

MVCCA Resolution ED-2019-1

Meaningful Citizen Participation in the FY2020 Fairfax County Budget Process

WHEREAS Fairfax County's Fiscal Year 2020 Advertised Budget Plan ("County Advertised Budget") was publicly released on February 19, 2019, and included expectations, presumptions and recommendations with respect to revenue sources ("Revenue"), funding levels for County services ("County Funding Levels"), and the proposed amount of support to be provided to Fairfax County Public Schools ("School Transfer"); and

WHEREAS, on February 7, 2019, the Fairfax County School Board adopted its FY2020 Advertised Budget ("School Budget") stating the funds required from Fairfax County to appropriately fund schools for the 2019-20 school year ; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2019, the Board of Supervisors ("BOS") will advertise the maximum residential and commercial real property tax rate ("Maximum Rate") which the BOS may legally and actually adopt in May 2019 for application in FY2020 ("Actual Rate"); and

WHEREAS the Actual Rate, Funding Levels, School Transfer and related matters in the County Advertised Budget will be the subject of citizen comment and testimony at hearings on April 9-11, 2019 ("Public Hearings"); and

WHEREAS homeowners, businesses and citizens consistently give high priority to maintenance of quality of life, infrastructure and particularly the continued high quality of Fairfax County Public Schools both as an educational institution and as a prime asset and driver of the County's economy; and

WHEREAS it is possible that Revenue will not be adequate, using FY2019 tax rates, to support County Funding Levels and/or fully fund the School Budget and/or address citizen concerns regarding underfunded priorities in the County Advertised Budget; and

WHEREAS meaningful citizen participation in the budget process, input and testimony at the Public Hearings should not be unnecessarily chilled and circumscribed by the arbitrary ceiling of the Maximum Rate (which will be set without any public hearing); and the BOS should retain flexibility to respond to citizen input and County needs; and

WHEREAS meaningful citizen input at the Public Hearings and the BOS's ability to respond specifically requires that the Maximum Rate be advertised at a level which would fully fund the School Budget , the County Advertised Budget and provide some flexibility in order to promote positive discussion on budget priorities and the proper balance of taxes and services;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations ("MVCCA"), in order to promote meaningful citizen participation in the FY2020 Fairfax County Budget process, enhance public discourse on budgetary priorities and the proper balance of public services and tax burden requests the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to advertise a Maximum Tax Rate which would if adopted fully fund both the County Advertised Budget and the School Board Budget and also provide flexibility to respond to citizen input.

Adopted by the MVCCA General Council at its membership meeting on 2/27/19