

City of Alexandria
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 11, 2013

4:00 PM
City Council Public Hearing

Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg, Members of Council John Taylor Chapman, Timothy B. Lovain, Redella S. Pepper, Paul C. Smedberg and Justin M. Wilson.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Young, City Manager; Mr. Banks, City Attorney; Mr. Fletcher, Special Assistant to the City Manager; Mr. Gates, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Evans, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Collins, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES); Mr. McPike, Director, General Services; Mr. Jinks, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Smith, Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Mr. Routt, Assistant Director, OMB; Ms. Taylor, Assistant Director, OMB; Mr. Behrens, Budget Analyst, OMB; Mr. Doku, Budget Analyst, OMB; Mr. Bever, Budget Analyst, OMB; Mr. Braden, Budget Analyst, OMB; Ms. Arbour, Budget Analyst, OMB; Mr. Trobridge, Director, Information Technology Services (ITS); Mr. Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Ms. Triggs, Chief Financial Officer/Director, Finance; Mr. Castrilli, Director, Office of Communications and Public Information; Mr. Coleman, Deputy Director, General Services; Mr. Catlett, Director, Code Administration; Mr. Lambert, Deputy Director, T&ES; Ms. Dawson, Director, Library; Police Chief Cook; Ms. Niebauer, Director, Office of Human Rights; Ms. Bryan, ITS; Police Captain Wemple; and Mr. Lloyd.

Recorded by: Gloria Sitton, Deputy City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

OPENING

1. Calling the Roll.

Mayor Euille called the meeting to order, and the Deputy City Clerk called the roll. All members of Council were present, with Councilmember Lovain arriving at 5:15 p.m.

2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2014 (Including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY2014-2023 (Including the School CIP). Adoption is Scheduled for Monday, May 6,

2013. A Public Hearing on the Ordinance Establishing the Real Property Tax Rate Will Be Held on Saturday, April 13, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.

City Manager Young gave a brief presentation of his FY 2014 budget proposal and responded to questions from Council.

The following persons participated in the public hearing on the proposed budget.

1. John Renner, 700 N. Fairfax Street, representing the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC), stated that the new budget procedure was good and promotes quality performance management and accountability, based on data analysis and stated measurable goals and outcome-driven decisions to promote efficiently delivering service. Mr. Renner noted that any cuts made to the budget should be based on the City's goals and priorities. Mr. Renner pointed out that it would be a mistake to add 3 cents to the real estate tax in order to fund the supplemental budget and BFAAC expressed concern about financing of the Metro Station and its impact on the debt ceiling and other projects in the City. Mr. Renner also stated that revenue growth must be part of the equation in order to keep Alexandria the vibrant community residents want to live in and commercial growth needs to be part of the solution.

2. Richard Merritt, 2729 Franklin Court, representing the Public Health Advisory Commission, urged the adoption of an increase in the local cigarette tax with most of the revenue being dedicated to the tobacco use cessation and education programs in the City.

3. Mary Agee, 19th Street, Arlington, representing Northern Virginia Family Services, requested that Council reconsider the recommendation of greater than 6% reduction in the Community Funding pool for the community partners, requested \$95,000 for the Gang Prevention Intervention Prevention Education program, and continued support of the Healthy Families program with gap funding until the Commonwealth distributes the funds to the 32 sites throughout the State.

4. Meredith McKeen, 10455 White Granite Drive, representing Northern Virginia Family Services, requested support for the Gang Prevention Intervention Prevention Education program and spoke about youth who have benefitted from participating in the program.

5. Herb Cooper-Levy, 1527 Oronoco Street, property owner, supported an increase in taxes in order to meet the goals and needs of the City and its residents. Mr. Copper-Levy spoke about the need to focus on affordable housing in the City and depletion of the available affordable properties. Mr. Cooper-Levy suggested the creation of a rent subsidy program to help families remain in the community.

6. Judy Noritake, 605 Prince Street, representing the Park and Recreation Commission, stated that the Commission supported the request for additional funds for ten new parks and recreational facilities, fee increases for recreational facility use, and the inclusion of recreational facilities in the Capital Improvement Program budget, especially as it relates to schools. Ms. Noritake stated that athletic fields should be upgraded with lights and artificial turf in order to maximize their usage and she stated that the open space goal set ten years ago is close to completion; however with population increases more open space will be needed. Ms. Noritake stated that the Commission supported the funding for aquatics in the

budget but there is a swimming pool deficit in the City.

7. Elke Fields, 17228 Larkin Drive, Dumfries, representing the Detox Facility kitchen at 2355 Mill Road, spoke about the cuts to the food services/employees at the Detox facility and requested that Council reconsider those cuts to save jobs and the nutritional program for those who attend the program.

8. Katharine Dixon, 5305 Neville Court, representing Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Association, requested that Council consider a \$3.5 million fund for the Affordable Housing Master plan in FY 2014, noting that plan needed dedicated funds for preservation and production of affordable housing units. Ms. Dixon also requested restoration of \$520,000 for use to help stabilize housing, health and employment needs for homeless and low-income individuals and families in the community.

9. Carol Jackson, 801 N. Pitt Street, #121, director of the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation and representing Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Association, requested restoration of 6.4% and additional cuts for the Community Partners funds in the Human Services budget and for the allocation of \$3.5 million to underpin the targets and tools for the Housing Master Plan.

10. Roger Digilio, 1115 King Street, representing Healthy Families, requested gap funding until the State distributes the funds and would like to make the Healthy Families program a multiyear funding recipient rather than coming every year to request funding.

11. Fay Slotnick, 400 Madison Street, #2203, representing Parent Leadership Training Institute, stated she supports an increase in real estate taxes in order to meet the goals stated in the Strategic Plan, particularly as it relates to children, families and diversity.

12. Ronald Gochenaur, 3011 Hickory Street, spoke in opposition to the closing of the Warwick pool and the lack of response from the City government to citizen requests and inquiries.

13. Masharia Shay Holman, 720 North Saint Aspah Street, representing the Community Services Board (CSB), expressed thanks for the Council support of the CSB programs and she pointed out that the proposed budget cuts will affect the deliverance of the services to the residents who need the most.

14. Skip Maginniss, 604 Johnston Place, representing the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, suggested that Council focus on the commercial taxes received by the City and examine why they have remained flat for a while. Mr. Maginniss also suggested that Council look at ways to leverage and encourage commercial growth in the City.

15. Anthony Barone, 174 Martin Lane, expressed support for the elements of the proposed budget regarding public safety for funding of full merit increases, top of grade pay increases, career ladders and increased employer contribution for police and fire pension plan. Mr. Barone also expressed support for improvements to public safety and fire facility and equipment in the proposed budget.

16. Tammy Mann, 10909 Clara Barton Court, Fairfax, representing the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission, stated that the original language in the

Strategic Plan goal four including children and youth has been changed and the commission expressed concern that the integrity and purpose of the original language remain in place as they work toward completing the Children and Youth Master Plan. Ms. Mann noted that cuts to Community and Human Services programs, particularly those affecting children and youth, have suffered major cuts in recent years and have not been reinstated. Ms. Mann also stated that the Commission believed it was critical to fund Alexandria City Public School Capital Improvement Projects as they will directly benefit the youth in the community.

17. Kathleen Schloeder, 2501 St. John Place, representing the Library Board, thanked Council for the inclusion of funds in the CIP for improvements at the Beatley Library. Ms. Schloeder requested that \$56,000 be restored to the Library budget to keep three branches open during the week.

18. Helen Desfosses, 603 S. Lee Street, representing the Library Board, spoke in support of funding to keep branches of the library open during the week.

19. Bill Rivers, 15 W. Mount Ida Avenue, spoke in support of including more funding in the proposed budget for aquatics/pools in the City. Mr. Rivers noted that the Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics have formed to help solve the problem through a public-private partnership that will raise funds to meet the aquatics needs in the City. Mr. Rivers stated that in order to show the private sector the City is serious about the partnership, there needs to be dedicated funding in the approved budget.

20. Liz Johnson, 424 E. Luray Avenue, representing the Commission for Women, expressed concern for the elimination of the domestic violence social worker position at the Alexandria Police department and noted the impact this position has had on domestic violence in the City.

21. Mary Catharine Gibbs, 3655 Trinity Drive, requested that the domestic violence social worker position be maintained in the public safety budget and she expressed concern about the overcrowding of the City schools and need for more money for the school improvements.

22. John Long, 801 N. Fairfax Street, #207, representing the Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Chamber strongly suggests that the Council remove the 3 cent capital addition and reduce the 2.5 cent increase as well. Mr. Long stated that there is an imbalance between the commercial and residential properties in the City, leading to funding problems.

23. Will Oakley, 119 S. Iris Street, representing the Alexandria Committee of Police Local 5, stated that many police feel they are not adequately compensated for the services rendered and the employees will be adversely affected by the proposed budget, highlighting the changes in health care.

24. Daniel Sweeney, Jr., 22 E. Oak Street, representing the Friends of Alexandria Mental Health Center, expressed concern about proposed budget cuts for services for persons with mental illness in the community, particularly the services received by those in the criminal justice system.

25. Larry Lee, 2801 Cameron Mills Road, representing the Alexandria Firefighters, Inc., thanked Mr. Young for the increase in the budget for career ladders, but noted that there

will be a marked decrease in take home salaries for firefighters, resulting from increases in health care and pensions costs.

26. Richard Hobson, 99 N. Quaker Lane, representing the Library Board, spoke in opposition to the possibility of closing three library branches.

27. Susan Drachsler, 3313 Carolina Place, representing the Friends of Alexandria Mental Health Center, expressed concern about cuts that will impact the lives of Alexandrians with mental health conditions and limited financial resources to access other services.

28. Rebecca Grueneberger, 18 W. Rosemont Avenue, representing the Friends of Alexandria Mental Health Center, spoke about maintaining funding for human service programs services and programs that help the most vulnerable residents in our community.

29. Eileen Bradley, 4705 W. Braddock Road, #30, representing the Friends of Beatley Library, thanked Council for the inclusion of the custodial contract services for the libraries in the proposed budget and requested maintaining funding for other library programs slated for elimination because of budget cuts.

30. Jason Dechant, 1201 Bayliss Avenue, representing the Social Services Advisory Board, stated that the Board urged caution in cutting programs and services that reach the City's most vulnerable residents and requested that Council restore funding for key Human Service positions.

31. Maryanne Weber, 124 Roberts Lane, #201, chair of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, spoke about cuts the Community and Human Services of jobs and programs. Ms. Weber requested that Council be mindful of the cuts and consider the effects they will have on those receive services.

32. Sandra Marra, 207 South Peyton Street, representing Saint Coletta of Greater Washington, expressed concern about cuts to Community and Human Services funding and requested help from Council fund programs at the school.

33. Stanley Bullock, 753 Princeton Place, Washington, D.C., a City employee, expressed concern about the lack of market rate adjustments, increased health care costs and other issues eroding the compensation for employees.

34. James Green, 2355A Mill Road, an employee, expressed concern about the increased health care costs the employees with face and he requested that Council consider the well-being of the employees during their budget considerations.

35. Vola Lawson, 2121 Eisenhower Avenue, representing the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, spoke in support of maintaining funding for their annual performance at the City's birthday celebration and she noted that they are working to find ways to keep the partnership with the City alive.

36. Jessica Wiser, 2121 Eisenhower Avenue, representing the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, expressed the orchestra's desire to remain a part of the annual birthday celebration and will work to find a ways to keep the partnership alive and continue to reach a larger and broad community audience.

37. Ronal Butler, 2121 Eisenhower Avenue, representing the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, spoke in support of the orchestra remaining a part of the annual birthday celebration and requested Council support to allow the orchestra to get the funding to be part of the birthday celebration.

38. Loti Dunn, 2121 Eisenhower Avenue, representing the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, spoke in support of the orchestra remaining a part of the annual birthday celebration.

39. Brenda D'Sylva, 3600 Wheeler Avenue, representing the Alexandria Employees Association, spoke about the continuously eroding compensation packages received by employees and the use of reduction-in-force and the increase in costs for health care benefits to balance the budget. Ms. D'Sylva suggested that areas of fraud, waste and abuse in the City be identified in order to address budget shortfalls.

40. Kristen Davis, 411 S. Henry Street, requested the addition of programs and resources for residents with autism spectrum disorders be included in the proposed budget.

41. Shirl Mammrella, 5457 Broadmoor Street, City employee, spoke about the increase of contribution in the public safety pension plan and expressed concerned that the benefits package had not been considered as a whole before the increase was proposed and that the City's benefits are not comparable to the surrounding jurisdictions.

42. Tom Ground, 3600 Wheeler Avenue, President, Southern State Police Benevolent Association, expressed concerns over the City's health program and the Police pension program. Mr. Ground stated that the inclusion of the deductible to the medical expenses will not only affect family budgets but the health of employees and families. Mr. Ground stated that the 2% increased contribution to the pension fund will greatly affect officers take-home pay and will force officers to seek employment elsewhere, taking valuable training and experience from the City.

43. Glenn Christianson, 1A Ancell Street, representing the Warwick Village Association, opposed the proposed closing of the Warwick Pool and noted the work that Warwick Village residents have performed to maintain and improve pool.

44. Lynda Strain, 421 Royal Street, City employee, spoke about the changes in benefits for employees and how the increases in cost will affect the financial well-being of her family. Ms. Strain stated that City staff is having a tough time remaining here with lagging salaries, increased costs and having to do more with less.

45. Bernard Schulz, representing Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, advocated support for the historic preservation management plan (\$100,000), continued Fort Ward archaeology work (\$75,000), reinstating the historian/research position, and the funding for the Waterfront Plan arts and history component. Mr. Schulz noted that historic preservation seems to be taken for granted and had remained unfunded for years.

46. Linda Couture, 505 Duke Street, spoke in support of restoration of the funding to the libraries and noted there needed to fairness in spending when considering programs for cutting.

47. Bill Patchak, 6 West Caton Avenue, opposed the increase in real estate taxes, particularly when there are increases in the real estate assessments.

48. Bob Wood, 711 Potomac Street, requested that Council undertake the management changes recommended in the Waterfront Workgroup Plan and provide for them in the budget. Mr. Wood also requested that the unfunded elements of the Waterfront Plan be considered for funding during budget deliberations.

49. Juan Kilpatrick, 3010 Mt. Vernon Avenue, employee with Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) maintenance, spoke in opposition to the healthcare deductible that employees, stating that will be a hardship with the salary he receives.

50. Thomas Knighton, 1430 Silverdale Drive, employee with T&ES maintenance, spoke about decrease in his paycheck in recent years because of the increasing cost of healthcare insurance. Mr. Knighton noted that many of his coworkers do not feel appreciated and feel they cannot afford to continue to work for the City without some consideration.

51. Joseph Anthony, 1861 Alabama Avenue, employee with T&ES maintenance, spoke in opposition to the increase in the cost of the healthcare insurance for employees and how it will affect compensation and morale of employees.

52. Keith Kehler, 3405 Vanetta Court, employee with T&ES maintenance, explained how the increase in healthcare costs for employees with affect his family.

53. Kenneth Fuller, 9400 Ivy Park Street, Capital Heights, MD, employee with T&ES maintenance, stated that the City should look to employees for advice for ways to save money instead of increasing cost to employees for healthcare.

54. Andrew Smith, 7238 Jon Paul Drive, #302, employee with T&ES maintenance, stated that with his salary he cannot afford the increase healthcare costs that is proposed in the budget.

55. Sharon Annear, 1118 North Howard Street, spoke in opposition to the cuts to historic resources and libraries. Ms. Annear spoke about the exclusion of the funds in the CIP for the sanitary sewer improvements and the need for the City to meet mandated targets.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Wilson and carried unanimously, City Council adjourned the special public hearing meeting of March 11, 2013, at 7:54 p.m. The voting was as follows: In favor – Mayor Euille; Vice Mayor Silberberg; Councilman Chapman; Councilmember Lovain; Councilwoman Pepper; Councilman Smedberg, and Councilman Wilson. Opposed – None.

APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR

ATTEST:

Gloria Sitton, CMC Deputy City Clerk