

**GET THE FACTS
GIVE YOUR INPUT
Help Us Balance The Budget**



The City's Financial Challenges Community Advisory Group (CAG), as a whole, represents:

- 1) Diversity of perspective
- 2) Community connections
- 3) Broad and varied work and life experience

	Name <i>(alphabetical)</i>
1	Anderl, Lisa
2	Baidwan, Nikki
3	Baumgarten, Jason
4	Cartwright, Heather
5	Cassan, Doris
6	Conradt, Jon
7	Eanes, Jim
8	Ginn, Rand
9	Griesse, Susan
10	Harper, Bob
11	Harrington, Jonathan
12	Hunkapiller, Tim
13	Jahnke, El
14	Kavalok, Elaine
15	Lavin, Amy
16	McCarthy, Jodi
17	Meagley, Leslie
18	Moreman, Terry
19	Reynolds, Craig
20	Scherzo, John
21	Stovall, Alison
22	Thomas, Brian
23	Wong, Kwan

❖ Donna Colosky, MISD Superintendent/School District Liaison

www.mercergov.org/FinancialChallenges



CHARTER for the Financial Challenges Community Advisory Group

Purpose

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) will review and help the City determine the best way to address its projected budget deficits in 2019-2024.

The primary goal of the CAG will be to provide a recommendation to the City Manager regarding a proposal to place an operations levy on the November 2018 ballot, which would maintain funding for parks, recreation, and community services; and/or a capital levy to address deferred maintenance and other infrastructure improvements.

The CAG will explore various solutions, including reducing service levels, increasing tax revenues, and considering alternative service delivery options. Also, the CAG will review the City's capital needs and several funding options.

The CAG will closely review information provided by the City over the course of four meetings in January through April 2018. A key document to read before these monthly meetings is the Budget Message from the City's adopted 2017-2018 Budget.

Where appropriate, updated information, will be provided to the CAG at the monthly meetings. For example, the financial forecasts for the General Fund and YFS Fund have been revised since the 2017-2018 Budget Message was drafted.

If the CAG concludes that the City's current service levels exceed the needs and desires of the Mercer Island community, the City Manager would like to discuss with the CAG "guiding principles" that would guide the prioritization of services, including the reduction or elimination of services.

Ground Rules

1. **Equal Voices.** Each member is an equal participant in the process and has equal opportunity to voice opinions and contribute ideas. CAG members recognize the legitimacy of the interests, concerns and goals of others, whether or not they agree with them.

2. **Commitment to Learning.** CAG members are committed to making a special effort to listen carefully, ask pertinent questions, and educate themselves about the interests and needs of City residents. They are responsible for keeping in mind the interests of all Mercer Island residents, even as they bring their own opinions to the table or represent specific interests or positions.
3. **Speak Up.** Members are encouraged to share their thinking out loud, to get all the group's best thoughts out in the open to enrich the discussion; silence is agreement.
4. **Keep an Open Mind.** CAG members are open to learning new information and considering perspectives different from their own.
5. **Ask Questions.** Questions of clarification are encouraged. Members should speak up if they feel there is any area of confusion or more information is needed.
6. **Speak for Oneself.** CAG members may bring input from others, but it is understood that each member speaks for her/himself.
7. **Civility, Courtesy and Respect.** CAG members commit to treating each other with civility, courtesy and respect so that meetings are comfortable for all.
 - Be attentive to the speaker
 - Let others finish speaking before you begin
 - Avoid side conversations or disparaging comments
 - Focus conflicts on the issues not the personalities
 - Disagree agreeably – look for opportunities for agreement (practice “yes, and” rather than “no/yes, but”)
 - Keep mobile devices turned off and stored away
8. **Stay on Track.** In light of the limited time available to complete its work, CAG members commit to making a concerted effort to focus on the topics under discussion and work toward consensus.
9. **Strive for Consensus.** In striving for consensus, CAG members commit to actively looking for ways to find agreement.
 - Consider something that you may disagree with and consider “if” something changed how you might be able to move to consensus,
 - Put another way, if a CAG member cannot live with the direction, she/he must offer an alternative.
10. **Share Information with the Broader Community.** CAG members are encouraged to discuss the City's budget issues with Mercer Island residents outside of CAG meetings, in order to share their knowledge and bring others' opinions and perspectives back to the group.

11. **Civility in Community Conversations.** Each member who discusses the CAG's work with the broader community commits to fostering conversations that share the same courteous, civil, and constructive tone as CAG meetings.
12. **No Surprises.** Out of respect for other CAG members, any member who plans to share information with the broader community that is unexpected should first inform her/his colleagues on the CAG.
13. **Come Prepared.** CAG members accept the responsibility to come to meetings prepared for the discussions by reading any materials provided in advance. Members are also encouraged to ask questions between meetings and review the information provided in response by the City or other sources.
14. **Attend Every Meeting.** Each member commits to attend all meetings. Alternatives are not being designated in this process. If a member must miss part or all of a meeting, she/he is responsible for asking another committee member to represent her/his interests or position at the meeting. The member may also submit written comments that will be shared with the group.
15. **Subgroup Meetings.** If a majority of the CAG approves, subgroups of 3-4 members can be assigned to conduct more detailed study of specific areas of interest (ex: the City's budget forecast details, or staffing costs) between CAG meetings. City staff are available to meet with subgroup(s) to provide information and answer questions. Subgroups will report back to the full CAG at the next meeting.
16. **Feedback Encouraged.** Members are welcome and encouraged to submit feedback to the facilitator or the City regarding the meetings, either after meetings or between them, via email or phone.
17. **Accountability.** Members of the CAG commit to helping hold each other accountable for following the Ground Rules.

Role of Facilitator

The facilitator's role is to keep the meeting running smoothly and on time, keep the discussion focused and the format interactive, and ensure the meetings follow the Ground Rules outlined above.

The facilitator is a neutral party in CAG discussions. She strives to help all CAG members participate in the discussion and reach consensus if possible, without advocating for a specific outcome.

The facilitator will write drafts of the CAG's recommendations and provide a final version that is approved by the CAG to the City Manager.

Role of City Staff

Through the course of the CAG's five meetings, members will hear from City staff about the City's budget situation and details of City finances. City staff will play an informational role but are not considered members of the CAG. They will:

- Kick-off the first meeting with welcome and introductions
- Make presentations to the group, providing subject matter expertise, analysis and insight
- Answer questions submitted by CAG members during and in between meetings, and meet with CAG subgroups as needed
- Encourage discussion of new ideas and suggestions by providing information and/or perspectives on City government
- Help with flip-charting and note-taking at CAG meetings.

Role of City Council

City Councilmembers may elect to attend CAG meetings but will do so as observers (see below) rather than taking an active role.

Role of Observers

All Mercer Islanders are welcome to attend and observe the CAG meetings. Their role is limited to observation; there will not be a public comment period. Observers are encouraged to provide comments to the members during breaks or outside of meetings.

We will also offer observers opportunities to put comments in writing. If hearing from them during a meeting would benefit the CAG, the facilitator will call upon them to speak after receiving permission from the CAG members. Observers need to abide by the committee's Ground Rules.

Consensus & Recommendations

The CAG is expected to represent a wide range of Islander interests, perspectives, and opinions. Decisions on recommendations will be made by the consensus of the group.

If some CAG members find they cannot support an emerging recommendation of the entire group, they are obligated to make their concerns known, and the rest of the group is obligated to listen with an interest in resolving them. Everyone is expected to try work to address the concerns, including asking the concerned party (parties) to clarify the underlying interests or discuss other dynamics that could be interfering with an agreement. All parties are obligated to try to find an alternative that meets the interests of the concerned party (parties) as well as their own.

If it is not possible to reach consensus on particular recommendations, the potential options for resolving the issue will be documented and included in the Committee's report as a minority opinion.

CAG Workplan

Date and Time	Topics
Wednesday, November 15, 2017 6:30-8:30pm	Welcome & Introductions Why We Are Here (Background/Charter) Identify Key Questions & Interests
Saturday, January 6, 2018 9:00am-12:30pm	Operating Budget: Challenges, Options and Group Discussion & Questions
Monday, February 5, 2018 6:30-8:30pm	Operating Budget: Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations
Saturday, March 3, 2018 9:00am-12:30pm	Capital Budget: Challenges, Options and Group Discussion & Questions. Preliminary Recommendations for Capital Budget.
Monday, April 2, 2018 6:30-8:30pm	Discussion and Final Recommendations on Operating and Capital Budget Challenges