is one part-time Commissioner with an expiring term in 2016.

- 7 Is there cost savings that could be realized from the projected increase in the percentage of cases filed electronically and decisions published on the RPTAC website? If so, please provide an estimated amount.

The benefit of the electronic filing is more in terms of convenience to the filer and the reduction of paper. The cost saving is to the Petitioner because if a case is filed with hard copies, then the Petitioner must file an original and 3 copies of everything that is filed. Filing electronically will save the Petitioner the costs of making, in some instances, several hundred copies depending upon the size of the filing and the number of exhibits.

- 8 Please explain and provide a listing of the proposed \$142,248 reduction in nonpersonal services.

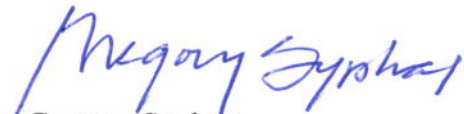
The reduction in nonpersonal services is being spread across the areas of supplies, contractual services -office support, equipment, and document management.

- 9 What is new for FY 2016? What, if anything, is being discontinued? Being revised?

There are no projected changes for FY 2016. We plan to continue to encourage the use of electronic filing by our Petitioners; offering a new round of training classes starting June/July. Additionally, we are continuing to seek ways to make our website more robust and user friendly.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to questions pertaining to the FY 2016 budget. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Gregory Syphax
Chairperson