



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, Inc.
P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-0203 <http://www.mvcca.org>

April 6, 2015

Supervisor Gerald Hyland
Mount Vernon District
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306

Dear Supervisor Hyland,

For your consideration and action, we attach
MVCCA Resolution (HHS) 2015-7
Fairfax County Planning for Human Services, FY 2016 and Beyond

This Resolution was approved, unanimously, by the General Council of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, meeting on March 25, 2015.

We request you to present our Resolution to Chairman Sharon Bulova for distribution to the Board of Supervisors and to support our recommendations, in upcoming public hearings before the Board of Supervisors that pertain to multi-year planning for FY 2016 and FY 2017.

We call your attention to the Resolved statements that urge (1) restoration of 3 critical programs proposed for elimination in FY 2016, (2) adoption of the full \$1.09 residential property tax rate as now Advertised, (3) speedy actions to diversify and increase sources of county revenue for FY17, and (3) contingency planning to protect County capacity to respond mid-cycle to such events as natural disasters and loss of federal or other non-County funds in critical service areas.

David Dale Judith F. Harbeck Patrick Rea
Co-Chairs, Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations

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Cc: Brett Kenney, Chief Aide to Supervisor Hyland
 MVCCA Secretary Elizabeth Martin

MVCCA Chair, Health and Human Services Louise Cleveland

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations approved this Resolution unanimously, in the General Council meeting of March 25, 2015.

MVCCA Resolution (HHS) 2015-7

Fairfax County Planning for Human Services, FY 2016 and Beyond

1. WHEREAS [Community Vision] The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) participates annually in the public review of the proposed Fairfax County (FC) budget plan for the next fiscal year and beyond, to assure that the fiscally balanced plan that must be adopted by May 1 will sustain the high quality of all public services essential to the well-being and quality of life of all who live and work in Fairfax County, including the services essential to effective County leadership within the available public and private network of health and human services.

2. WHEREAS [Proposed FC FY16 Multi-Year Budget Plan] The Fairfax County (FC) Executive has presented to the FC Board of Supervisors (BOS), for extensive public review, the *Fairfax County Advertised Multi-Year Budget Plan for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017*. His Summary letter (*Overview*, pages 1-87) states that the fiscal balance required by law must also weigh needs for “investment and affordability” and prove to be sustainable in our current multi-year context, so that—for FY16 planning—he has proposed the following conditions:

- ◆ A balance of estimated Revenues and required Expenses, in the General Fund, that projects a continuing trend of weak revenue growth and requires a package of Reductions/Savings (from FY15 levels) in Expenses—in all agencies—totaling \$26.86M (Million), of which \$10.01M are Reductions in Human Services (from eight agencies that comprise the FC Human Services System);
- ◆ Allocation of Available Revenue, \$98.6M above FY15, toward specific Expenses in the General Fund, increased only as required by BOS guidance, state or federal mandates, and contracted services, to include a \$66.67M transfer to FC Public Schools and \$10.28M to Human Services items (termed, “Inclusions”);
- ◆ Management of existing Fund balances in Capital Improvement and in Reserves, to show levels that may satisfy credit rating agencies and maintain FC’s AAA rating (esp. Reserves funded at 2% “Managed” and 3% “Revenue Stabilization” = 5% of General Fund); and
- ◆ Adherence to BOS guidance, to maintain the FY15 tax rate for residential property of \$1.09 per \$100/assessed valuation and also to maintain several BOS strategic Initiatives.

The FC Executive states, however, that the proposed Plan is not able to fund some of the BOS-established commitments to priorities and investments in strategic Initiatives, with only \$3.06M available for their consideration during the public review, so that difficult choices must be made this year, important investments must be postponed, some programs and positions are eliminated to achieve the required Reductions/Savings, and all remaining programs will be evaluated for outcomes and sustainability in a Lines of Business (LOB) process to be even more vigorously applied for FY 2017.

3. WHEREAS [County Human Services Role] Citizens participating in MVCCA continue to affirm that Fairfax County must play a leadership role in evolving and sustaining a strong public

and private network of health and human services, available countywide and accessible for all persons when and where most needed; so that

- ◆ the County’s Human Services System—when appropriately resourced—will plan and work, day and night, in cooperation with many public and private entities, to interweave the “safety net” of basic needs and emergency crisis response available to people in Mount Vernon District and the Richmond Highway Corridor, as well as countywide and regionally;
- ◆ the County’s eight Human Services agencies will help identify trends, seek causes of emergent community crises, and respond effectively through carefully targeted, evidence-based cost-effective programs and services that are seldom one-size-fits-all: scaleable, locally delivered services that are needed in the countywide continuum for prevention, early intervention, access to appropriate levels of care for recovery and sustainable progress toward positive living and contributions to family and community; and
- ◆ the County’s BOS-adopted strategic Initiatives—especially those designed with broad citizen engagement, participation of many ‘stakeholders’ in numerous advisory bodies to agree on goals, and public review of independent reports (with findings on root causes and recommendations for effective response)—will be resourced, year by year, for their implementation steps toward agreed goals.

4. WHEREAS [MVCCA Findings, on Human Services Inclusions] MVCCA acknowledges and supports the decision of the FC Executive to include a total of **\$10.28M** (increased from FY15 funding levels) in the proposed FY16 Plan, as fiscal requirements that will sustain the County’s Human Services commitments to negotiate contract rates, share costs in state and federally mandated activities, and convert grant-funded positions into sustained County funding for services to victims of domestic violence (many of whom are children), as well as fund some BOS priorities—services for public school special education graduates diagnosed with Intellectual Disability, young children in need of early School Readiness programs, and students in two new elementary schools that require nurse aides able to monitor medications and other health-related issues.

5. WHEREAS [MVCCA Findings on Human Services Reductions, by Agencies] MVCCA finds documentation in the County Executive’s summary *Overview* that the total package of Reductions across all agencies that is required for flexibility to balance the FY16 Plan as proposed is \$26.86M, of which **\$10.01M** (or \$10,012,266 rounded) are Reductions in eight agencies that compose the FC Human Services System. MVCCA finds upon scrutiny of each item and impact statement that few, if any, of the specified Human Services reductions meet the County’s ‘smart services’ definition of doing more with less. Many Reductions are eliminations in FY16 of positions held vacant for 1-3 years for purpose of restricting agency spending or positions being vacated by retirement of experienced program managers and licensed clinicians who will not be replaced in FY16. In some cases, program “savings” come at the cost of giving back state or federal revenues to the County, for a meager net gain. In some cases, a planned “redesign” or elimination of a program “saves” operating costs but opens a service gap that will be both critical and increasingly costly to the County—i.e. one that requires annual investment in an effective strategic approach, yet the Reduction/ Savings item planned in FY16 is allocated instead to “balance” the weak multi-year fiscal outlook. The County Executive’s Reduction decisions come with warning that all positions and programs that remain in the FY16 Plan will be reassessed under the Lines of Business (LOB) process, to be reported to a newly elected BOS by January 2016, in advance of the proposed FY17

Plan. MVCCA finds among the proposed FY16 Reductions—as itemized below in eight Human Services agencies—many that diminish an essential (though not ‘mandatory’) service, and some that entirely eliminate a critical and highly effective service that is also strategic in planning to mitigate or prevent unacceptable damage of a kind proven to be very costly, in both public dollars and community well-being:

- ◆ (HCD) Housing and Community Development, Reduction Total \$230,800, 0 positions (*Overview* p. 36) [**Note:** Though no HCD positions are cut directly, the County allocates \$225,000 for FY16 Reduction purposes, reducing 43% of the FCRHA Operating Fund that supports activities across all Housing programs, so that RHA staff vacancies are pushed up by 3 positions to a rate of 30 percent];
- ◆ (DFS) Family Services, RT \$4,318,037, 11 positions (pages 42-45) [**Note:** All 11 positions are removed by eliminating 3 prevention programs: “Eliminate Healthy Families Fairfax,” 8 positions, preventing child abuse and neglect, \$1,639,022; “Reduce Parenting Education Program by c. 50%,” 2 positions, \$216,816; and “Eliminate Good Touch Bad Touch Program, \$85,056, 1 position. “Eliminate Rent Relief Program” (for one-time emergency assistance per year), \$275,000, combines with a reduction in OPEH funding, to impact resources available for short-term emergency response for basic needs. Finally, “Eliminate Contract for Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities,” \$51,017, eliminates legal workshops for County citizens and trainings for County staff];
- ◆ (DAHS) Administration of Human Services, RT \$120,637 (p.45) [**Note:** Though 2 positions are reduced here, the required Inclusion of 20 new positions will facilitate the major improvement needed in timely billing for services and other administrative activities];
- ◆ Health Dept., RT \$627,575, 12 positions (p.47) [**Note:** \$232,693 and 3 nurse positions are lost through the decision to “Eliminate Healthy Families Fairfax,” which combines with DFS for the same program, so that MVCCA finds this total elimination of the HFF Program unacceptable—for reasons summarized in Whereas 6, Findings, on Strategic Initiatives];
- ◆ (OPEH) Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, RT \$360,317 (p.48) [**Note:** “Eliminate OAR Contract,” \$10,000 (with nonprofit organization that prevents homelessness and recidivism through services to formerly incarcerated adults) and “Reduce Funding for Short-term Financial Assistance,” \$269,100, with a plan to access federal Emergency Assistance Grant funding where it applies may reduce flexibility of response to basic needs];
- ◆ (DNCS) Neighborhood and Community Services, RT \$784,700, 4 positions (pages 49-50) [**Note:** Cutting three programs that offer resources to neighborhoods with children at risk will impact Mount Vernon/Lee neighborhoods near Richmond Highway: “Eliminate Three Computer Learning Centers Located at School Sites,” \$185,000; “Eliminate Funding for the Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program of \$100,000;” and “Eliminate a Community Developer III Position,” \$85,000];
- ◆ (JDRDC) Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, RT \$1,229,200, 0 positions (p.51) [**Note:** No reductions are planned in the Court services for families, children and youth];
- ◆ (CSB) Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, RT \$2,341,000, 29 positions (pages 57-59) [**Note:** All CSB Reduction/Savings items deserve further scrutiny. Several items appear to consolidate, reduce or eliminate capacity to respond to behavioral health crises in particular settings: “Eliminate One Filled Substance Abuse Counselor IV Position at Merrifield Center,” \$147,119, and “Eliminate Diversion to Detoxification Outreach Program and Three Positions” \$257,394, for a total of \$494,513 and 4 positions, and “Reduce Eight Positions and Limited Term Funding in Residential Treatment and Supportive Community Residential Services,” \$213,648 and 8 positions. When such CSB “Reduction/Savings” are possible without increasing risk to highly vulnerable people in one setting, these resources must be reallocated strategically to mitigate gaps in CSB services that meet critical under-served needs elsewhere, for example to strengthen access to 24/7 emergency behavioral health services for residents in southeastern Fairfax County, a long-standing concern in the Mount Vernon District and Richmond Highway Corridor].

MVCCA finds evidence that these proposed Reductions

- ◆ will weaken critical programs in 6 of 8 human services agencies, through at least \$4,081,811 in damaging FY16 Reductions (noted above) that appear to be justified solely for the purpose of budgeted “Reductions/Savings”;
- ◆ would eliminate three essential, highly successful programs in FY16 and cause unacceptable losses to County resources: (a) *Healthy Families Fairfax* (cuts totaling #1,871,661 and 11 positions, in two agencies), (b) Community development activities (3 items in DNCS) that include after-school *Computer Learning Centers*, free and accessible for children and families at risk that live in Annandale and the pyramids for Mount Vernon and West Potomac High Schools (totaling \$370,000 and 1 position), and (c) the *CSB Outreach Program* in the County’s strategic Diversion to Detoxification treatment (\$257,394 and 3 positions); and
- ◆ threaten now and the years ahead to reduce the County’s capacity for strategic leadership within the public and private network of services that must be available for all, as evidenced in the entire proposed reduction from the CSB totaling \$2.34M and 29 positions—of which a substantial portion (items totaling \$718,161 and 12 positions) should be reallocated to strengthen CSB’s capacity for crisis response countywide, provided that more County revenue were “available” for investment without resorting to other equally damaging “reductions/savings” (more in Whereas 6, on Strategic Initiatives).

MVCCA finds elimination of certain programs so unacceptable that these merit funding restored in the FY16 Plan along with every possible effort to raise County revenue available for these and other wise investments, especially in public and private partnerships, in FY 2017 and beyond..

6. WHEREAS [MVCCA Findings, on Strategic Initiatives]

MVCCA findings, in examining the Human Services Inclusions and Reductions in FY16 planning, are considered in relation to two recent reports:

- ◆ *Trends and Emerging Needs Impacting the Fairfax County Human Services System*, Dec. 15, 2014, 33-page report to the Human Services Council, in preparation for public review of the FY 2016 proposed budget plan, and
- ◆ *The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors’ Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County*, updating the County’s 2011 strategic view, published Feb. 2015 as a draft for public comment, and adopted March 3.

These reports inform the public view of human services in a broader context with other public and private resources that must respond to cross-cutting trends, emerging needs, and critical tests of community capacity to respond effectively to all hazards and emergencies. MVCCA finds some service reductions proposed for FY16 are unacceptable and must be restored by adjustments in the FY16 Plan that do not trigger other irreparably damaging reductions in order to make funds available this year. Some are also “canaries in the mines,” exemplars warning of threats to the County’s capacity to sustain its necessary leadership role in strategic planning and Initiatives, so that MVCCA finds evidence that a plan to increase County revenue and expand County fiscal capacity in FY17 and beyond must be adopted as soon as possible, to enable the incremental annual investments that will implement well-developed strategic Initiatives and help “Achieve Economic Success through Education and Social Equity” (Goal 5 of the economic strategy).

- ◆ *Health in All Policies* is an Initiative that needs sustained County participation in *Healthy Families Fairfax*, to prevent child abuse and neglect through in-home visits and training for more than 600 at-risk pregnant women and children from birth, at roughly 1/5 the cost per child of foster care placements. This highly successful public-private partnership has outstanding outcomes—spectacular success in prevention, cost-effective partnership pooling resources of two

FC agencies, three nonprofits, and federal funding of \$327,000, with steep savings over costs of placing children in foster care. Apparently the budgetary guidance imposed for the FY16 Plan will eliminate a service, however irreplaceable and effective, if it is not “mandated,” and the fact that the population proven to benefit from this program is three times what the current program is funded to serve is a deciding factor: if “not affordable” at \$1.87M in FY16, it will not be available in FY17 and never be considered scalable to meet the full need.

- ◆ *The Housing Blueprint* acknowledges a range of distinct housing needs and supportive services that offer incentives to thrive and maximize self-sufficiency and that can be implemented in “affordable” County steps that help leverage private resources. For example, County leadership could initiate a bond referendum designed to provide funds for permanent affordable housing, and sustainable housing programs in the current Housing Blueprint could serve to meet the County goal of ending and preventing homelessness in ten years.
- ◆ *Educational priorities for overcoming disparities in School Readiness* and the economic strategic plan should make everyone welcome County investments in community development such as *Computer Learning Centers*, located where they can attract elementary students from families least able to access computers into free after-school learning activities in safe locations in or near their neighborhoods. Yet the program now serving children in three such locations is proposed for elimination in FY16, despite low cost per child and demonstrated potential to complement efforts of school staff, parents, and community volunteers and even to leverage public/private initiatives like *Opportunity Neighborhood - Mount Vernon*. The County must invest now and find resources to seed such model programs in other high-need locations, in FY17 and beyond;
- ◆ Despite the blue-ribbon *Beeman Commission Recommendations*, the proposed \$2.34M CSB Funding and 29 Position Reductions—some closely related to emergency services—are not reallocated to CSB services, for example to provide better access to 24/7 emergency behavioral health services. This could be done (a) through co-location in the CSB’s Joe and Fredona Gartlan Center with nearby hospital and public safety resources or (b) via expanded capacity for localized mobile crisis response countywide, through multiple units that could each cover events nearby (staffed like the solo mobile crisis unit that now serves the entire county). Yet in the proposed plan, because the County is unable to sustain its FY15 level of investment in the CSB, it is not clear how recent strategic recommendations for expanded Youth Behavioral Health Services and 24/7 emergency and crisis response capacity will be resourced in FY16 or FY17.

7. WHEREAS [MVCCA Findings on “Investment and Affordability”} County service needs are growing but its capacity for services is not. MVCCA finds that more support is needed, from more diverse sources. Greater reliance on private enterprise (both nonprofit and commercial) to initiate projects through public/private partnerships has proven to be a way to move some forward. The BOS should encourage and intensify efforts to capture federal funds, also, particularly to reach goals in Sustainable Housing, early childhood care and development, and health services. More emphasis placed on forms of prevention and crisis response will avert rising costs: “pay now or pay much more later.” The BOS needs to act speedily to increase and diversify County income, to leverage participation from all other resources and thereby open greater opportunity for economic development that is built on human or social development (social capital) in the Plan for FY 2017.

A. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) recommends that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopt a Multi-Year Budget Plan for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017 that

- ◆ includes \$10.28 Million in Human Services funding increased as proposed in the Advertised FY 2016 Plan, in order to sustain essential contracted services and mandated programs, and
- ◆ restores some proposed Reductions from Human Services, in order to prevent the elimination in FY16 of certain programs critical to the health of families and success of children and youth, as specified herein:
 - Healthy Families Fairfax, a program preventing abuse and neglect of very young children, (\$1.87 Million and 11 positions);
 - Program resources for strategic community development, including afterschool Computer Learning Centers made free and accessible to young children from low-income working families in Annandale and the Mount Vernon and West Potomac High School Pyramids (\$370,000 and 1 position); and
 - CSB Outreach that is a critical component of diversion to the Fairfax Detoxification Center (\$257,394 and 3 positions).

B. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the MVCCA urges that the BOS continue their commitment to fund the current Housing Blueprint and to support the Bridging Affordability Program as proposed, to make housing available to those at the lowest income levels and those with disabilities and special needs as well as veterans.

C. BE IT RESOLVED THAT the MVCCA urges the BOS to maintain and not reduce the \$1.09 Tax Rate for residential property, as now Advertised, and to act speedily to diversify and increase the sources of County revenue by all means available to the County and recommended by the MVCCA, especially through BPOL tax reform and a Meals Tax.

D. FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the MVCCA recommends that the County estimate and acknowledge the full extent of risks, beyond direct County control, of fiscal and other contingencies, so that the County may build a contingency plan that will protect the County's fiscal flexibility and managerial capacity to respond mid-cycle to such events as natural disasters and/or loss of federal and other non-County funds in critical service areas.

-----END OF MVCCA RESOLUTION (HHS) 2015-7 -----