

**City of Alexandria
Monday, March 7, 2022 5:30 PM
Budget Public Hearing Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

Present: Mayor Justin M. Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy B. Jackson, Members of Council Canek Aguirre, Sarah R. Bagley, John Taylor Chapman, Alyia Gaskins, and R. Kirk McPike.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Parajon, City Manager; Ms. Anderson, City Attorney; Mr. Routt, Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Mr. Smith, Information Technology Services (ITS); Ms. Demeke, ITS, and Police Captain Ballentine.

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

1. Calling the Roll

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order and the City Clerk called the roll. All members of Council were present with Vice Mayor Jackson attending from her home address via Zoom webinar. Vice Mayor Jackson was attending virtually for medical reasons.

2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2023 (including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2023 to FY 2032 (including the Schools CIP) and Proposed Tax Rate Recommendations.

Adoption is scheduled for May 4, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. A public hearing on the ordinance establishing the Real Property Tax Rate will be held Saturday, April 23, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

The following persons participated in the budget public hearing:

1. Kathie Hoekstra, Alexandria, representing the Environmental Policy Commission, spoke about addressing the Climate Emergency in the proposed budget and requested that climate issues and equity issues be integrated into all decisions that are made by the City. Ms. Hoekstra requested that all City staff integrate climate and equity considerations into every project, plan, or proposal going forward and that all new permitting for CDDs and DSUPs to meet an energy use intensity of 25 or below for monthly use buildings where developers are asking for increased density or height beginning one year from Council's decision.

2. Michael Schuster, Alexandria, representing the Commission on Aging, spoke in support of the Department of Community and Human Services proposal to increase funding for rent relief to help those struggling to pay the increasing rent in the City. Mr. Schuster noted that the provision for updating the asset limits in the property tax relief program has not been updated and requested that the limit be increased.

3. Jesse O'Connell, Alexandria, representing the Hopkins House, requested additional local funding to support childcare and childcare workers and providers in the City, noting the use of ARPA funding to address the inadequacies during the pandemic. Mr. O'Connell requested the City Council enhance funding for the Unified Early Childhood Workforce Stabilization Initiative to assist childcare providers support of new and existing employees and to direct the Alexandria Workforce Development Center to prioritize opportunities for those seeking employment in childcare.

4. Nathaly Zelaya, Alexandria, representing Tenants and Workers United, spoke about the impact of the pandemic and the upcoming development of corporations like Amazon on communities of color, particularly on their housing. Ms. Zelaya requested that Council prioritize the immigrant communities and the communities of color in the budget and to prioritize deeply affordable housing for working class families, including raising the meals tax to 6% and increasing the amount of property taxes dedicated to affordable housing to 1 cent. Ms. Zelaya requested that Council eliminate funding for School Resource Officers and funding holistic approaches including mental health to meet the needs of students in the community.

5. Jose Guerrero, Alexandria, requested that City Council prioritize affordable housing in the City for families making \$50,000 or less and help protect these residents from being displaced from the City.

6. Ayesha Amin, Alexandria, student at Alexandria City High School and member of Tenants and Workers United, spoke about policing and safety in the schools. Ms. Amin requested that Council not allocate funding for the School Resource Officers program in the middle and high schools and redirect the funding toward mental health services for students.

7. Bill Pugh, Alexandria, representing Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, spoke about the restoration of funding to the Energy and Climate Change Plan, the baseline budget not adding new resources for Climate Change programs in the City, and he noted that the budget does not address low and moderate income home weatherization assistance and the budget should prioritize the residents that are both vulnerable to the weather crisis.

8. Holly Carr, Alexandria, spoke about the need for the City to address the climate crisis in the City and the need to address greenhouse gases from City buildings and the need to address to shift from use of fossil fuels to clean energy sources. Ms. Carr noted the use of Federal funding through bipartisan infrastructure legislation to building electrification and weatherization for low to moderate income households. Ms. Carr requested that the City fund two full-time staff positions, a Climate Mobilization Director and a Climate Mobilization Coordinator, along with full funding of the Climate/Energy Manager supplemental budget request and she supported the 2 cent tax option for funding these requests.

9. Scott Barstow, Alexandria, spoke about climate change and need to address

emissions from building energy use in order to meet the target. Mr. Barstow stated that he was pleased with the addressing of climate adaptation and climate mitigation in the proposed budget. Mr. Barstow requested that Council support all of the climate mitigation provisions in the base budget as well as in option #1 and option #2, as well as the two positions to support climate mobilization.

10. David Peabody, Alexandria, spoke about impacts of climate change on future generations and support the recommendations of previous speakers for increased funding for addressing climate change issues. Mr. Peabody requested that Council support all of the measures in the budget that support climate mitigation provisions and the creation on staff positions to support climate mobilization.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Chapman, seconded by Councilman Aguirre and carried unanimously, City Council closed the public hearing. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilman Aguirre, seconded by Councilwoman Gaskins and carried unanimously, City Council adjourned the Budget Public Hearing meeting at 6:42 p.m. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

APPROVED BY:

JUSTIN M. WILSON MAYOR

ATTEST:

Gloria A. Sitton, CMC City Clerk

Approved: April 5, 2022