

**MINUTES of the
DELAWARE ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Buena Vista, June 16, 2025

Attendance:

Member	Present
K. Agne	Yes
P. Anderson	Yes
C. Baker	Yes
S. Bravo	Yes
C. Davis	Yes
L. Davis	Yes
J. DiPaula	No
C. DuVilla	Yes
R. Glen	Yes
P. Gupta	No
S. Hastings	Yes
M. Houghton	Yes
M. Jackson	No
P. Key	Yes
K. Knight	Yes
T. Lawson	No
A. Levin	Yes

Member	Present
J. Manning	Yes
G. Marcozzi	Yes
B. Maxwell	No
D. Mell	Yes
R. Miller	Yes
K. Myers	Yes
T. Paradee	Yes
B. Pettyjohn	Yes
C. Postles	Yes
E. Ratledge	Yes
P. Reese	Yes
T. Shopa	Yes
M. Smith	Yes
W. Smith	Yes
P. Swain	Yes
D. Tam	No
K. Williams	Yes

Members in Attendance: 28

Members Absent: 6

Others Present:

C. Baker, K. Baranski, S. Bolden, N. Brock, V. Brennan, A. Brown, S. Constantino, F. Cooke, J. Coverdale, J. Day, J. DeChene, B. DiVirgilio, J. Edelen, J. Fedele, S. Finnigan, A. Giuttari, A. Godfrey, R. Goldsmith, S. Gonzalez, C. Haas, C. Hall, J. Haynes, J. Heller, A. Jenkins, J. Johnstone, B. Khanal, D. Killen, G. Krupanski, R. Lancaster, R. Lewis, N. Lombardo, M. Marlin, K. Maull, B. Mayrack, M. Minor-Brown, O. Montes, S. Mueller, E. Nestlerode, A. Patel, J. Patterson, S. Petrowich, J. Richards, D. Roose, P. Santo, J. Seemans, A. Shields, S. Sipple, M. Smith, S. Sokolowski, T. Strayer, K. Taylor-Roberts, (no name) Versalign, A. Visalli, A. Willey, S. Wooteen.

Opening Business: Mr. Levin called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

The minutes from the May meeting were approved as submitted.

Expenditure Forecasts:

Mr. Lombardo presented the General Fund Expenditure forecasts.

General Fund Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2025:

Mr. Lombardo reviewed the balance sheet method. He said for FY 2025, there were no changes made to the reversions or encumbered funds estimate, however there was an adjustment of \$14.3 million made to the expenditure estimate. In terms of expenditures by category, Mr. Lombardo said that there was a decrease of \$24.8 million to Grants, which reflects expenditures that were anticipated to occur in FY 2025 but are now expected in FY 2026.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept \$6,969.3 million as the Expenditure estimate for FY 2025. The estimate represents an increase of \$737.1 million (11.8%) from FY 2024.

General Fund Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2026:

Under the functional method, Mr. Lombardo noted that the FY 2026 expenditure projections incorporate Markup Budget items recently voted on by the Joint Finance Committee. In addition, Mr. Lombardo said that state salaries are expected to increase by \$147.0 million over FY 2025 due to factors such as general salary increases, collective bargaining negotiations, and Public Education Compensation Commission salary increases. Fringe healthcare is also showing growth over FY 2025, which reflects the recent Group Health Insurance Plan increase of 4.2% as voted by the State Employee Benefits Committee. Capital Outlay reflects a decrease of 13.8% over FY 2025 due to the normalization in capital spending as Bond Bill projects begin to wind down.

Mr. Ratledge inquired about the total amount of cash to the Bond Bill. Mr. Lombardo responded that the FY 2025 amount is \$427.5 million. Mr. Levin asked about what was included in the category "Fringe-Other." Mr. Lombardo stated that the category included items such as social security.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept \$7,260.7 million as the Expenditure estimate for FY 2026.

Revenue Forecasts:

Mr. Roose presented the General Fund Revenue forecasts.

Economic Outlook

There has been minimal change in the economic outlook since the May DEFAC meeting. S&P's U.S. economic outlook still calls for below trend growth due to tariffs, continuation on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, tight federal policy and weaker equity values. Unemployment is expected to rise to 4.7% by the middle of next year, which is 0.3 points lower than previously projected. The effects of the conflict in the Middle East are currently unknown but could have an impact on the economy.

Mr. Roose said that there was record tariff revenue in April of \$19.9 billion, with approximately half of that amount coming from Chinese exports. The average tariff effective rate is 7.1%. Steel/aluminum tariffs doubled to 50% on June 4th, excluding United Kingdom exports which currently remain at 25%. Mr. Roose noted that many of the tariffs are currently subject to ongoing court disputes as the legal system works to determine the extent of the President's constitutional authority in this area.

There were few notable changes for Delaware's economic outlook. One area where there was growth was in Wages and Salary, which are up from the 3.7% estimate in May to 4.5% in June for FY 2026.

General Fund Revenues:

Mr. Roose then turned to the general fund revenue forecast:

FY 2025				FY 2026			
Revenue Category	May-25	Jun-25	Change	Revenue Category	Category	May-25	Change
PIT Refunds	(324.5)	(335.0)	(10.5)	Dividends and Interest	105.7	116.7	11.0
Dividends and Interest	167.2	171.5	4.3	Bank Franchise Tax	111.1	104.7	(6.4)
Personal Income Tax	2,715.3	2,719.4	4.1	Other Revenues	85.7	86.3	0.6
Bank Franchise Tax	110.7	114.1	3.4				
Insurance Taxes	102.0	99.1	(2.9)				
Other Revenues	81.1	78.2	(2.9)				
CIT Refunds	(79.8)	(82.5)	(2.7)				
Other Refunds	(16.2)	(13.6)	2.6				
Realty Transfer Tax	238.0	236.1	(1.9)				
Uniform Commercial Code	30.0	31.7	1.7				
Hospital Board and Treatment	22.0	22.9	0.9				

For a complete listing of FY 2025 and 2026 estimates, see Table 2.

Mr. Roose recommended the above changes to the revenue forecast. There is next to no change in revenues with most revenue sources tracking to the forecast. Overall, there is a \$3.9 million reduction to the FY 2025 revenue projection. Mr. Roose noted that one outstanding issue is the Quarter 2 estimated Personal Income Tax (PIT) payments which

were due on June 16th, the day of the June DEFAC meeting. Though Quarter 1 growth was 10.5%, the forecast requires 12.4% growth in June which Mr. Roose finds reasonable given the market rebound. The largest revisions to the forecast are the PIT final payments, which are up \$11.2 million, and refunds, up \$10.5 million. Withholding is slightly below the May forecast and was reduced by \$7.1 million for June, leading to a total net reduction of \$6.4 million to PIT. Ms. Davis asked if Mr. Roose had looked at the impact of the President's One Big Beautiful Bill Act on Delaware's revenue projections. Mr. Roose responded that this legislation is not currently factored into the projections. While he is aware of the bill, it's possible it will undergo significant changes in the Senate; when it is enacted, it will be accounted for in the estimates. As the bill stands today, the income tax exemptions for overtime and tips wouldn't impact Delaware, but it's likely there will be more changes over the next few months.

There were three additional revisions made to the FY 2026 General Fund Revenue Forecast which net to a \$5.2 million increase. Mr. Roose noted that the only recommended revisions are to bank franchise tax, dividends and interest, and business and occupational fees. Ms. Davis spoke on the Dividends and Interest projection, stating that the actuals for FY 2025 were higher than anticipated but the overall outlook is healthy.

Mr. Houghton asked the committee, specifically those that are part of the Governor's Cabinet, if there was any work being done around the problem of slowing revenue and increasing expenditures. Mr. M. Smith affirmed that the Administration is aware and is looking into this.

Mr. W. Smith asked if there were any changes made to the Franchise Tax. Mr. Knight responded that they are not seeing any changes to the forecast.

Mr. Roose finished his presentation with a graph showing the contribution to General Fund growth in FY 2025 as compared to FY 2026. Ms. C. Davis asked if these projections factor in entities coming to Delaware and bringing new jobs, and if energy projects could be a potential revenue source in the future. Mr. Roose responded that job growth is implicitly factored into his projections, but that the recent announcement of Merck coming to Delaware won't impact these projections for several more years. Mr. Roose was not aware of any energy projects that could be significant revenue sources.

Mr. Levin concluded by emphasizing that the Administration and General Assembly need to work on addressing these issues.

Fiscal Year 2025 Estimate Adopted:

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept \$6,700.6 million as the revenue estimate for FY 2025. The estimate represents a decrease of \$3.9 million from the May estimate and results in bottom-line growth of 5.5%.

Fiscal Year 2026 Estimate Adopted:

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept \$6,782.9 million as the revenue estimate for FY 2026. The estimate represents an increase of \$5.2 million from the May estimate, for growth of 1.2%.

Transportation Trust Fund (TTF):

TTF—Expenditures: Ms. Giuttari presented the Transportation Trust Fund's expenditure forecast. She recommended an increase of \$25.0 million to their projected FY 2025 expenditures, primarily driven by road system projects. Mr. Levin inquired about the number of individuals that use the DelDOT shuttle service. Ms. Hastings responded that approximately 1,200 – 1,300 use it daily, but she's unsure of the split between in-state and out-of-state patrons.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept \$1,188.0 million as the FY 2025 TTF expenditure estimate (see Table 4).

TTF—Revenues: Ms. Giuttari presented the Transportation Trust Fund's revenue forecast. She recommended reducing toll road revenues by \$1.3 million due to lower traffic and enforcement and increasing investment income by \$0.9 million for an overall revenue decrease of \$0.4 million for FY 2025. Mr. Levin asked if DelDOT is noticing any slowing in federal funding. Ms. Hastings responded that most federal funds for transportation are protected, and that they're currently working with the federal government on grant funding.

All other revenues are tracking to the current forecast.

Fiscal Year 2025 Estimates:

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept \$633.1 million as the FY 2025 TTF revenue estimate.

Fiscal Year 2026 Estimates:

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept \$622.1 million as the FY 2026 TTF revenue estimate (See Table 5), which reflects an overall net decrease of \$14.7 million. This change is primarily driven by a reduction to the Motor Fuel Tax revenues. Mr. Levin asked if the revised projection accounts for DelDOT's proposed fee and toll increases. Ms. Giuttari responded that it does not. Mr. Paradee followed up by asking if the projections factor in DelDOT's fee legislation (House Bill 164). Ms. Hastings responded that it does not as the legislation has not yet passed. Once the bill is signed, they'll revise their projections.

Balance and Appropriations Worksheet:

Mr. Roose presented the Balance and Appropriations worksheet. The result of this exercise is attached as Table 3.

Other Business:

Mr. Levin shared an update on the Healthcare Spending Benchmark Subcommittee. Ms. Manning has requested additional time to put forward a recommendation due to significant changes recently made to the subcommittee membership. Mr. Levin approved the request.

Mr. Roose reviewed the Debt Authorization Limit, which is 5% of the estimated net General Fund revenue for the fiscal year. The new tax-supported debt limit for FY 2026 is \$339,145,000.

Mr. Levin announced the next (tentative) scheduled DEFAC meeting dates:

- Monday, October 20, 2025
- Monday, December 15, 2025

Public Comment:

Mr. Roose said that no member of the public has signed up for comment.

There being no further business, Mr. Levin adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Roose