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4-15-23



Faith Alliance for
Climate Solutions
City of Alexandria

April 15, 2023

Mayor Wilson and City Council
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Re: Thank you for prioritizing Climate Action in the FY24 Proposed Budget

Dear Mayor Wilson and City Council members:

I am a City resident and parent and am speaking on behalf of the Alexandria hub of the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS). We are people of faith from Alexandria neighborhoods and congregations focused on equitable local solutions to the climate crisis. Our hub includes members from over 15 congregations and nonaffiliated city residents.

FACS thanks you and the City Manager for addressing the climate crisis in the proposed FY24 budget and through your actions last year to set up the Office of Climate Action. We thank you for fully funding the Office of Climate Action, and we hope that this continues next year as well. Think of this annual funding as an investment that will pay off and reduce future city expenditures. For example, Alexandria residents and businesses will see lower energy prices – making housing more affordable and local businesses more competitive.

We also appreciate your current efforts to foster more sustainable and equitable transportation and housing. **The *Duke Street In Motion* and the *Zoning for Housing/Housing for All* initiatives with community input will provide climate and equity benefits to Alexandria and the region.**

We look forward to seeing the programs that the Office of Climate Action will begin implementing this year – we hope that these especially benefit low- and moderate-income households and workers. Related, in January, the **Planning Commission and the Environmental Policy Commission sent to you a list of recommendations for making sure that new development meets City climate policies.** We need the Office of Climate Action to move these recommendations forward while also improving the sustainability and health of existing buildings.

FACS appreciates your support of strong climate action in Alexandria.

Bill Pugh
1200 N Quaker Ln, Alexandria, VA 22302
FACS Alexandria Hub Co-Coordinator

Cc: Ryan Freed, Climate Action Officer, City of Alexandria

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April 14, 2023

The Honorable Justin Wilson
and Members of City Council
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of City Council,

On behalf of the Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC), we are submitting this letter to recommend that you adopt/add the provisions included in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget:

- **OSTP Stabilization:** The proposal is to increase permanent part-time staffing at RPCA Out of School Time program locations and supports a staffing framework for OSTP that provides consistent quality across all locations. To improve recruitment and retention of these staff, RPCA is requesting more positions that offer employees paid leave and benefits. The proposal builds on a partially funded request in the FY2023 budget.
- **Childcare Services:** Provide child minding services at Council Town Hall events (4) and selected Board and Commission meetings with total costs TBD. Council staff will work with Commission Chairs to determine 2-3 Bd/ Comm with greatest need to support an initial program. Selected Bd/ Comm will then coordinate implementation of child minding services.
- **Bed finder Position:** The bed finder position would facilitate expedited placements of Alexandrians experiencing a mental health crisis. Through expedited and regional collaboration, we would increase availability of APD officers currently assigned to those awaiting beds and more efficiently clear emergency room spaces, as well as accelerate treatment for patients awaiting these placements.
- **Eviction Prevention:** Current funding of \$100,000 is projected to assist 40 households with Funding Increase an average payment of \$2,500. However, the current median balance in 2023 for households facing eviction is closer to \$5,000 (given rent increases). To reasonably assist 40 households in FY24, this fund should increase by \$150,000 for a total of \$250,000.
- **Pilot position at RPCA facilities that is designed to better connect residents to mental health services and if needed provide onsite mental health services.** This add responds to young people's requests in recent focus groups to "meet them where they are" and "create more safe spaces." It also responds to the need for more mental health services in our community. It places, \$75,000 in contingency to develop a pilot program at two RPCA facilities. Based on Budget Memo # 12, this would cover the cost of a part-time Senior Therapist at 20 hours/week(.5FTE) who could provide ten hours/week at each site and necessary private space improvements. I am suggesting funds be placed in contingency to give staff more time to determine the best sites for the pilot and other key program design elements.
- **Summer Youth Employment Program:** Currently, the Summer Youth Employment Program serves 170 young people, 14 to 18 years old, for six weeks. However, over 300

young persons applied for the program last year. To expand the program by 50% (reaching 255 youth) costs an additional \$214,943 (see budget memo # 9). I am proposing a one-time program expansion and directing the City Manager to use the next year to explore public/private/philanthropic partnerships to expand and enhance the program moving forward.

- **Waive fees for Summer OSTP programming for participants eligible for SNAP or TANF:** Total fees for SNAP and TANF participants are projected to be \$15,000 for OSTP summer programs. Waiving those fees would then have a net impact of approximately (\$15,000) to RPCA.

The CYFCC outlined its priorities for the FY20204 city budget in an October 13, 2022 letter to the Mayor and City Council as well as a follow up letter sent March 24 in support of many of these issues in the alternative budget proposal.

The Commission, again, thanks the City Council for adopting the Children and Youth Community Plan and for all your efforts to make implementation of this plan financially possible since its adoption.

We look forward to working with the City Council, the city, and ACPS to ensure this year's budget addresses the evolving needs of Alexandria's children, youth, and families. Thank you again for the great work that you do for our city and residents.

Sincerely,

Jessy Cuddy, MSW | she/her
Chair

Catherine Clinger | she/her
Chair Elect

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Add/Delete Budget 24'

Spanish Public Comments

Luz Castillo

Hola buenos días alcalde Wilson y miembros del concejal,

Mi nombre es Luz Castillo y estoy aquí como miembro de la comunidad y también como miembro de Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos. Yo e vivido en Alexandria por 16 años.

Vivo en los apartamentos de Eaton Square y les quiero compartir mi historia ya que es muy similar a la de muchas familias que conozco en la ciudad de Alexandria.

Me preocupa mucho el costo de la renta. Tengo un apartamento de 2 cuartos y pago \$1803 dólares al mes, más todas las utilidades estoy pagando aproximadamente 2 mil dólares por mes.

La vivienda accesible es una de las necesidades más grandes en mi persona y de nuestra comunidad que ganamos menos de 50 mil al año.

La situación nos está forzando a tener varios trabajos, compartir vivienda con personas que en ocasiones no son parte de nuestras familias.

Para nosotros es un sacrificio el estar aquí presente, por la falta de tiempo, la falta de conocimiento de cómo el gobierno toma decisiones y la barrera del idioma. Pero hemos hecho presencia muchas veces este año solo para pedirles a ustedes que no se olviden de nosotros en este presupuesto. No somos invisibles, somos parte de esta ciudad.

Necesitamos ver más acciones, más prioridad en vivienda con más urgencia.

1- Necesitamos que incrementen la ayuda de renta de emergencia para las familias que están en corte para ser desalojados

2-Se necesitan fondos para crear y estudiar el programa de cupones.

Ustedes como funcionarios electos pueden mejorar las condiciones de vida de todos los habitantes de la ciudad de Alexandria. Les damos las gracias que nos han escuchado y a último momento han logrado poner un poquito más de fondos en el presupuesto del año 2024 para el estudio del programa de cupones y para la ayuda de renta de emergencia.

Esperamos continuar trabajando con ustedes y que ustedes sigan apoyando a todas las comunidades, incluyendo la de nosotros. Gracias por darme la oportunidad de compartir.

4/15/2023

Add/Delete Budget 24'

English Public Comments

Luz Castillo

Hello, Good Morning Mayor Wilson and City Council Members.

My name is Luz Castillo and I am here as a member of the community and as a member of Tenants and Workers United. I have lived in the city of Alexandria for 16 years.

I live in the Eaton Square Apartments and I am here to share my story as it is very similar to other families I know who also live in the city.

My concern is the high cost of rent. I live in a two bedroom apartment and pay \$1,803 per month, plus utilities which is approximately 2 thousand dollars per month.

Access to affordable housing is my biggest need and for our community who earns less than 50 thousand dollars a year.

This issue has forced us to have many jobs and share our home with other people who occasionally are not part of our family.

For us it is a sacrifice to be here today, due to our lack of time, our lack of knowledge of how local government takes decisions and the language barrier.

But we continue to still attend and make a presence in these meetings so we can tell you to not forget about us in this budget. We are not invisible, we are part of this city, too.

We need to see more action with more priority and urgency on housing.

1- There needs to be an increase in emergency rent relief for those families who are in the court process, soon to be evicted.

2-There needs to be funds in order to fund and study the voucher program

As elected officials you can improve the living conditions of all residents in the City of Alexandria. We thank you for hearing us from before and willing to propose a little bit of additional funding for this proposed budget for the voucher program and emergency relief.

We hope to continue to work with you in order to support all the communities, including ours. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

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Add/Delete Budget 24'

English Public Comments

Moises Montes Rodriguez

Good Morning, Mr. Mayor Justin Wilson and members of the city council members of the City of Alexandria and to the public that is here today.

My name is Moises Montes Rodriguez, I've currently been living in the Morgan Properties apartment of Alexandria, Virginia for 8 years.

This time has allowed me to know more closely my community, that it is diverse, with many different languages and religions. But something we all have in common is OUR COLLECTIVE CONCERNS, and it's shown at the end of every month when we have to pay our rent. Each year they increase our rent due to the high cost of living. But we know there are other external factors, such as inflation, the devaluation of the dollar, COVID-19 and the gas prices, etc.

These factors also impact directly and indirectly the salaries of our communities. Salaries that are currently being swallowed even more due to inflation.

The current situation obligates many of our families to have up to two jobs, in order for us to pay our rent and utilities.

Many times, this results in our families being fractured because we do not have the opportunity to invest the time with our children.

Personally, I had two jobs, I lost one due to COVID-19. The company was doing lay-offs to my coworkers, including myself. This created an economic crisis that impacted many working class families.

Many big projects are coming into the City of Alexandria, especially in the west end, where many corporations plan to create new buildings for new

apartments, with better living conditions, but for a qualified income sector, and this will exclude the majority of the community who would not be able to pay those high costs. That is why we ask the City of Alexandria to please include more funding in your budget for affordable and dignified housing .

If not, in the near future we will see many families living in the street just like in surrounding districts.

Council, the future of our communities are in your hands. I don't want my words to be considered as a cheap, populist, and exaggerated slogan. But we please ask you to prioritize affordable housing in the budget.

We all have the right to have a good quality of life, and you all can improve that.

Mayor and Council members, I appreciate your attention to my words, and I hope it can be echoed to the budget 2024.

Thank you.

4/15/2023

Add/Delete Budget 24'

Spanish Public Comments

Moises Montes Rodriguez

Muy buenos días, Señor Alcalde Justin Wilson, y concejales de la ciudad de Alexandria, y público presente.

Mi nombre es Moises Montes Rodriguez, actualmente viviendo por 8 años en los departamentos de "Morgan Properties" de Alexandria, Virginia.

Tiempo que me ha permitido conocer más de cerca a mi comunidad, que es diversa, con diferentes lenguas y religiones. Pero que tenemos algo en común, NUESTRAS PREOCUPACIONES, reflejada al final de cada mes, en la que tenemos que pagar la renta. Que cada año nos incrementa más, debido al alto costo de la vida. Generada por factores externos: como la inflación, devaluación del dólar, COVID-19, y gasolina, etc.

Estos factores afectarán directa o indirectamente aún más los salarios de la comunidad. Salarios que están tragados por el pantano de la inflación.

La actual situación obliga a muchas familias a tener dos trabajos, para poder completar el dinero de la renta y otras utilidades.

Dando como resultado familias fracturadas, ya que no le dan el tiempo necesario a sus hijos.

En lo personal tuve dos trabajos, perdí uno debido al COVID-19. La compañía le dio lay-offs a mis compañeros, y a mi persona. Esto creó una crisis económica que afectó a la familia trabajadora.

Vienen proyectos grandes en la ciudad de Alexandria, donde las grandes corporaciones tienen planeado nuevos edificios para nuevos apartamentos, y mejorar la calidad de vida para un sector calificado, pero no de la mayoría de la comunidad que no podrán pagar los altos costos de

vivienda. Es por eso que pedimos a la ciudad de Alexandria que incluya en su presupuesto viviendas de bajo costo, y dignas para la comunidad.

Si no, en la brújula del tiempo veremos gente viviendo en las calles como en otros distritos cercanos.

Señores, en su manos tienen el futuro de nuestras comunidades. No quiero que mis palabras sean tomadas como un populismo barato y exagerado. Por favor, ayúdenos con viviendas accesibles en el presupuesto.

Todos tenemos un derecho a una calidad de vida mejor, la cual ustedes pueden mejorar ahora.

Señor Alcalde y concejales, les agradezco mucho la atención a mis palabras, y que estas tengan eco en el presupuesto del año 2024.

Gracias.