

Friends of the DC Archives
Testimony on the Department of General Services
Committee on Government Operations and Facilities
FY2022 Performance Oversight Hearing
Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 9:00 AM

My name is Carl Bergman¹. I am testifying for the Friends of the DC Archives. Before I begin, I want to urge the Committee members to visit the current DC Archives. There is no better way to see what we currently have, how precious it is, and what we need to preserve its future.

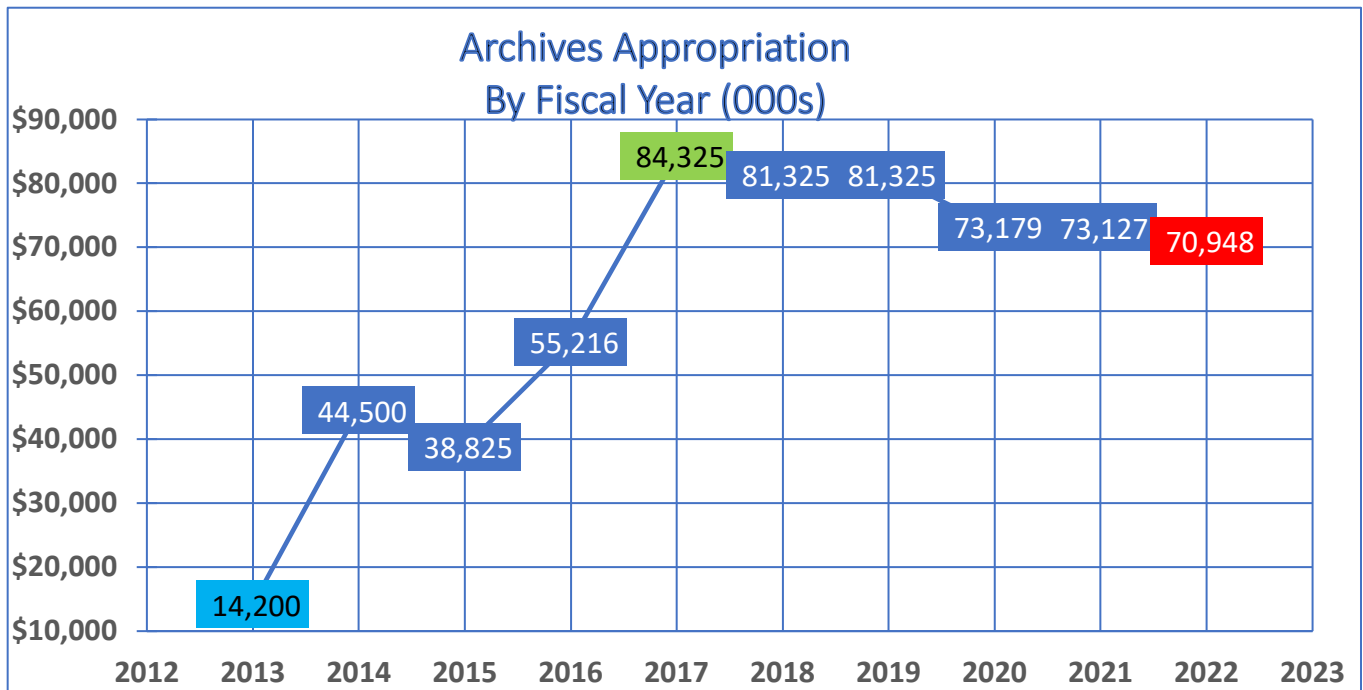
Our organization, the Friends of the DC Archives formed eight years ago to give a public voice to the city's desperate need for a modern archives facility.

As the committee is aware, the District lacks a modern Archives facility. Fortunately, the council created the Archives Advisory Group to review the facility issue. We strongly support the group and recognize the difficult path before it. The group is the single most important event in this project's long, and to a great extent, sad history.

Questions Surrounding the Archives Facility

We have testified on many occasions to the council about the building of the new archives. What we have found is that the project has numerous unanswered questions. Here are some of them:

Question 1. As the Archives Appropriation Chart below shows, the archives capital program has bounced around. In Fiscal Year 2017, it was \$84,325,000. In FY 2020, developing the facility



¹ See addendum below

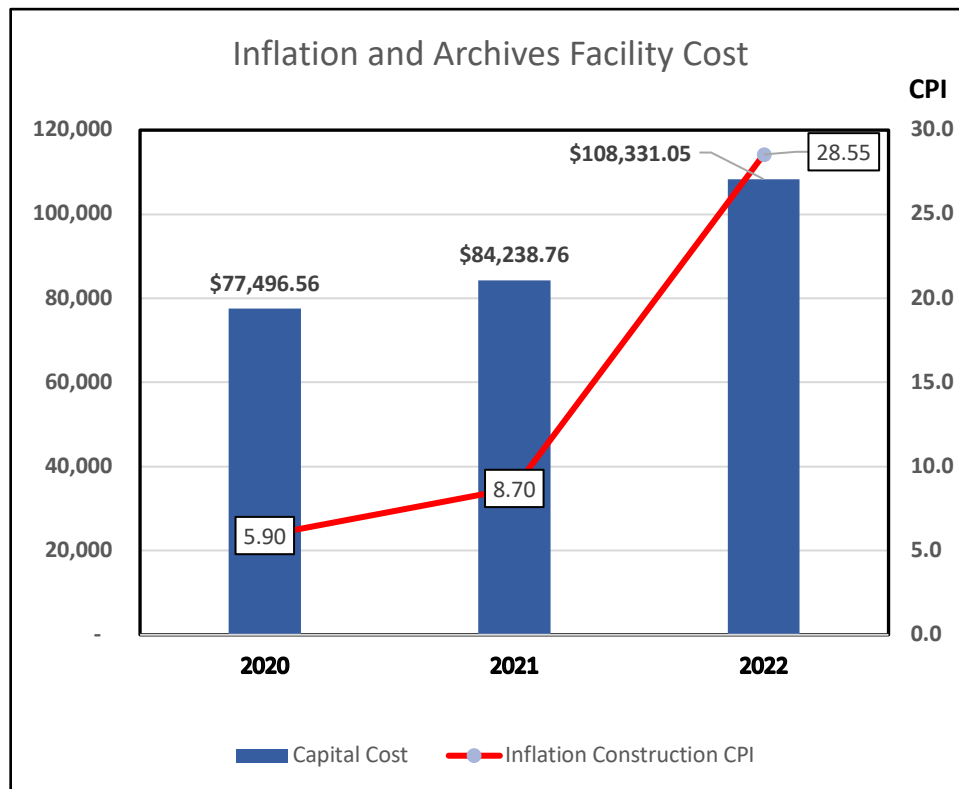
dropped by \$8 million to \$73,179,000. By FY2021, the facility dropped to \$73,127,000. The balance is now \$70,948,000. Who developed these numbers? Where did the \$8 million go? Did DGS develop these costs? If not DGS, then who?

Question 2. Since 2020 the appropriation has dropped again by \$2 million. Again, what role, if any, did DGS play in this drop?

Question 3. Does the District have a capital planning process? It seems that agency after agency hires consultants to develop their capital projects. Who, if anyone, looks to see if agencies cooperate and share facilities? For example, the Office of Secretary and UDC agreed to place the archives at the University and share it. However, the Mayor’s Senior Advisor ended the agreement. There will be no shared facility. What role does DGS play in these planning issues? What, if any, position does it take on planning for shared facilities?

Question 4. On three occasions, DGS drafted a sole source justification to award the A&E contract for the Archives facility to Hartman-Cox. That is, in 2017, 2019, and this January. None were signed. Who, if anyone, put them on hold?

Question 5. The [Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#) tracks the cost of inflation for new industrial buildings. As the chart below shows, construction costs increased dramatically in the past three years. The archives facility cost \$73 million three years ago. Now, it will cost \$100.8 million. However, the capital budget program does not mention inflation. Does DGS have a position on increased project costs? These increases impact not just the archives facility. It also applies to almost all DC construction projects.



Question 6. The project description for the FY 2022 Archives facility states:

*The Budget provides funding to allow the Archives to relocate to a site that meets several criteria outlined in a report commissioned by the Department of General Services, which found that the preferred alternative would be a stand-alone, purpose-built, new facility requiring **approximately 135,000 gross building square feet**. The Archives building is to be a mix of high-quality, environmentally controlled storage space, and several thousand square feet of space for the public to access the Archives, office space, and meeting space. [Emphasis added]*

The description is wrong about the size of the facility. The UDC Archives location is for a 79,000 gross square feet facility. We cannot find the 135,000 gross square feet number. Can DGS explain this discrepancy?

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to ask these questions. I hope that they are helpful in your overview of DGS.

Addendum

During his testimony to the committee, [Director Keith Anderson](#) stated that an Architectural and Engineering contractor was on board. Presumably, this is Hartman-Cox which was the subject of a recent [draft sole source agreement](#). However, the [DGS contracts website](#) has no new contract for Hartman-Cox or any archives facility contractor.