

MEMORANDUM

April 25, 2019

TO: Education and Culture Committee
FROM: Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst *GS*
SUBJECT: FY20 Operating Budget: Historical Activities Non-Departmental Account (NDA)
PURPOSE: Review and make recommendation to the Council

Those expected for this worksession:

Matthew Logan, Executive Director, Montgomery County Historical Society (MCHS)
Pofen Salem, Office of Management and Budget

Budget Summary

The Executive recommends \$150,000 for the Historical Activities NDA, an increase of \$15,000 or 11.1% from FY19.

Council Staff Recommendation

Approve the Executive's FY20 recommendation of \$150,000 for the Historical Activities NDA.

I. Budget Overview

See the Executive's recommendation on ©1. **The Executive is recommending an increase of \$15,000 compared to FY19.** This is the third annual increase proposed by the Executive. The table below details the County's funding history for MCHS since FY16.

FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20 (recommended)	% change FY19-20	% change FY16-20
\$77,250	\$77,250	\$110,000	\$135,000	\$150,000	+11.1%	+94.2%

MCHS states that the recommended increase will provide stabilization to personnel costs due to a loss in donations. Below is MCHS's proposed FY20 distribution for the County's recommended

funding in comparison to its FY19 and FY18 allotment. The County’s recommended funding will support approximately 28.4% of the total estimated FY20 MCHS budget of \$527,685.¹

MCHS’s Proposed Allotment of County Funding

	FY18	FY19	FY20
Librarian	\$12,500	\$22,500	\$40,000
Archivist	\$12,500	\$17,500	N/A
Curator	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$10,000
Outreach Manager	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
Communications Manager	N/A	N/A	\$10,000
Executive Director	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$45,000
Utilities/Supplies	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$25,000
Total	\$110,000	\$135,000	\$150,000

Note: The Archivist and Librarian were combined in FY20.

Council staff recommends approval of \$150,000 for this NDA.

II. Organization Overview

MCHS’s mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and share the histories of all of Montgomery County’s citizens. The organization was founded in 1944 and has served the community through its various activities and programs. MCHS operates two museums and manages a 9,500-piece collection of historic artifacts. See MCHS accomplishments for FY19 on ©2-3.

This packet contains:

Executive FY20 recommendation for MCHS	<u>Circle #</u> 1
MCHS FY19 accomplishments	2

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¹ This is a draft budget; the MCHS board adopts a budget later in the year.

☀ Historical Activities

This NDA provides funding for the Historical Society to support the Society's Education Program staff, educational and outreach programs for County residents, and to maintain the Historical Society's research library and museums.

FY20 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY19 Approved	135,000	0.00
Increase Cost: Operating Expenses	15,000	0.00
FY20 Recommended	150,000	0.00

Accomplishments for FY19-to-date

Montgomery History prides itself on maximizing its limited resources by developing programs and experiences that tell important stories, utilize strategic partnerships, reach new audiences, and create opportunities for further exchange and discussion. We are proud of the fact that people outside the organization often tell us we “punch above our weight.”

Here are a handful of highlights from the first 9 months of FY19:

Montgomery County History Conference

Co-hosted with Montgomery College, this annual gathering has nearly doubled its audience in the past 4 years by providing provocative, thoughtful, and entertaining programs on a wide range of historical topics. The 2019 event, featuring sessions on postbellum race relations, the River Road African American community, historic cemeteries, and jazz, among many others, drew the largest and most diverse audience to date!

Montgomery County History Day

In partnership with MCPS, we hosted this spring competition for middle and high school students in March 2019. Over 900 students participated. We are making plans for the 2020 event when the number of competitors will at least triple after MCPS, upon our recommendation, added it to the 7th grade accelerated learning curriculum.

Speakers Bureau

Due to the addition of new program offerings and new venues, our Speakers Bureau is on track for its busiest year ever. In fact, this past February (Black History Month) was the most active in the program’s history!

Exhibits

Last fall we partnered with VisArts and the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association to help curate and host a panel discussion for the exhibit *Deep Flash: On Art and Transformation*.

From January through April of this year we have hosted *Migrate With Us*, a collaborative exhibit in partnership with 75 Rockville High School students. Montgomery History helped the students find their voices to tell the stories of how their families came to settle in Montgomery County from all over the world.

Social Justice and Racial Equity

In the wake of the controversy surrounding the name of E. Brooke Lee Middle School, we have provided research services to MCPS to help evaluate the list of 53 names that have been proposed for new schools to ensure the people honored share the values of the school system and the community. We will soon begin an evaluation of the names of the existing schools named for local figures.

Montgomery History has been appointed to the County's Remembrance and Reconciliation Commission to ensure that its extensive historic resources are made fully available to the commission and to document the challenging process of engaging the community in very difficult discussions.

Historic Beall-Dawson Restoration

We have developed a Landscape Concept Plan for the Beall-Dawson campus to make it more accessible, engaging, active, and inviting. We envision it becoming a popular site for heritage tourism (telling the unique story of slave-ownership in a Unionist household), community events, and private functions. We are also in the process of securing a consultant to develop architectural and engineering plans for the full restoration of the house.

Library and Archives

In order to make accessible objects that could not otherwise be displayed due to their fragile condition, we developed an online exhibit called *History Between the Pages* which features over 40 Bibles in our care, including one dating back to the 1720s. Work is underway to develop two more online exhibits in FY20,

We delivered our Montgomery County Sentinel microfilm to the University of Maryland's Digital Conversion Center where they are being digitized. This will enable all extant issues of the Sentinel from 1855-1969 to be fully keyword-searchable online by 2020.

Events and Outreach

We continue to offer programs and activities to appeal to a broad cross-section of the county. Beginning last fall, we have been offering "Tuesday Talks," an informal speakers series from our Rockville campus. Our historic typewriter and telephone "pop-up" exhibits have been installed for a day or two at a time in locations across the county. We have offered special curatorial tours and talks in Rockville and at other museums. Our ghost tours in October sold out in days, bringing a brand new audience to our work. And we launched a "History & Nature Speaker Series" that is also very popular and helping to grow our base.

Of course, there has been much more including the collection, transcription, and digitization of a number of oral histories (including Mr. Edgar Dove of Scotland), significant planning for our 75th anniversary (big events coming June 2 and the weekend of June 29-30), and planning for major programs in FY20 and beyond (in partnership with the Commission for Women as well as the Maryland Historical Trust and the Smithsonian for a symposium on the "Freedom House" at the National Museum of African American History and Culture).