

BF2010-01:

MVCCA Recommendations on the Fairfax County FY 2011 Budget Plan, As Advertised

1. WHEREAS, the Fairfax County Executive has presented the FY 2011 Advertised Budget Plan for Fairfax County, which complies with the Board of Supervisors (BOS) budget guidance; and
2. WHEREAS, the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) congratulates the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive on the level of outreach to the citizens of the county by holding community budget meetings and further for the transparency of the process of developing the FY 2011 Advertised Budget Plan, yet we find that the proposed Real Estate Assessment (at the rate of \$1.09/\$100 assessed valuation) may be inadequate to fund basic county services; and
3. WHEREAS, we agree that while the economic downturn has created unprecedented reductions in revenue in both the Commonwealth of Virginia and Fairfax County, which has required careful consideration of County services and reduction or elimination of many County personnel and programs, nevertheless Fairfax County should also give consideration to residents of the county when the elimination of services and personnel will only add to the burdens and disadvantages and unemployment already in existence; and
4. WHEREAS the Fairfax County Advertised Budget Plan presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) on February 23, 2010 proposes to address the significant reduction in revenue sources for FY 2011 by, among other proposals, increasing the property assessment tax rate to \$1.09 and by reducing, reengineering, reorganizing, redesigning and eliminating various County lines of business (LOB); and
5. WHEREAS, the MVCCA fully supports the stormwater tax district and the proposed increase to 1.5 cent funding thereof; and,
6. WHEREAS, the MVCCA is in agreement that the programs and personnel retained by the FY 2011 Advertised Budget are essential and should be maintained; and the MVCCA further believes that the following additional programs and positions are also essential and \$79,249,347 in additional revenue may be necessary to fund these additional programs and positions identified below (in some cases by Reduction item numbers from the Summary/Overview of the proposed Budget Plan) ; and,
7. WHEREAS, access to libraries for both adults and children is an essential service particularly in view of the fact that library use has increased during the present economic downturn and therefore the MVCCA supports restoring \$3.4 million to the proposed Budget to fund the libraries; and,
8. WHEREAS, Fairfax County has substantial investments in its parks and athletic fields and, the MVCCA supports the restoration of \$2,432,974 to the Parks Authority budget to maintain the parks and athletic fields and to assure the continued operation of the ML King, Jr. outdoor pool that serves many youth and families in the Route 1 Corridor; and,

9. WHEREAS the FY 2011 Advertised Budget Plan includes a group of proposed reductions that appears to have particularly severe and long-lasting impact on the health and human services network, the MVCCA recommends restoration of these critical services and estimates that damage to these essential services may be mitigated through taxpayer support for further revenue enhancement totaling ~~\$12.75~~ 2,639,600-million (as described in MVCCA's separate Resolution on this matter); and
10. WHEREAS , in FY2011 and the foreseeable near future, Fairfax County will continue to face the challenge of increasing public needs as well as mandates for many public services, coupled with continuing risk of falling revenues, and whereas County leadership and investments in the health and human services network now build upon and seek to improve the efficiency of prevention and interventional strategies that offer our best hope of effective response to emergent community crises; and
11. WHEREAS the MVCCA supports the statement of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) that requests full restoration of 8 proposed reductions to their service safety net totaling \$1,344,138 . Of particular concern is the proposed elimination of the Emergency Services at the Mount Vernon Center for Community Mental Health (\$172,619). This reduction would result in 382 individuals currently served in this community who would no longer receive 547 emergency psychiatric services nearby, with adverse impact to both effective mental health treatment and public safety services. The elimination of these services will result in more persons on the street and in the community with psychiatric problems, many of whom will become police cases requiring police to transport these persons to the walk-in Emergency Services at the Woodburn Center by Fairfax Hospital--a 45 to 60 minute transport each way, resulting in the police officer being off patrol for approximately 3 hours;
12. WHEREAS Fairfax County's Circuit Court requires adequate staffing to address the numerous legal matters brought before it, the MVCCA supports restoration of funding in the amount of \$253,270 for law clerks who provide a valuable service to Circuit Court judges and the public;
13. WHEREAS, the MVCCA supports restoration of Fund #128 the Fairfax County Watch Center : restoration in the amount of \$72,232. Impact consideration: provides a valuable service to warn citizens of significant weather events to mitigate flooding and also monitors national and regional alert systems for security threats.
14. WHEREAS, the MVCCA finds unacceptable the following proposed reductions in funding to the public safety services and supports revenue enhancement totaling \$3,284,856 to restore these items:
 - Restore Reduction #91 Eliminate Middle School SROs (\$2,104,480). Over the last ten years, the School Resource Officers (SRO) have become an integral part of the school staffs and have established a close relationship with students, school staff and the surrounding communities which have fostered safer school campus at each school by assisting in investigations and removal of disruptive students. Removal of the SROs will result in further load on regular patrol officers. In the event of an emergency incident, the patrol officer responding will have little or no knowledge of the school building. He/she

will be delayed in learning the specifics of the emergency. And, finally, will know little about the students and probable culprits.

- Restore Reduction #93 Reduce Police Citizen Aide (PCA) Positions at District Stations (\$772,480). This will reduce the PCA positions by two at each of the eight district stations. Currently, each station has six PCAs. One PCA is currently assigned to each of six patrol squads at the district stations. These positions are responsible for staffing the front desk at each station, and serve as the direct customer service provider for walk-ins and telephone calls. In addition, they provide a wide variety of administrative and operational support to the officers and personnel who work at the station. The elimination of two positions will mean the PCAs are no longer assigned to specific squads, but instead will work 12-hour shifts spanning across multiple squads. Further, the overlap of PCA coverage during periods of increased activity will be eliminated. Finally, with so few remaining PCAs at the station, situations will be created where police officers will have to be taken from their regular duties to fill in for PCAs who have mandatory breaks and absences for leave, sickness or training. Not a responsible use of police officers.
- Restore Reduction #97 Eliminate Administrative Assistant II Positions at District Stations (\$247,896). This will reduce one of two administrative assistants at each of the eight district stations. These two positions share supporting approximately 130 personnel at each district station. This support includes copying, filing, and sending informational cases to each detective, completion of time and attendance sheets for sworn and civilian personnel assigned to the station; data entry for the crime analyst; and maintenance of the CIS crime database. Although assigned to CIS, these administrative assistants perform other administrative duties to assist in managing and balancing the workload of overall station administrative duties. These duties include, but are not limited to, management of personnel evaluations, alarm reports, general filing duties, mail management, and handling phone inquiries. The workload cannot be effectively accomplished by the remaining administrative assistant. Consequently, officers may be assigned from patrol duties to provide support as needed. This reduction will negatively impact internal efficiency and function, as well as customer service and responsiveness within each police district.
- Restore Reduction #108 Eliminate Daytime Lock-up Services at the Mount Vernon District Satellite Intake Center (\$160,000). This will require police officers to transport prisoners to the Adult Detention Center (ADC) in Fairfax City during the day. Further, in processing prisoners at the Mount Vernon Station, a second officer will have to assist the primary police officer while the prisoner is unshackled in the process of fingerprinting, taking photographs, etc. The round trip to the ADC takes at least three hours during which time the sworn officer is not performing his assigned station duties.

15. WHEREAS, the combined effect of imposing Reductions #91, #93, #97 and #108 that eliminate services will also result in a significant reduction in the hours that sworn police officers perform their normal duties, including patrol, etc. so that they will be required to perform essentially support and administrative duties at the station; and

16. WHEREAS, a further Reduction in public safety services is also unacceptable and should be restored: #98 Eliminate Marine Patrol (\$222,287). [Impact consideration: The Marine Patrol Unit provides police service and law enforcement on the waterways of Fairfax County as well as for Maryland and Prince William County, by mutual agreement. There will be no police presence on the Potomac River south of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The elimination of the unit will mean that Fairfax County citizens will have no protection from illegal and/or unsafe activity on the river.]

17. WHEREAS, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has taken extraordinary measures to reduce its FY2011 funding requirements--including eliminating all staff compensation increases, reducing central administration staffing, instituting student fees and eliminating funding which disproportionately impacts schools in the Mount Vernon District; and,

18. WHEREAS, schools in the area represented by the MVCCA are among those most at risk and most heavily affected by the growth in population of students who require additional services and staffing considerations, have benefited from increased resources as demonstrated by significant progress in achieving mandated benchmarks, and will require continued additional targeted resources if progress is to continue; and,

19. WHEREAS, the MVCCA supports a transfer to the Fairfax County Public Schools which restores the transfer to schools to FY2010 levels in accordance with the March 18, 2010 presentation by the school board includes no less than the Requested Transfer increase of \$81.9 million; and,

20. WHEREAS, it is better to implement expense reductions that result in a simple delay or temporary cancellation of a County service rather than to cut funding that results in structural damage to a service that will take years to repair once the budget crisis is over, and

21. WHEREAS, FCPS and the taxpayers of Fairfax County continue to be adversely affected by under-funded mandates of the United States federal government and the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as by the failure of the Commonwealth to partner fully in programs such as Medicaid that make federal funding available to states and localities, and to fairly distribute that funding which is provided:

A. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the MVCCA urges the Board of Supervisors to look at all available sources of revenue for providing the additional funding necessary to fund the essential programs described herein. In addition to the Real Property Tax Assessment, other forms of revenue that should be considered by the Board of Supervisors should include consideration of a referendum on a meals tax, reinstatement of the vehicle registration (or "car sticker") tax, and increases in the BPOL tax rates;

B. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the MVCCA finds that the Transfer to Fairfax Public Schools proposed in the FY2011 Advertised Budget is inadequate to preserve the value of this critical, priority service and should ~~be increased by a minimum of \$81.9 million to~~ keep pace with enrollment growth and without consideration of any increased state education funding which may or may not become available during FY2011;

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C. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations recommends the Board of Supervisors act this year to adjust the Advertised Budget Plan to restore proposed reductions in funding in the amount of at least ~~\$12.75 million~~ 2,639,600 to avoid severe and long-term damage to the health and human services network;

D. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding be restored for operation of Libraries within the county in the amount of \$3.4 million;

E. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding be restored for operation and maintenance of parks and athletic fields in the amount of \$2,432,974;

F. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding be restored for public safety in the amount of \$3,579,375.

G. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding be restored for operation of the Circuit Court in the amount of \$253,270 for law clerks who provide a valuable service to Circuit Court judges and the public.

H. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors, in an effort to limit structural damage to County agencies due to budget cuts, redirects all funding for the HCD/RHA proposed development of North Hill for FY2011 into public safety, human services, and education, resulting in the delay of the North Hill project by one year.

I. H. BE IT FURTHER ~~BE IT~~ RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, in consideration of all of the above, urges the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in adopting a Budget for FY 2011 to include tax rates and revenue enhancements that take full advantage of the revenue sources available to the County as authorized by the Virginia General Assembly and thereby provide for County revenue sufficient to avert unacceptable loss of essential public services including environmental quality, libraries and schools, public safety, and the health and human services network.

END: MVCCA RESOLUTION BF2010-01