

Resolution of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, approved by the General Council on January 25, 2012:

EDUC-2012-01: MEANINGFUL CITIZEN INPUT TO FAIRFAX COUNTY'S FY2013 BUDGET PROCESS

(1) WHEREAS Fairfax County's Fiscal Year 2013 Advertised Budget Plan (FY2013 Advertised Budget) will be released on or about February 28, 2012; and

(2) WHEREAS the FY2013 Advertised Budget will include a variety of expectations, presumptions and recommendations with respect to revenue sources including but not limited to residential and commercial real property taxes (Revenue), funding levels for County services (Funding levels), and the proposed amount of support to be provided to Fairfax County Public schools (School Transfer); and

(3) WHEREAS, contrary to prior practice, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) will also on February 28, 2012, advertise the maximum residential and commercial real property tax rate (Maximum Rate) which the BOS may legally and actually adopt in May 2012 for application in FY2013 (Actual Rate), and

(4) WHEREAS Fairfax County relies heavily on real property tax revenue to support its budget so that the Maximum Rate and the Actual Rate are integral to evaluating and determining final Funding Levels and the School Transfer; and

(5) WHEREAS The County Executive, in his presentation to the BOS on November 29, 2011, preliminarily suggested that (1) small employee compensation increases, other expenses, replenishment of reserve funds and a School Transfer increase of about \$80Million would (at revenue projected on the FY2012 tax rate) result in a FY2013 shortfall of about \$115Million (County General Fund Shortfall), and (2) that each penny of residential real property tax rate will generate about \$19Million in revenue in FY2013; and

(6) WHEREAS on January 12, 2012, the Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools released a proposed budget (FY2013 Proposed School Budget) which, if adopted by the School Board, would require for full funding an increase in School Transfer of \$135.8Million, or \$55.8Million more than the \$80Million suggested by the County Executive in November 2011 (School Shortfall); and

(7) WHEREAS the County General Fund Shortfall as projected by the County Executive could be addressed by an residential property tax rate increase of approximately 6 pennies to an Actual Rate of \$1.13 per \$100, avoiding further reductions and preserving a small increase in School Transfer after several years of flat budgets and funding reductions; and

(8) WHEREAS the School Shortfall could be addressed by a further residential real property tax increase of 3 pennies to \$1.16 per \$100 avoiding further reductions in school services and addressing significant enrollment increases experienced during several years of flat transfers;

(9) WHEREAS the Actual Rate, Funding Levels, School Transfer and related matters will be the subject of citizen comment and testimony at April hearings on the FY2013 County Budget (Public Hearings); and

(10) WHEREAS meaningful citizen comment and testimony at the Public Hearings may be unnecessarily chilled and circumscribed by the arbitrary ceiling of the Maximum Rate, set without public hearing and prior to any citizen review of the FY2013 Advertised Budget; and

(11) WHEREAS meaningful citizen input on addressing the County General Fund Shortfall, on the proper balance between services and the Actual Rate, as well as on appropriate Funding Levels and School Transfer, requires that the Maximum Rate be advertised at a level which allows positive discussion and meaningful public participation; and

(A) NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, in order to permit meaningful citizen input to the FY2013 County Budget, improve and enhance public discourse on budgetary priorities and the appropriate balance between County services and tax burden, respectfully requests the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to advertise a maximum residential real property tax rate applicable to FY2013 of no less than \$1.16; and

(B) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations expresses no opinion at this time as to final tax rates, service funding levels or School Transfer appropriate for adoption for FY2013.