

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM THE ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON WOMEN FOR CITY FUNDING FOR THEIR NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN ALEXANDRIA

ISSUE: Consideration of a request from the Alexandria Commission on Women for City funding for their needs assessment of the economic status of women in Alexandria.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council determine if it wishes to allocate \$20,000 from the General Fund Contingent Reserves for the Commission's needs assessment of the economic status of women in Alexandria. While I fully support the study effort, I am reluctant to recommend that those funds be provided now, out of the context of the regular budget cycle. At the November 13 public hearing meeting, a member of the Commission noted that the data collected to date will not be current if the request is postponed and considered in Council's FY 2006 budget deliberations.

DISCUSSION: At Council's November 13 public hearing meeting, a representative of the Commission on Women, speaking on behalf of the Commission, requested that Council consider the Commission's request to provide \$20,000 for the Commission's needs assessment of the economic status of women in Alexandria. Council asked that the request be docketed for Council consideration.

This summer representatives of the Commission on Women met with the Mayor and the City Manager to present their request for \$20,000 in City monies to fund a comprehensive needs assessment of the status of women in Alexandria. The purpose of the assessment is to provide broad-based factual information about how women living and working in Alexandria are faring economically, and to make recommendations to Council and to agencies serving women and families. Following the meeting, the mayor wrote to the chair of the commission and said that, given the City's current budget constraints, the City could not provide the funding at this time. He suggested that the Commission bring this matter up during the Council's FY 2006 budget discussions.

In the meeting, the Commission representatives pointed out that the City's first needs assessment took place in the late 70's and led to the creation of the Commission and eventually, the Office on Women. An additional assessment was conducted in 1985, and there has not been a comprehensive update and analysis of this information since then.

Commission members already have gathered a great deal of data and now are asking for \$20,000 for professional research support and to complete the detailed data collection and analysis required for such a report. The final report would include community input and insights from City agencies serving women and would be presented to Council in December 2005.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed project would require \$20,000 from the City's General Fund Contingent Reserves to provide funds for the study. The contingent reserve now has \$738,700 available.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: October 29, 2004 Letter to Commission Chair Laura Mandala

Attachment 2: November 8, 2004 Letter to the Mayor and Members of City Council

STAFF:

Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager

Lisa Baker, Director, Office on Women

DATE: 11/9/04

Attachment 1

cc: HLE
LB
RJ
MJ

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER



City of Alexandria, Virginia

301 King Street, Suite 2300

Alexandria, Virginia 22314



William D. Euille
Mayor

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October 29, 2004

Laura Mandala
Chair, Alexandria Commission for Women
5108 Bellemeade Lane
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

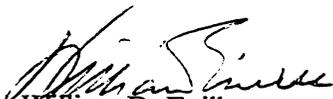
Dear Ms. Mandala:

I thank you for your recent memorandum regarding funding for a Women Needs Assessment Project.

A periodic evaluation of issues affecting women certainly is important. I appreciate the Commission undertaking this initiative, and applaud the efforts of the Commission and its volunteers in collecting the data needed for such an assessment. However, given current budget constraints, the City cannot provide the funding requested at this time. If the Commission wishes to pursue its request, I suggest that it bring the matter to Council's attention during our FY 2006 budget deliberations.

Again, I thank you for all that you, and the other Commission members, do to improve the quality of life for women living and working in Alexandria.

Sincerely,


William D. Euille
Mayor

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

TO: THE HONORABLE WILLIAM D. EUILLE, VICE MAYOR PEPPER
AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: LAURA MANDALA
CHAIR, ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

SUBJECT: FUNDING REQUEST FOR COMMISSION FOR WOMEN NEEDS
ASSESSMENT PROJECT

DATE: 11/8/2004

CC: PHIL SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER
MICHELLE EVANS, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
LISA BAKER, OFFICE ON WOMEN

As you may know, the Commission for Women has undertaken a comprehensive needs assessment of the status of women of Alexandria. The assessment design is comprehensive and spans topics including employment and earnings, issues relating to the poor and working poor, housing, transportation, and impact on children and the elderly. The purpose of the Assessment is to provide broad-based factual information about how women living and working in Alexandria are faring economically, and to make recommendations to the City and to agencies serving women and families for the future.

This effort, intended to be the first of several assessments of important aspects of women's lives, including health and education, fits the Commission's core mission: *Encourages equal opportunity for women in employment...health services, housing, education, government, community services, and credit; recommends legislation and policy changes.*

This project is long overdue. The City's first needs assessment took place in 1979 and was responsible for the creation of the Commission and, eventually, the Office on Women. An additional assessment was conducted in 1985. Since that time there has not been an analysis of the status of women in our City.

Using the skills and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor by our Commissioners we have gathered Census data, existing State and local data, and consulted with agencies who have conducted evaluations that can contribute to our work, such as the United Way's 2001 study, *Living from Paycheck to Paycheck: A Look at Alexandria's Working Poor*. Having gone as far as possible on our own time, labor and skills, we request support from the City to obtain the services of a research professional with the expertise to bring this mass of information together in usable fashion that will serve and inform the City and the agencies in our community. The Commissioners, all working women who are volunteers, do not have the necessary resources to complete the detailed data collection and analysis that is still needed.

Given their mission and funding restraints, the Office on Women does not employ professional research analysts. (It is important to note, however, that the Office on Women supports the Needs Assessment since the results will serve as a very valuable tool for their strategic planning and allocation of resources.) We request \$20,000 for professional research support and seek these funds in Fall 2004 as a part of the current fiscal year's allocations.

Once the data have been compiled and shaped into the report we envision, the Commission will present the preliminary results first to the City Council, and then hold public hearings to receive feedback from the community. We will also conduct a series of briefing meetings with the agencies in the City that serve women and families. Finally, we will prepare the final report, including Council, community and agency insights, and present it to the Council. We seek to complete this process by December 2005.

If you have any questions regarding this request for funding please do not hesitate to call me at 703.820.1041 or Needs Assessment Co-Chairs Susan Lowell Butler at 703.370.3334 and Joan Dodaro at 703.931.2716.

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11-23-04



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11/19/2004 11:36 AM
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Subject: City of Alexandria Website Contact Us - EMail for Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Council Members (alexvamayor@aol.com, delpepper@aol.com, council@joycewoodson.net, councilmangaines@aol.com, rob@krupicka.com, macdonaldcouncil@msn.com, paulcsmedberg@aol.com, rose.boyd@ci.alexandria.va.us, jackie.henderson@ci.alexandria.va.us, tom.raycroft@ci.alexandria.va.us)

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Time: [Fri Nov 19, 2004 11:36:25] IP Address: [65.209.100.195]

Response requested:

First Name: Diane
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Comments: I am writing to ask for your support for Docket Item #24 at the City Council meeting on November 23, 2004. The Needs Assessment is very important to the women in Alexandria and is The Commission for Womens major agenda item. A dedicated group of Commissioners has worked on this project but it has reached a point that outside expertise and manhours are needed. It was our understanding that the the letter we wrote per the request of the Mayor and City Manager was the procedure to follow to have the

request be considered for funding from the 2005
Discretionary Fund.

I will be out of the country and therefore unable to
attend the meeting Tuesday but trust that this
very important request will be given your
consideration and support.

Thank you

Diane Crawford-Batt