

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
REAL PROPERTY TAX APPEALS COMMISSION



April 2, 2019

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 2020 Budget questions. Please see those responses below.

1. **Please list all program enhancements, technical adjustments, and reductions included within the FY 2020 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). Be sure to include in your response the reclassification of one Full-Time Equivalent position from temporary to continuing full-time status.**

Response: The Real Property Tax Appeals Commission's (RPTAC) proposed FY 2020 gross budget is \$1,784,120, which represents an overall 1.2 percent increase over its FY 2019 approved gross budget of \$1,763,225. RPTAC's proposed Local funds budget reflects a net personal services increase of \$28,352 across multiple programs to support salary steps and Fringe Benefit adjustments. RPTAC's Local funds budget proposal includes a reduction of \$7,458 in the Real Property Appeals Process program to partially offset projected increases in personal services. This adjustment reflects anticipated savings in Part-Time Commissioners' stipends. The budget is comprised entirely of Local funds.

2. **Will the proposed FY 2020 budget allow the agency to meet all statutory mandates? If not, please explain.**

Response: The Commission's proposed operating budget of \$1,784,120.00 should be adequate for RPTAC to meet its statutory mandates.

3. What does the caseload look like thus far for FY 2019, and what are your predictions, if any, for the caseload for the remaining FY 2019?

Response: For Tax Year 2019 (season ended February 1, 2019), the Commission processed a total of 4,577 cases (4,552 valuation appeals) – 3,490 Class 1 Residential valuation cases, 1056 Class 2 Commercial valuation cases and, 3 Class 3 Vacant classification valuation cases; 3 Class 4 Blight Classification cases; 21 Classification cases and 4 Homestead cases. This caseload was lighter than Tax Year 2018 by 526 cases. The Commission received a total of 74 requests (1.6% of valuation cases) for rehearing/corrected decisions – 34 requests for a re-hearing have been granted, 35 have been denied, and 5 required corrected decisions. Re-hearings will be held in late April and early May.

4. How many full or part time commissioner positions are currently vacant? How many positions have an expiring term in the remainder of 2019 or during 2020? Are there challenges associated with identifying qualified commissioners who are willing to serve on a part time basis? Please discuss and provide numbers regarding the balance of commissioners with commercial real property experience versus residential.

Response: There is one Part-Time Commissioner vacancy. There are two Full-Time Commissioners and one Part-Time Commissioner whose terms expire on April 30, 2019 and one Part-Time Commissioner whose term expires on April 30, 2020.

5. What is new for FY 2020? What, if anything, is being discontinued? Being revised?

Response: No significant changes or revisions are expected during FY 2020.

6. Your Agency Performance Plan activities include having Commissioners perform market research and data gathering on at least 6 assessment neighborhoods (Objective 2, page B-112). What is the timeline of this project, and will the information assembled be available for public viewing on your website?

Response: Now that we have responded to the Petitioners' requests for rehearing and corrected decisions, we will begin to do our annual research and data gathering efforts. As you know, we keep track of annual changes in residential property values for single family dwellings and condominiums, and calculate the percent of increase or decrease in the average and median sale price of properties in 54 neighborhoods. We also review the sales of apartment buildings, hotels, and commercial office buildings as well. It's tedious work that I plan to start this month.

7. Your Agency Performance Plan activities include using exit surveys to solicit feedback from the public (Objective 3, page B-112). What is the timeline of this project and what is the plan to evaluate the feedback received?

Response: Beginning in FY 2019 and continuing in FY 2020 the agency will use Survey Monkey to solicit feedback from Petitioners. The survey questions seek to identify areas

in which the Commission can improve its operations and the way in which hearings are conducted.

8. Will the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget allow the Agency to meet all statutory mandates? If not, please explain.

Response: The Commission's proposed operating budget of \$1,784,120.00 should be adequate for RPTAC to meet its statutory mandates.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to questions pertaining to the oversight of the FY 2020 budget. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Gregory Syphax,
Chairperson