

3A
5-8-01

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**Special Public Hearing Meeting
Tuesday, April 17, 2001 - - 4:30 p.m.**

Present: Mayor Kerry J. Donley, Vice Mayor William C. Cleveland, Members of Council Claire M. Eberwein, William D. Euille, Redella S. Pepper, David G. Speck, and Joyce Woodson.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Sunderland, City Manager; Mr. Pessoa, City Attorney; Ms. Evans, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Jinks, Assistant City Manager; Mrs. Godwin, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Boyd, Director of Citizen Assistance; Ms. Davis, Director of Housing; Ms. Fogarty, Director of Planning and Zoning; Mr. Sanderson, Director of Real Estate Assessments; Ms. O'Regan, Director of Human Services; Ms. Federico, Director of Historic Alexandria; Legislative Director Caton; Mr. Neckel, Director of Finance; Mr. Baier, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services; City Engineer Baker; Fire Chief Hawkins; Mr. McCobb, Deputy Director of Transportation and Environmental Services; Ms. Steele, Special Projects Coordinator; Ms. Whitmore, Director of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Mr. Eiffert, Director of Office on Aging and Adult Services; Police Chief Samarra; and Lieutenant Butler, Police Department.

Recorded by: Mrs. Beverly I. Jett, CMC, City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

OPENING

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Donley, and the City Clerk called the Roll; all Members of City Council were present, with Councilwoman Eberwein arriving at 4:45 p.m.

(It was noted that a Notice of this Special Meeting had been previously served upon each Member of Council pursuant to a provision of the City Charter, a copy of the Notice certified by each member of Council being on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council.)

2. Public Hearing on The Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2002 (including Schools) and The Proposed Capital Improvements Program for FY 2002-2007 (including the School CIP). (#8 3/13/01)

(Communications received on this item are on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked collectively as Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 2; 4/17/01, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.)

The following persons participated in the public hearing on this item:

Walter Kloetzli, 1705 South George Mason Drive, Falls Church, VA, president of the Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery Alliance (SAARA), requested additional funding for substance abuse treatment; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 2 of this item;

Judy Noritake, 605 Prince Street, chair, Park and Recreation Commission, spoke in support of the budget for Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities;

Jeannie Cummins, 4 East Oxford Avenue, chair, Coalition for Mentally Disabled Citizens of Northern Virginia, urged Council to fund the development of a day treatment program and a residential program for twelve adolescents who have been identified by the school system as unable to stop using alcohol or drugs, supported the Community Services Board's request for supplemental funding to hire mental health professionals to provide direct treatment for fifty school students, and addressed other funding issues; a copy of her statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 3 of this item;

Patrice Green, 4818 West Braddock Road, youth member, Youth Policy Commission, urged continued support for the youth fund;

Valerie Perz, 4600 Duke Street, Suite 305, president, Education Association of Alexandria, supported the School Board's budget but there is not enough money allotted in the budget to retain quality teachers, and requested more funds to be used for professional development for educators, to fully staff the extended day program of a focus school, for employee hospitalization premium costs, and for a follow-up to the Mercer study for support personnel; a copy of her statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 4 of this item;

Chris Colligan, 603 Russell Road, president, Alexandria PTA Council, spoke in support of the School Board's budget; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 5 of this item;

Sherry Brown, 1600 Prince Street, #603, representing the Alexandria Arts Forum, spoke in support of funds for the Arts;

Councilman Speck suggested that the City move beyond the inflationary factor for the Arts grants from year-to-year and have some sort of standard that people could measure against.

Morgan Delaney, 207 King Street, president, Historic Alexandria Foundation, asked City Council for a special appropriation of \$50,000 to be used as part of "matching funds" to meet the matching requirements of a Federal government grant which is earmarked to underwrite partially the construction costs for the restoration of the Alexandria Academy building; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 6 of this item;

H. Stewart Dunn, 418 South Lee Street, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke in support of Mr. Delaney's request;

Pat Butler, 400 Woodland Terrace, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, supported Mr. Delaney's request and spoke to the problems with respect to restoration;

Mayor Donley requested a budget memorandum that would give Council some additional background on the Save Our Historic Treasures Challenge Grant that the Foundation has so that Council can fully understand the ramifications of that grant.

Councilwoman Pepper indicated that she hopes that the Alexandria Academy gets placed on a tour.

Victoria Robinson, vice president, John Adams Elementary School PTA, endorsed the School Board's budget and expressed concerns about the increase in students projected for John Adams and hopes that there is enough personnel to support these projected increases that are not currently reflected in the budget, including teachers, support staff and ESL teachers;

Anne Vroom, 811 Beverley Drive, president, George Mason Elementary School PTA, expressed concern about the leanness of the budget with respect to the number of reserve teaching positions; a copy of her statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 7 of this item;

Tom VanZoeren, 617 North West Street, president, Maury Elementary School PTA, supported the full funding for the School Board's budget as recommended in the City Manager's budget, and addressed technology benefits; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 8 of this item;

David Martin, 421 King Street, Suite 300, representing First Night Alexandria, spoke in support of funding for First Night Alexandria;

Members of Council and Mr. Martin participated in a discussion with respect to this funding.

Vice Mayor Cleveland requested that the amount of \$25,000 be added to the add/delete list with respect to First Night Alexandria's request.

Councilwoman Pepper concurred with this request.

Councilwoman Woodson also concurred and asked if this request does not survive the add/delete list, would Council consider matching this with a challenge grant?

Mayor Donley stated that there may be another way to do this, and that is to look at the marketing fund. He noted that the marketing fund was designed to provide grants like this, and usually they were one-time shots. He reported that the original First Night proposal came before the marketing fund and was approved and received \$25,000. Mayor Donley indicated that it might be time to reconsider the one-time allocation guideline that is followed in terms of the marketing fund.

Councilman Speck stated that the consensus is that Council would like to see First Night revitalized and requested the City Manager to identify procedurally what he would suggest as the best way for Council to do this that doesn't put Council into a position where it only succeeds if the City keeps making an allocation.

Maggie Williams, 203 Yoakum Parkway, #1011, president, Samuel Tucker Elementary PTA, spoke in support of the School Board's budget, and more funds for science and computer technology;

Phillip Bradbury, 1250 South Washington Street, chair, Community Services Board, spoke in support of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse budget and its supplemental budget items;

Theresa Edwards, 1212 Franklin Street, spoke in support of the School Board's budget and to the need for interpreters in all schools and at city hall, updated science lab material at G. W. Middle School, multicultural training, a facility for our youth, requested that DASH bus service be restored to the Southwest Quadrant neighborhood, and suggested that the blighting influence at the corner of Route 1 and Franklin be razed and the area be used for open space; a copy of her statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 9 of this item;

Daniel Rosenblatt, 628 South Pitt Street, chair, Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association, supported full funding of the ACVA budget request; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 10 of this item;

Sheryl Bell, 910 Gibbon Street, spoke to the hourly rate per child provided to childcare providers, health benefits, and the need for a track facility and suggested that a track surface be built around the Nannie J. Lee Center baseball field;

Members of City Council, Human Services Director O'Regan and Ms. Bell participated in a discussion with respect to the hourly rate for the providers and the need for a track facility.

Councilman Euille requested a budget memorandum with respect to the hourly rate paid to childcare providers, and expressed interest in the track initiative.

Councilwoman Woodson expressed concern about the hourly rate provided to childcare providers, and questioned why this has not been in previous legislative packages and asked that this item be placed in our legislative agenda for the next session.

Vice Mayor Cleveland indicated that the City not only look at what the State pays, but what is incumbent to living in the Alexandria area.

With request to Councilman Euille's budget memorandum, Councilwoman Pepper requested staff to include a cost analysis of what it might be to add a subsidy to the hourly rate that is paid to the day-care provider. She urged the City to begin somewhere and that the City should be asking the State for more money. Councilwoman Pepper would also like some reference to benefits addressed in the memorandum.

Ms. Pepper also would like the track around Nannie Lee Center addressed in the memorandum as well.

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Director Whitmore indicated that the track will be looked at during the needs assessment.

City Manager Sunderland stated that staff will look at the economics, give the background on who sets the rate and why the rate is so low.

Mayor Donley indicated that Council needs to get more information on how the hourly rate is decided.

Barry Schiftic, 1301 Hancock Avenue, representing the Alexandria Police Association, requested an increase in the COLA to 5%, an increase in amount provided to retirees for hospitalization insurance costs from \$106 to \$250, provide survivor benefits for retirees' spouses for hospitalization, increase cap for police comp time leave balance from 160 to 240 to comply with FLSA, provide longevity bonus for employes who have spent 15, 20, 25 and 30 years at 5% increments to be retroactive for the past five years, and increase the percentage paid for sick leave balance from 25% to 50%;

Councilwoman Pepper requested Barry Schiftic to provide Council with a memorandum providing details pertaining to his request(s).

Members of Council participated in a dialogue with Officer Schiftic.

City Manager will report back regarding the issues raised by Officer Schiftic.

Assistant City Manager Evans noted that the police are on a market analysis, not in the Quantitative Evaluation System, and there's probably a need to look at all the changes that the other jurisdictions have had to take another look market wise.

Councilwoman Woodson recognized Director of Housing Davis for an innovative plan she has been putting forth to increase opportunities for staff, City officials, police, school system officials to live in Alexandria. The program is through our Housing Trust Fund where dollars have been made available and, in fact, increased dollars to our public safety officers so that they can if they want to and if they can find a place that's suitable to them to stay here in Alexandria. She thanked Ms. Davis and her staff for putting forth the effort.

Robert Hickman, 2003 Mill Road, representing Alexandria Committee of Police, supported the Alexandria Police Association's request;

Councilman Speck, with respect to the issue of retention or attrition, noted that another element of the compensation policy was to insure that we had the ability to make adjustments either on an annual basis or on an emergency basis if we determined that we were lagging in such a way that it was having an effect on either recruitment or retention. If that's the case, we need to know about it. If any of the departments are slipping in that regard and we're either finding it difficult to attract people to come here or finding it difficult to retain people, then we have to make adjustments. Councilman Speck indicated to the City Manager if there are any indications that is happening Council needs to know about it regardless if it's in the middle of the budget cycle or not.

City Manager Sunderland stated that staff will provide Council with the turnover rate, but his recollection is for general employees last year was a little over 12 percent, and for the police department it was 5 percent.

Ronnie Campbell, 5222 Maris Avenue, spoke in support of funds for a totally accessible and inclusive special needs playground at John Adams Elementary School which has a high population of special needs children attending the school; a copy of her statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 11 of this item;

Lauren Leggett, 5740 Drake Court, #271, president, T.C. Williams High School PTA, spoke in support of the School Board's budget and encouraged Council to continue to fund schools at the highest possible level;

Marshall Cook, 2705 Mosby Street, supported most of the School Board's budget except the plan for extended day and block scheduling;

Bill Hendrickson, 304 East Spring Street, representing Del Ray Citizens Association, spoke in support of the plan to expand and renovate Duncan Library and the plan for traffic calming, requested more funding for and improvements to the area along Braddock Road between the railroad bridge and Mount Vernon Avenue, and expressed concern about the city-owned property on the corner of Braddock Road and Mount Vernon Avenue, and to redevelop this entire block;

Martin Brown, 4320 Seminary Road, Chief, Emergency Medical Services, INOVA Alexandria Hospital, spoke in support of the fifth medic unit;

Kenneth Kozlof, 4320 Seminary Road, INOVA Alexandria Hospital, spoke in support of the fifth medic unit;

Cindy Chambers, 604 West Windsor Avenue, representing the Environmental Policy Commission, supported the funds that relate to the environment and the quality of life;

Jim McIntyre, 6022 Morgan Court, representing the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee, spoke to the proposed budget and recommended that City Council consider a reduction in the real property tax rate of at least one cent per \$100 of assessed value; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 12 of this item;

Members of Council directed questions to Mr. McIntyre.

John Vollmer, 4600 Duke Street, Suite 429, representing Alexandria Firefighters Local 2141, supported the fifth medic unit, agreed with Police Association and Committee of Police for a request for 5% COLA, longevity bonus, and increase of supplement to retirees for health insurance from \$106 to \$250, as well as the request to provide survivor benefits;

Mayor Donley requested a budget memorandum on an explanation of the City's plans for health care including an option regarding the survivor benefit to include some cost figures as well.

Councilman Speck noted that he had requested the City Manager in his most recent budget memo on the matter of the contribution for health care and agreed that Council needs to find out more about the survivor benefit issue.

City Manager Sunderland will address all of the issues in a memorandum to City Council.

Lucille Davis, 300 Wythe Street, supported funds for Mental Health Program to address substance abuse;

Raymond Johnson, 505 South Henry Street, representing AFSCME Local 2737, requested an increase in COLA to 5 percent; a copy of his statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 13 of this item; and

Councilman Speck requested the City Manager to provide Council with a memorandum with regard to the City's overall attrition is a little higher than other jurisdictions. At some point over the next couple of months he indicated that it would be real helpful for Council to have more information about what's happening. He noted that we are always trying to stay within sort of the same framework with other jurisdictions and it looks like we are somewhere in the neighborhood of two to three percent higher than other jurisdictions overall, not public safety.

Councilman Speck complimented Raymond Johnson and Gwen Nelson on what a good job they are doing and the effects they are having on the downtown area with assisting businesses and monitoring the area.

Andrew H. Macdonald, 513 Robinson Court, spoke to balancing all of the City's needs, addressed several areas of environmental concern, suggested cutting the property taxes for certain City employees like police and fire and so on who live in the City and giving them a benefit, and commended the City Council for putting some real money into some of the environmental issues that do keep people here and make people want to remain part of the community.

Councilwoman Woodson asked if the City could provide some sort of a subsidy with respect to the property tax if that would be an innovative way to add to benefits that we provide to employees who are interested in staying in the City.

City Manager Sunderland indicated that there is a legal side and a policy side to this issue and that staff will do a memorandum to Council.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Vice Mayor Cleveland, seconded by Councilwoman Pepper and carried unanimously, City Council closed the public hearing. City Council will adopt the budget on Monday, May 7, 2001. The voting was as follows:

Cleveland	"aye"	Eberwein	"aye"
Pepper	"aye"	Euille	"aye"
Donley	"aye"	Speck	"aye"
	Woodson	"aye"	

3. Public Hearing on AN ORDINANCE to establish the real estate and personal property tax rates for calendar year 2001. (#19 3/27/00)

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated March 22, 2001, is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 3; 4/17/01, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.

A copy of an Informal Memorandum explaining ordinance is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 2 of Item No. 3; 4/17/01, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.

A copy of the ordinance referred to in the above item, of which each Member of Council present received a copy not less than 24 hours before said introduction, is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 3 of Item No. 3; 4/17/01, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.)

The City Clerk read the docket item.

It was noted that there were no speakers on this item; therefore, the public hearing was concluded.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Vice Mayor Cleveland and carried unanimously, City Council closed the public hearing. Second Reading and Final Passage of the Ordinance will be held on Monday, May 7, 2001. The voting was as follows:

Pepper	"aye"	Eberwein	"aye"
Cleveland	"aye"	Euille	"aye"
Donley	"aye"	Speck	"aye"
		Woodson	"aye"

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilman Euille, seconded by Vice Mayor Cleveland and carried unanimously, at 7:50 p.m., City Council adjourned the Tuesday, April 17, 2001 Special Public Hearing Meeting. The voting was as follows:

Euille	"aye"	Eberwein	"aye"
Cleveland	"aye"	Pepper	"aye"
Donley	"aye"	Speck	"aye"
		Woodson	"aye"

APPROVED BY:

KERRY J. DONLEY

MAYOR

ATTEST:

Beverly I. Jett, CMC

City Clerk