



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2018

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Amending the Budget Resolution Establishing the Process to be Used to Adopt the FY 2020 Operating Budget and the FY 2020 to FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: To provide an alternative option to the Budget Adoption date as discussed at the November 13, 2018 Legislative meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt a revised resolution removing the requirements that final budget decisions be made 72 hours prior to adoption and made available to the public 48 hours prior to adoption, and that budget adoption be rescheduled from Thursday, May 2, 2019 to Wednesday, May 1, 2019.

BACKGROUND: City Council adopted Resolution #2855: Budget Resolution Establishing the Process to be Used to Adopt the FY 2020 Operating Budget and the FY 2020 to FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program at the November 13, 2018 City Council Legislative Meeting. This resolution includes provisions that “final decisions will be made 72 hours prior to budget adoption and discussed at a Special City Council work session” (i.e. the final add/delete work session) and that “final decisions will be made available to the public 48 hours prior to budget adoption.” As part of the Resolution #2855 discussion, Council directed staff to return to Council with options to consider potentially reducing the amount of time between final add/delete and budget adoption from the current 72 hours.

DISCUSSION: The 72-hour period between the final add/delete work session and budget adoption was one of several add/delete changes City Council made to the budget process beginning with the FY 2016 budget. Staff believes the intent for the 72-hour period between final add/delete and adoption was to provide time for the public have time to review proposed add/delete items that may have been introduced late in the process and not publicly discussed as thoroughly as other items.

Staff believes that the co-sponsorship requirement established in the FY 2016 budget process combined with

the recent amendments to the FY 2020 budget process contained within Resolution #2855 that include an earlier add/delete deadline and a public hearing on preliminary add/delete items effectively eliminates the possibility of items being introduced that late in the process without sufficient public discussion. Since the proposed process making add/delete items public 21 days before adoption, there is no longer a need for another 72-hour period. In addition, the public will have more time than in past years to comment on add/delete items through the other normal channels available to them such as the budget website, social media, Call.Click.Connect, and direct contact with Council members and staff. If approved by Council, staff will begin advertising these and the other schedule changes included in Resolution #2855 upon approval and continue to communicate them throughout the budget process. It is also important to note that the budget process as currently constructed does not include a mechanism for Council to change its final decisions during that 72-hour period should it receive new input from the public, thereby potentially creating public expectations that Council cannot meet.

Some separation between final add/delete and adoption is valuable in providing staff time to memorialize final decisions, rebalance the budget to reflect the final changes, and prepare the motions and resolutions for final adoption, and to give Council adequate time to review the motions and resolutions before introducing them at adoption, but staff believes that the 72-hour requirement is unnecessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Resolution Establishing the Process to Be Used to Adopt the FY 2020 Operating Budget and the FY 2020 to FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program
- 2) Budget Process Calendar: Current and Recommendation

STAFF:

Laura B. Triggs, Deputy City Manager
Morgan Routt, Director, Office of Management and Budget