

Memo

To: Mr. John R. Pick, Executive Officer
From: J. H. Cawley *JRC*
Date: November 17, 2004
Re: Tax Differential Explanation

Under Maryland State law, municipalities have the opportunity to ask the county, within which they are located, for a tax setoff, or a tax differential. A tax differential is a way for Counties in Maryland to compensate municipalities for services not provided by the county in those municipalities. This is done by a tax setoff, either reducing the county tax rate in that municipality, or making a payment directly to the municipality for those services.

Attached is a resolution which serves to comply with the law and give timely notice that Salisbury wants to meet with Wicomico County to provide evidence why a tax differential is justified. Attached also is a letter from the Mayor which serves as our tax differential request for this year.

Every year since 1999 the City has formally asked the County for a tax differential, and every year since 1999 we have been denied. By state law there are eight counties that are mandated to make a tax setoff. They are the high density counties (with the one exception of Allegany county that has fewer residents per square mile than Wicomico). In the remaining counties the tax setoff is voluntary, and Wicomico is among them. However, many counties less densely populated than Wicomico, such as Caroline, Garrett and Talbot still voluntarily grant a tax setoff because they have determined that it is the right thing to do.

Salisbury is the only City our size in the State of Maryland not receiving a tax setoff from the County. Salisbury is the 11th largest city in Maryland and all other cities in the top 20 get either a rebate or a lower tax rate.

A tax setoff is the norm for most counties and larger communities. For example, all towns in Calvert county receive a 37.6% reduction of county taxes. All town in Harford County receive a 14.3% reduction of county taxes. Annapolis receives a 42% reduction. County taxpayers in Preston and Ridgely each receive a 13% reduction from Caroline County property taxes. Salisbury has computed our fair share to be about 10%.

City of Salisbury
Tax Differential Study, Page 1
Setoff Effective 7/1/2005

Description	Non-City		City
	Actual Cost	Taxpayer Share	Taxpayer Share
Fire Department			
<u>City of Salisbury contributions</u>			
Fire Department	\$ 708,422	\$ 575,179	\$ 133,243
Ambulance	\$ 111,006	\$ 90,128	\$ 20,878
Hazardous Material Emergency	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<u>Volunteer Companies</u>		\$ -	\$ -
Fire Department	\$ 1,162,000	\$ 943,447	\$ 218,553
Ambulance	\$ 738,000	\$ 599,194	\$ 138,806
Workers Comp Insurance	\$ 68,700	\$ 55,779	\$ 12,921
Miscellaneous	\$ 316	\$ 257	\$ 59
Hepatitis vaccine	\$ 1,315	\$ 1,068	\$ 247
Total	\$ 2,789,759	\$ 2,265,051	\$ 524,708
Sheriff Department			
Sheriff - Salary	\$ 78,979	\$ 64,124	\$ 14,855
Salaries	\$ 4,384,177	\$ 3,559,586	\$ 824,591
Less: Sheriff's Fees	\$ (403,088)	\$ (327,274)	\$ (75,814)
Less State Grants	\$ (780,452)	\$ (633,662)	\$ (146,790)
Less Board of Education Grant	\$ (74,263)	\$ (60,295)	\$ (13,968)
Operating	\$ 413,537	\$ 335,758	\$ 77,779
Special Investigation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Outlay	\$ 136,702	\$ 110,991	\$ 25,711
Total	\$ 3,755,592	\$ 3,049,227	\$ 706,365
Net Law Enforcement @ 75%	\$ 2,816,694	\$ 2,286,920	\$ 529,774
Protection of Animals			
Dog Control	\$ 204,799	\$ 166,280	\$ 38,519
Less Animal Licenses	\$ (2,640)	\$ (2,143)	\$ (497)
Humane Society Total	\$ 202,159	\$ 164,136	\$ 38,023
Public Safety Building - Facility Expenditures	\$ 65,845	\$ 53,461	\$ 12,384
Public Safety Total	\$ 5,874,457	\$ 4,769,568	\$ 1,104,889
Source: Wicomico County FY2003 Audited Financial Statements			

City of Salisbury
Tax Differential Study, Page 2
Setoff Effective 7/1/2005

Description	Non-City		City
	Actual Cost	Taxpayer Share	Taxpayer Share
Recreation and Culture			
Department of Recreation and Parks			
Salaries			
Salaries- overtime and part-time	\$ 1,054,092	\$ 855,835	\$ 198,257
Less Recreation and Parks Revenue	\$ (30,287)	\$ (24,591)	\$ (5,696)
Operating	\$ 369,134	\$ 299,706	\$ 69,428
Capital Outlay	\$ 23,500	\$ 19,080	\$ 4,420
Total Department of Recreation and Parks	\$ 1,416,439	\$ 1,150,030	\$ 266,409
Total - Public Safety and Recreation and Culture	\$ 7,290,896	\$ 5,919,599	\$ 1,371,297
Overhead at \$250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 202,979	\$ 47,021
Grand Total - Duplicate Services	\$ 7,540,896	\$ 6,122,578	\$ 1,418,318
Source: Wicomico County FY2003 Audited Financial Statements			

City of Salisbury
Tax Differential Study - Page 3
Effective 7/1/2005

TOTAL REVENUE			\$ 96,303,591
LESS:			
Intergovernmental - program specific revenue	\$ (1,339,441)		
Service Charges and Fees	\$ (6,580,183)		
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ (7,919,624)	\$ (7,919,624)	
BASE REVENUE			\$ 88,383,967
PROPERTY TAX REVENUE			\$ 47,740,221
PERCENTAGE OF PROPERTY TAX TO BASE REVENUE			54.0%
GRAND TOTAL -PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC WORKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE PARALLEL SERVICES			\$ 7,540,896
PORTION OF PARALLEL SERVICES ATTRIBUTABLE TO PROPERTY TAX			\$ 4,073,183
COUNTY ASSESSABLE BASE 2003 IN HUNDREDS			\$ 40,636,089
COUNTY TAX RATE REDUCTION IN SALISBURY			\$ 0.100
CITY ASSESSABLE BASE FOR 2003 IN HUNDREDS			\$ 14,149,846
COUNTY TAX RATE REDUCTION IN SALISBURY (REBATE)			\$ 1,418,318
	<u>Real Estate</u>	<u>Personal Prop.</u>	
County Tax Rate for Taxpayers before Differential	\$ 1.047	\$ 2.617	
New Tax Rate for City Taxpayers	\$ 0.961	\$ 2.402	
New Tax Rate for Non-City Taxpayers	\$ 1.101	\$ 2.753	
Source: Wicomico County FY2003 Audited Financial Statements			

RESOLUTION NO. 1171

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY,
MARYLAND ACCEPTING A TAX DIFFERENTIAL STUDY AND AUTHORIZING
SUBMITTING A REQUEST TO WICOMICO COUNTY FOR A TAX
DIFFERENTIAL**

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the State of Maryland has authorized counties, and the cities located therein, to meet and discuss tax setoffs of county property taxes to recognize that certain tax supported county services are not provided within the incorporated areas of these counties; and

WHEREAS, the City of Salisbury desires to arrange such a discussion with Wicomico County, and

WHEREAS, the City of Salisbury Finance Department has prepared a study to determine whether there was a basis for the City to request a tax setoff from Wicomico County, and

WHEREAS, the Finance Department has completed such a study and has determined that the City is entitled to request that the County reduce its property tax rate for property within the City limits by \$.086 per \$100 of assessed valuation, and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the study fairly and accurately sets forth the computations for a tax setoff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Salisbury City Council hereby accepts the study prepared by the City Finance Department, dated November 17, 2004, and, on the basis of this study, authorizes submitting a request for a tax differential to Wicomico County in the form of the attached letter to the Wicomico County Council.

THE ABOVE RESOLUTION was introduced and duly passed at a meeting of the Council of the City of Salisbury, Maryland held on November 22, 2004 and is to become effective immediately upon adoption.

ATTEST:

Brenda J. Colegrove
CITY CLERK

Michael P. Dunn
PRESIDENT, CITY COUNCIL

Approved by me this _____ day of _____, 2004

Barrie P. Tilghman
MAYOR, City of Salisbury

City of Salisbury



BARRIE P. TILGHMAN
MAYOR
JOHN R. PICK
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

MARYLAND

125 NORTH DIVISION STREET
SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21801-4940
Tel.: (410) 548-3100
FAX: (410) 548-3102

November 18, 2004

Wicomico County Council
P.O. Box 870
Salisbury, MD 21803-0870

Dear Council Members:

Under the authority of Section 6-306 of the Tax - Property Article of the Maryland State Code, please be advised that the City of Salisbury proposes that it be granted a property tax setoff by Wicomico County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005. The desired level of such setoff is the proportion of the County's property tax rate which represents expenditures on the following parallel services: fire, police, animal control, and recreation and culture.

In support of this request, the City submits the following:

1) A description of the scope and nature of the services or programs provided by the City in lieu of similar services or programs provided by the County.

A) Fire—The Salisbury Fire Department provides residents in the City of Salisbury with 24 hour protection and emergency services. The Salisbury Fire Department has 37 career and 105 volunteer firefighters. The City of Salisbury Fire Department also provides fire protection outside the City to the Fire District (48 miles). A portion of the cost of providing fire protection outside the City is offset by contributions from Wicomico County under an existing agreement.

B) Police - The Salisbury Police Department is a full-service, accredited law enforcement agency, which provides an urban-level of police protection to the area located within the Salisbury city limits. In addition, to the basic patrol function, the Salisbury Police Department also provides a number of special services, including bike patrols, foot patrols, horse patrols, substations, tactical unit, negotiators, and victim-witness assistance. With the exception of back-up

assistance, the Salisbury Police Department handles all calls for police service within the City limits.

The Wicomico County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to the unincorporated portions of the County. Since these services are not provided to the area located within the City limits, City taxpayers do not receive a benefit from these expenditures, but do pay a portion of the costs through their County tax bill. In addition to law enforcement the Sheriff's Department provides constitutionally mandated services such as court security, and legal document service, which benefit all County residents. A study prepared by the Institute for Government Services and previously forwarded to the County determined that 25% of the cost of the Sheriff's Department was attributable to these duties. A subsequent work session between the City and County should develop an allocation percentage; until then we have assumed the 25% allocation used in prior years.

C) Animal Control - The Salisbury Police Department provides animal control services to the area located within the Salisbury city limits. The Wicomico County Humane Society provides animal control services to the unincorporated areas of the County, under an agreement with the County. Since these services are not provided within the City limits, City taxpayers pay a portion of these costs but receive no benefit.

D) Recreation and Culture - The Salisbury Department of Public Works maintains a system of City owned parks, some of which are used by the Wicomico County Department of Parks and Recreation to provide recreational programming. The Wicomico County Department of Parks and Recreation provides parks maintenance services to county owned parks throughout the unincorporated areas of the county. Recreation and Culture is another area of duplication of services.

2) Financial records and other documentation regarding municipal revenues and expenditures.

In prior years, the City provided a copy of a report titled *Property Tax Setoffs for the City of Salisbury, Maryland*, which had been prepared for the City by the Institute For Governmental Service. Since you provided the City with the FY 2003 Wicomico County Financial Statements last year, we have updated our request using your financial report. Enclosed is a Tax Differential Study worksheet, enumerating those costs for the aforementioned parallel services not applicable to the taxpayers of the City of Salisbury.

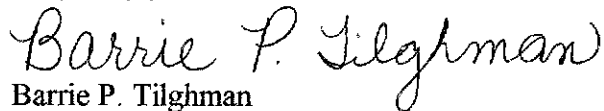
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The amount of the tax setoff proposed is equal to \$.086 on the County's tax rate, or a payment to the City from the County in the amount of \$1,418,318. The attached worksheet shows how this proposed setoff was calculated.

We request that the County provide a copy of the FY-2004 Wicomico County, Maryland Financial Statements, when they are available.

I look forward to your response and the opportunity to discuss this matter with you.

Very truly yours,



Barrie P. Tilghman
Mayor

cc: City Council Members
John R. Pick
John H. Cawley
Paul Wilber