

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**Special Public Hearing Meeting
Monday, April 9, 2007 - - 4:00 p.m.**

Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Andrew H. Macdonald, Members of Council Ludwig P. Gaines, K. Rob Krupicka, Timothy B. Lovain, Redella S. Pepper and Paul C. Smedberg.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Hartmann, City Manager; Mr. Pessoa, City Attorney; Ms. Evans, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Jinks, Deputy City Manager; Police Lt. Uzzell; Ms. Boyd, Director, Citizen Assistance; Mr. Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Mr. Culpepper, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services; Mr. Johnson, Director, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Murphy, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget; Mr. Doku, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget; Mr. Eisinger, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Moore, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget; Mr. Routt, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget; Mr. Josephson, Acting Director, Planning and Zoning; Sheriff Lawhorne; Ms. Davis, Director, Office of Housing; and Mr. Lloyd.

Recorded by: Jacqueline M. Henderson, City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

OPENING

- 1. Calling the Roll.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Euille, and the City Clerk called the Roll; all Members of City Council were present.

- 2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2008 (Including Schools and Proposed Tax Rates) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2008-2013 (including the School CIP.) Adoption is Scheduled for May 7, 2007.

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

- 1. John Moorehead, 2804 Woodhollow Place, Ft. Washington, Maryland,

Black Fire Service Professionals of Alexandria, spoke in favor of a COLA for the Fire Department, noting they continue to respond to incidents with significant risk to health due to materials that cause cancer and other illnesses. He said they have not lost one life due to fire this year, which is due to the hard work and dedication of the fire, emergency medical service and code enforcement divisions through prevention and education, the cornerstones of reducing fire fatalities. He spoke of the recruitment war with their neighbors for the best and brightest and noted they will fall further behind in pay and recruitment if they do not receive a competitive cost of living raise to stay competitive with the surrounding neighbors. He said they request a fair days pay for a fair days work. He spoke of the off duty activities of the employees. He asked those in the audience to stand in support, to which approximately eight people stood.

2. Holly Sloan, 403 S. Fairfax Street, president, Women's Giving Circle of Alexandria, spoke about their programs and their organization and the investment they have. She said they have an investment strategy that focuses on early intervention and parents or caregivers. In just over two years of operation, they have invested over \$180,000 and countless volunteer hours to support programs that reach overburdened parents and caregivers early in a child's life. Ms. Sloan said their investments have included expanding the number of families served by Healthy Families Alexandria, initiating a developmental play group for caregivers and their children in the Arlandria area, and have committed to support, evaluate and potentially expand the parent leadership programs offered by Hopkins House. She thanked the City Manager for recommending a five percent increase in funds to support Human Services organizations, and she urged Council to incorporate the five percent increase into the budget.

3. William Dickinson, 805 N. Quaker Lane, City representative to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, spoke of its land conservation, open space, outdoor recreation, historic preservation and environmental education and he spoke of the NVRPA's programs and operations, funding, the environment, land, and its water supply. Mr. Dickinson said they have kept their request low at five percent.

4. David Pritzker, 4113 N. Garland Street, City representative to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, expressed appreciation for the past and support of the City for the activities and facilities of the regional park authority. He noted that they have several parks in Alexandria, some are money makers and some are money losers. He spoke about Cameron Run Park and Carlyle House, and he urged full funding of the NVRPA request.

5. Kristina Rasmussen, 240 S. Reynold Street, said she and her husband are renters and are saving to buy a home in the Northern Virginia area. She said property tax relief can help some segments of the population, but there is a far larger swath of residents who won't qualify for affordable housing programs. She said the Council can control the price of property taxes. She said the City needs to compete for residents, just like it competes for public employees, and cutting taxes would make Alexandria a more attractive place to live for middle class families who have to watch

the bottom line. She urged Council to adopt a budget with a property tax rate that lowers the net tax bills for all Alexandrians.

6. David Cordell, 2407 Crest Street, co-chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for ACPS, spoke of schools and the quality of its education and asked Council to fully fund the Schools budget and asked Council to in fact increase the budget. He said cutting the budget will allow larger class size and a decline in quality and they need highly qualified teachers, who need to be rewarded with a COLA. He said ways need to be found to reward those teachers who excel in the form of increased performance bonuses. He also noted that every dollar spent on a child with a disability is an investment in that child and in the long run, an investment in the society in which they live. He said the Therapeutic Recreation Department is a life line for many children and teenagers with disabilities, as well as their families, and he asked that the City continue to fund that Therapeutic Recreation Department. Mr. Cordell asked that the City commit itself to ensuring children, teenagers and adults with autism and other disabilities have the resources they need to lead an independent life.

7. Kristin Langlykke, 7 Sunset Drive, director, Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc., said she wished to share the benefits of the Arlandria Health Center, and she submitted a letter from Toni Thomas, who was unable to attend.

8. Anna Montes, 1502 Commonwealth Avenue, Apartment 4, spoke for the Alexandria Health Center Clinic, noting that it helped her and her eight year old daughter, and she they gained access to the National Institute of Health in Bethesda where they helped her daughter, noting that if it weren't for the doctors, nurses and people who work at the health center, her daughter probably would have lost her vision and would be blind today.

9. Glen Hopkins, 1224 Princess Street, spoke of child care for Hopkins House for low income working families and he urged Council to put the \$1.1 million of needed money for child care subsidies in the FY08 budget and to clear the list of children waiting for child care. He said the parents are not asking for a hand-out but a hand as they work to become part of the City's economic mainstream. He noted that at Hopkins House over the past year, the number of fee subsidized children fell by 25 percent, and all that changed were the rules this past year, as families formerly eligible for child care subsidies in Alexandria and all over Northern Virginia found themselves ineligible or forced to the end of the list.

10. Kari Galloway, 1 East Loray Avenue, executive director of Friends of Guest House, a transitional home for women coming out of jail and prison, said they were recently in jeopardy of closing forever, but when it was open, they had served over 900 women. She noted the large impact on the community for helping to reintegrate women who are coming back into the community. Ms. Galloway said they are trying to expand their program to reach women who don't need a place to live but still need their services.

11. Wendy Albert, 4020 Tulsa Place, said she is a small business owner for a non-profit business, has served as chair of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, and she spoke in support of the City Manager's recommendation for ACVA funding. Ms. Albert said the marketing of the City as one of the country's most treasured historic destinations has proven to be profitable to their economy, noting that the ACVA has worked in partnership with the City, the business communities and their residents and tourism has contributed to Alexandria's economy, which has almost doubled. She noted the decrease in hotel occupancy in the last fiscal year, which translates to a decrease in the hotel transient tax and a decrease in the \$1.00 room night tax, however, Alexandria's hotels average daily rate has increased by over 10 percent. She said the ACVA needs to continue its strong marketing efforts for Alexandria and noted the potential for tremendous growth.

12. John Varghese, 801 N. Asaph Street, treasurer of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, president of the Hotel Association of Alexandria, spoke about ACVA and the Hotel Association working in partnership to benefit the City's economy. He said the Hotel Association requested the City to impose the \$1.00 occupancy tax to fund ACVA marketing. Mr. Varghese noted the new hotel properties coming on board, which will add 5,900 rooms. He asked for funding of the current ACVA budget and to look for ways to increase the spending in marketing Alexandria.

13. Charlotte Hall, 205 The Strand, vice president of Potomac Riverboat Company and a member of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association Board, said the ACVA has delivered consistent marketing messages with strong impact. She said they have had successful programs and a high return for the City. She said that in 2007, two studies are planned which will provide the basis for the development of a strong five-year strategic plan for the City's tourism industry. She said there is a review of current brand and advertising materials, which will take into account the input of all Alexandria tourism stakeholders and will become a roadmap for marketing Alexandria in their changing and competitive tourism environment. She said they look forward to building a new tourism strategy in partnership with the City and the business and residential communities. She thanked Council for the new water taxi service in conjunction with National Harbor.

14. Kevin Brockway, 1767 King Street, Hilton Old Town, spoke about concerns for the ACVA marketing budget and hotel tax increases. He noted they are in the midst of several additional hotel projects and noted the Alexandria market for February was down 11.8 percent in occupancy, while D.C., Maryland and Virginia overall as a market were flat, and overall in the last three months, Alexandria was down 13.7 percent and D.C., Maryland and Virginia were up 1.1 percent as a combined market. He noted they are in a serious downturn of occupancy, which will affect them adversely. He noted other hotel properties being planned in the region and said it is not the time to raise the lodging tax to where they are no longer competitive. He said the hotel group supports the elimination of the transient lodging tax exemption for government employees. Mr. Brockway said reducing the marketing spent for tourism at this time period is a critical concern to the overall service sectors in the City. He urged

Council to increase the marketing dollars for the ACVA and to be very creative in how to drive the tax base in the City so it does not hurt the service sector.

15. Charlie Banta, 5000 Seminary Road, general manager, Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, vice president of the Alexandria Hotel Association, spoke to the potential increased occupancy tax and spoke of the competitive tax structure in the area. He said with the 10.5 percent tax and dollar per room per night, that equates to an average rate of about \$150.00 at his hotel, to about 11.2 percent in total taxes. Arlington is at 10.5 presently, Fairfax County is at 9 percent, Loudoun County is at 10 percent, Prince Georges at 10 percent, Montgomery is at 12 percent, and D.C. is at 14.5 percent. He asked that they not raise the tax for increased revenues until they know where all the other moving parts are going to fall in place.

16. Eileen Longstreet, 700 Princess Street, representing Senior Services of Alexandria, spoke in support of funding for Senior Services and noted they manage two programs funded by the City, and she noted that most of the issues they deal with are people with failing memories, people who have hearing problems, people with multiple disabilities and whether they are using the DOT paratransit or using senior taxi, the kind of patience and dignity that is provided to the seniors will not be provided by an \$8.00 an hour taxicab employee. She said she hoped the funding would remain stable. She also commended the City on having a performance based budget. Ms. Longstreet said she hoped that as it moved forward in considering senior programs, that they remember that the seniors are just as in need of respect and dignity as their children and youth, as well as the parents.

17. Victor Glasberg, 121 S. Columbus Street, spoke about schools, education and taxes. He said the real reason he is speaking for support of the schools is economic. A dollar spent on their children today is a dollar not spent on the police tomorrow, not spent on social services tomorrow, not spent by the courts, not spent by the sheriff. It is the biggest bang for the buck it can get by supporting the schools, and he urged Council to support the educational programs in full in the school and preschool system. Mr. Glasberg said on taxes, one has to pay taxes because he needs the services from his City, even if he doesn't use them personally, such as Police, buses and libraries. He urged Council to be bold and courageous and to do the right thing by their students, their kids and their City.

18. Francis Chase, 4600 Duke Street, president of the Education Association of Alexandria, spoke for funding for the school system and said he fully supports the Superintendent's budget, which has a COLA, step increase, increase for their support staff and increase in the School Board contribution toward health insurance, and he asked Council to do the same thing. He spoke of the recruitment of teachers. He noted that one of the cornerstones of a good community is the school system.

19. Susan Lank, teacher at Maury Elementary School, spoke of funding for the schools. She said she pays about \$2,000 a month for her children for child care, and that is going up five percent because of cost of living, and she noted that almost

half of her salary will go to her children's child care. She said she and her husband would like to be homeowners in Alexandria, and she would like her children to attend the small, strong competitive school system that ACPS has been and will continue to be with Council's support. She asked Council to fully fund the Superintendent's budget.

20. Marianne Hetzer, 604 N. Mansfield Street, president of the PTA Council, spoke of the schools and the education provided to the students, noting that questions have been asked and answered and no blaring mistakes or excesses have been identified, so they are left with a justifiable and reasonable budget that provides the education that their 10,000 students deserve. She said they must find these resources and it may have to be from a real estate tax increase. She said that with the tax rate decrease last year, combined with the cumulative increases over the past five years was too severe and that decrease has created this year's unfortunate predicament. She said they must create revenue alternatives that do not put undue pressure on residential property owners. The unfair burden creates an atmosphere of skepticism and doubt that leaves residents to question expenses that would never be questioned on the basis of their merit. She asked Council to judge the school budget on its merit alone and vote accordingly.

21. Richard M. Moose, 317 South Street, said the great majority of Alexandrian's hope that Council having made such a good start on holding the line on budget increases and scouring over the cost of the operation of the City that they will continue and persevere and see through the very good start they have made. He said Council has done its best to apportion the burden for holding the line in a fair manner. He said he is apprehensive that everyone has put in for budget increases and hoped they would find a way to do that within the ceilings and tax rates that were originally announced. Mr. Moose said his concern is that if they begin to deconstruct the carefully composed budget, that they risk it coming apart and if it begins to come apart, he thought tax bills would rise again. He urged Council and others to recognize and appreciate that considerations heard today almost without exception have already been taken into account.

22. Rick Dorman, 2724 Kenwood Avenue, chair of the board of directors of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, read a prepared statement from the Chamber of Commerce, which states that the Chamber has encouraged Council to hold increases in the budget within five percent and to keep increase in real estate tax bills to a minimum. He noted that the budget shows that they must expand their tax base, which becomes a win-win situation for the community. He said they should not expand the budget by burdening citizens and businesses with increasing real estate taxes and be creating new types of taxes to levy on businesses and residents. They must develop a vision and strategy for economic development. One of the key opportunities is the new vision for the waterfront, which should be viewed as an asset for all the citizens.

23. Jay Day Gravel, 801 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 402 acting president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, read a prepared statement from the Chamber of

Commerce, which states that the Chamber is looking forward to continuing its work as part of a collaborative group to develop recommendations to help the City take advantage of National Harbor offers. He said they urge Council to give serious consideration to the recommendations which will come to Council in June and the \$300,000 of supplemental funding for National Harbor is a great start. He noted that when visitors step off the water taxi, they must have appealing and accessible transportation to get them to the City's historic sites and signage and a trolley bus to move the visitors up and down King Street, noting that the trolley should be free and frequent. Mr. Gravel suggested bringing back the King Street trolley and to consider opportunities for additional connections to the current Metro system, also utilizing the DASH buses.

24. Pam DeCandio, representing the Chamber of Commerce, read a prepared statement from the Chamber of Commerce. She spoke of the need for new jobs and providing economic incentives to ensure that the City is business friendly, needing to attract new employees and keep the ones they already have. Ms. DeCandio spoke of Landmark Mall and asked Council to do whatever possible to encourage the three property owners to agree upon appropriate development. She said a grid system between Eisenhower and Duke would take congestion off of Duke Street and help Landmark to be more attractive for development.

25. Elizabeth Chisman Moon, 110 West Mason Avenue, representing the Chamber of Commerce as chair elect, read a prepared statement from the Chamber of Commerce, and she spoke of the Chambers support of the work being done by the Mayor's blue ribbon economic sustainability task force, noting that economic sustainability is the future of the City. She said City departments and non-profit entities promote tourism, but none are accountable for ensuring that the City is economically sustainable for the long haul. She said they need to define the functions of economic development. She said the Chamber believes that a high level position within the City government, on the level of a deputy city manager, should be charged to champion economic development interests on behalf of the City. She said the City must develop an educational program to provide accurate information to the citizens about the need for economic sustainability and the benefits of economic development. She also spoke of workforce housing for middle income homeowners, such as office workers, teachers, police officers, firefighters and nurses, so that in the event of an emergency, the first responders don't have to first jump in their cars to drive into the City.

26. Todd Ruopp, 125 Cameron Park Place, president for ARHA North America, member of the government relations of the Chamber of Commerce, read a prepared statement from the Chamber of Commerce, speaking about City employees pay. He noted that because the City's pay structure also includes a merit pay increase, even with no cost of living increase, 8 out of 10 City employees will receive a merit pay increase this year of between two and five percent, however, there are employees at the top of their grade who can receive no further merit increases. He said the Chamber supports a COLA of one percent and said the City should consider whether the current compensation system needs to be changed and to evaluate and revise the current pay

raise system.

27. Lonnie Rich, 1199 N. Fairfax Street, 10th floor, 2006 chair of the Chamber of Commerce, read a prepared statement from the Chamber of Commerce, speaking to the schools budget. He said citizens depend on school system leadership to provide openness in the school budget process and expect to know how their dollars are being spent. He said the money devoted to the schools over the past few years have funded some big successes. He said this year's budget will result in higher real estate tax bills unless some choices are made, noting that the school budget includes a two percent COLA for school employees where the City's budget includes none. The Chamber suggests that both the City and school employees receive a COLA of one percent.

28. Dorothy Mitchell, 1224 Princess Street, president, Hopkins House Parent Association Board, urged Council to allocate the \$1.1 million to fully fund the child care subsidies in Alexandria. She asked that Council think about the children and the parents who have to pay the high cost of child care along with the high cost of living.

29. Traci Hopkins, 5614 Chapin Avenue, parent of a Hopkins House Preschool Academy student, spoke of child care subsidies and urged funding of the child care and evaluation of it and said the \$1.1 million would help the children.

30. Nancy Belmont, 816 A N. St. Asaph Street, co-owner of Belmont Inc., a new communications firm, and past chair and current member of the board of directors of the Alexandria Small Business Development Center, thanked the City Manager and budget staff for the recommendation to continue the SBDC's \$120,000 funding and urged Council to support that recommendation. She noted that the SBDC staff assisted 226 businesses in 2006, and during March 2007, the staff conducted 81 counseling sessions and helped 48 businesses. She also noted how the SBDC helped her business win a seven year \$3.5 million contract. She said the business owners are their residents, and a strong business community creates a stronger fabric for the City that they all enjoy and it balances the tax base. She said they are residents, they have families, they pay property taxes and they pay business taxes.

31. Sean McGowan, 2003 Mill Road, spoke about the cost of living adjustment and said they anxiously await the decision on the COLA. He stressed importance of the pay adjustments and said the hard working City employees deserve the pay increases and have earned them.

32. Patrick Cozza, 2001 Mill Road, representing the Sheriff's department 215 sworn and civilian employees, spoke about the three separate pay scales for public safety and said that Council assured them that although divided, the pay scales would remain the same for the foreseeable future. He said that less than five months later, in January, the Alexandria Police Department received a market rate adjustment, and they are in full support of that and they deserve it. He said deputy sheriff's three's and four's now lag behind other public safety counterparts and recruitment, already tough, is becoming even harder. To maintain a high level of professionalism and to aide them in

recruiting the best employees and retaining those employees, they are asking that deputy sheriff's three's and four's be brought on par with other public safety agencies. He said that the Q step would benefit few within their organization, and a young work force is looking for the here and now, not what might come 25 years down the road. He said they are in full support of the COLA and elimination of the Q step in the budget.

33. William Newman, 2525 Gadsby Place, president of the Hamptons at Stonegate Homeowner Association, representing daily users of the Metro transit system, and said they wished to voice disapproval of the Metro Authority's plan to discontinue route 7B, which is based on financial considerations, and he understood the funding comes from the City of Alexandria. Mr. Newman said the proposed route will take twice as long as it presently does. He said they see ridership increasing every day - the buses are full and are standing room only. He noted two or three more high-rise condo structures are about to be opened in that same area near Stonegate. He said they will see an increase in the bus route rather than a decrease.

34. Vicky Mebhuvar, 3801 Mt. Vernon Avenue, representing Tenants and Workers United, spoke in support of full funding for the public schools budget, and she said the highest quality education is important for the African American and Latino community who attend the schools. She asked how they can prepare each and every student to go on to college and how can they address the achievement gap so the black and brown minority is prepared to fully and equally participate in society. She urged full support of funding for the school systems budget and pledged to work to ensure that the money is well spent so that every student who graduates from Alexandria schools is prepared for college.

35. Sean McEneaney, 2736 Franklin Court, chair of the budget advisory committee for the School Board, board member of the Chamber of Commerce, and is chair of the Early Childhood Education Commission, spoke, as chair of the Early Childhood Commission, in favor of funding for early childhood education and noted that in 2005, the Commission was asked to look at universal access to preschool, and in October 2006, they submitted their preliminary findings and made five recommendations, two of which are relevant to the budget. The first is they must address the needs of the children zero to five rather than just four year olds, and second, they need to sustain the programs they have before they look to create new ones. He said they have to provide a healthy environment that nurtures social, emotional and cognitive development at the earliest age. He asked Council to add funding to the budget that will offset some of the loses the City programs have had, so they can sustain the services necessary for their children to succeed.

36. Bill Rossello, 501 Cathedral Drive, vice president of the Alexandria Soccer Association, spoke to the CIP budget and the playing fields and the children that use the fields. He noted that 15 percent of their players are subsidized by their club and they currently have 30 kids receiving at least \$1,000 in subsidy, and he said they administer the top soccer program for disabled kids. Mr. Rossello noted the fields crisis and thanked Council for listening to them previously and for including synthetic turf

fields in the CIP budget. Mr. Rosselo said they don't think the current plan to install one turf field per year over the next five years addresses the crisis quickly enough, and they are asking that Council start accelerating the plan to get five fields in the next two years. He said the fields are getting worse, not because of a maintenance problem, but because of overuse.

37. Annabelle Fisher, 5001 Seminary Road, said renters contribute to the tax base and contribute to the property tax rate in terms of the buildings they live in, as renters pay the property taxes on the buildings. She thanked the City Manager, Mr. Jinks and Mr. Johnson for putting out a pretty good budget. She spoke about the school's budget and said she attended the work session with the School Board and she commended Mayor Euille for the good questions he posed to the School administration. She said no one could answer the questions, such as janitorial service and salary increases. She said she didn't hear the Superintendent saying that they would take a cut and won't take a COLA, but instead the Superintendent has to defend in the newspaper the high salary raises in that office. She said she doesn't believe in a COLA and a step raise, as it should be one or the other. She said on grants, if the program isn't working, they can't keep bailing them out, and she hoped Council would consider that as social service agencies come before Council. She asked if the Police, Sheriff and City cars wouldn't park in the metered spaces around City Hall and instead parked in the parking garage, so they could make some money.

38. Jeannie Cummins, 4 E. Oxford Avenue, RPJ Housing, thanked Council for establishing the penny fund in Alexandria. She said that over the past year, they have been able to preserve 198 units through the efforts of several non-profit affordable housing organizations. Both RPJ Housing and Wesley Housing have made a decent dent in affordable housing and the work has been done by several non-profits, joining long-time established organizations such as Community Lodgings. She said they develop by the skin of their teeth and need operating dollars to support their development activities. Right now, she said, the only operating dollars go 100 percent to the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation. She said they would like to see the existing pot of money to be distributed more fairly so that both the non-profits that have been doing some really good work in Alexandria, as well as the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation, all have an opportunity to benefit from that money. Ms. Cummins echoed the concerns of the parents in the school system and she didn't want them to forget the values in the budget.

39. Bob Bogan, 1224 Princess Street, chair of the Hopkins House Community Outreach and Public Education Committee, said the committee meets monthly to track policy issues that affect or have the potential to affect Hopkins House children and their families. Mr. Bogan said the child care subsidy issue is of concern and over 300 Alexandria children are in need of help to child care. He urged Council to allocate the \$1.1 million to fund child care subsidies and clear the waiting list.

40. Christopher Bedwell, 110 N. Royal Street, fiscal officer with the Department of General Services, said he is the son of a retired public educator and he

spoke about the health insurance premiums paid, specifically the employee/employer share in the Alexandria City Public Schools. He said some modifications could be made to the employer/employee share of health insurance premiums in the '08 schools budget, as administrators are receiving 100 percent employer contribution to the health care premiums, which are typically the highest paid members of the school system. He said there are no 100 percent premiums that are covered by the employer in the City government - it is share of 6.6 to 38 percent on the employee side, depending on the plan, to adjust to 10 percent next year, and for those employees hired after July 1, 2006 that contribution is already at a minimum of 10 percent. Mr. Bedwell said that at the ACPS work session, the question was posed to the school system and they indicated that they are looking at it, but Council talked about looking at it last year, and he wondered why the schools didn't make that same consideration last year. He noted the cost differences in the different plans offered between the City and the school system and they should take advantage of the different cost savings if it can.

41. Margo Williams, 102 W. Bellefonte Avenue, parent of children in Alexandria's schools, said that while no child left behind raises the bar each year, the schools must work harder and be more creative to meet the challenge. On top of that, the City has the highest free and reduced lunch percentage, highest ESL percentage, and the highest mobility rate in the region. It also has one of the most highly educated populations in the country, and it needs to attract and retain excellent teachers and offer an ever wider variety of programs and services to meet the needs of its population. Ms. Williams spoke for funding for the ACPS budget in its entirety.

42. Julie N. Jakopic, 3210 Landover Street, chair of the planning and assessment committee for Hopkins House, supported the recommendation of the Early Childhood Commission that the \$1 million for child care funding be made. She said their funding stream is called child care or early childhood education. She said she does a lot of work with state and local government and community based organizations, and the source of the funding problem they have is largely new regulations for the temporary assistance to needy families program - welfare - and the redirection of funds to those families. She said they need to think about where the help is coming from, as it is largely coming in reductions of availability of funding for working families. She said the working families work because they have adequate early childhood education and child care for their children. She said there are 50 working families at Hopkins House alone who have received \$90,000 in scholarship funds. She said she cannot think of an investment they make that has a higher return than investing in early childhood education for their kids.

43. John W. Timmons, 2408 Davis Avenue, current president of the Alexandria soccer association, spoke about their financial aide situation for soccer and noted that 15 percent of the kids are on financial aide. He said if they can get five fields in 2009--five turf fields, putting two in at Braddock Road, combined with the fields at GW, combined with the fields moved from Potomac Yard after the bridge project is done, in combination with Arlington, they could sponsor the Cherry Blossom Invitational, which generates a tremendous amount of revenue for the small businesses and

revenue for their club, that they would then put into the scholarship and outreach programs.

44. Emily Siegel, 1267 Dartmouth Court, said she is a 15 year-old high school freshman and member of the girls soccer team, the Alexandria Arrows, and she said several of her teammates are present with her to represent the team. She said the Washington Area Girls Soccer – WAGS, consists of 10 age levels and is the highest competitive soccer league in the D.C. area. She said that in order to remain successful, they need to have practice and playing fields available. She noted that they need a turf field, as it allows practice in all types of weather. She said they are unable to practice at all during late fall and winter months, as the fields need to be repaired, and the turf field at Minnie Howard will not be available for travel soccer. She asked Council to provide them a facility that will allow them to be competitive.

45. Leonard Rubinstein, 17 West Cedar Street, said he submitted a letter, along with five other families, concerning schools in Alexandria. He said the families who sent the letter have lived in the City for 20-25 years and sent their kids to public schools. He noted that the schools are unique because of diversity and is a reality of who the kids are and the values they have. He said they made a commitment to lower class size and lower student/teacher ratio in the region, and other data is even more extraordinary. Mr. Rubinstein asked Council to think about the scholarship fund, to think about the kids and make a commitment to full funding.

46. Rose Cameron, 2424 Cameron Mills Road, said her daughter has played soccer in Alexandria for 10 years and sports has taught her valuable life lessons and how to live a healthy lifestyle. She asked Council to give their children all the facilities they need to be able to continue playing soccer in Alexandria. She asked Council to allow more funds for turf fields and said they need to give their children the ability to exercise on the fields.

47. Daniel Pattarini, 2917 Mosby Street, said he is the parent of a first grader at Cora Kelly Elementary School, and he asked for fully funding of the ACPS schools budget. He challenged Council to accept that the decision last year to lower the real estate tax rate by 10 cents is the decision that has led them to where they are today. He said they have to decide what it's worth to fully fund the schools budget. He said that fully funding the ACPS budget will cost most less than a dollar a day. He invited those who scoffed at \$16,000 per pupil to go into the schools, meet the administrators at central office and have a positive impact on the school system.

48. Bud Miller, 115-D South Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria Taxpayers United, a non-partisan, not for profit organization that was formed to address the defunct BID tax fight from a few years ago, thanked Council for greater transparency and accountability for all sections of the budget. He said that despite the different special interests present today, the people of Philadelphia or Detroit would love to have the City's financial issues. He said it is the first he has heard of a turf crisis, and he asked that Council understand that the taxpayers have a crisis. He said when he

moved to the City, he was paying about \$3,200 a year in property taxes and now pays \$7,000, and the City budget has grown from the year 2000 from \$361 million to \$562 million in 2006. He said he gets \$18,232 per student, putting the City at the highest funding per student in the entire Washington area. He said the City might want to consider reviewing other alternatives methods of putting the budget together.

49. Kevin Bergen, 1402 Oakbrooke Avenue, said after serving 26 years in the military, he went to work for the City's homeless shelter on Mill Road for three years as a case manager and assistant director, and then went to work as a probation officer for the Virginia Department of Corrections. He said the overwhelming majority of clients were undernourished in terms of education, family stability and in life and social skills, which form the foundation for pre-K and child day care programs offered at Hopkins House. He said money spent on child day care and early childhood development will save the City money in the long-run.

50. Julie Nemon, 36 Kennedy Street, said she is the parent of two children at Mt. Vernon Community School and they also attend Mt. Vernon Recreation Center after school program. She said that in looking at how to be more fiscally prudent, she has been surprised at some of the recommended cuts--teachers aides and kindergartens and first grades, social workers, literacy coaches, funding for homework clubs, tag teachers, the list goes on. She said that is not what she would have expected at the first suggestion of tightening belts. She said the recommended cuts may target different sectors, but have one thing in common - their cuts would directly impact the quality of education the children receive. Ms. Nemon asked if the City would really transfer the burden of a smaller budget to low and middle-income families, which cannot afford to absorb the results of some of the discussed changes. She said there has been rumors that the City is looking to increase revenue by charging fees to attend the recreation centers after school programs, and that thought has raised the stress level of many a parent. She asked Council to fully fund the School Board budget and in the future, make cuts that will directly impact the kids a last resort.

51. Saskia Swider, director of Children's International School, a representative of the Early Childhood Education Directors Association of Alexandria and a member of the Early Childhood Commission, said she wished to advocate for the children who receive child day care subsidy. She noted several families who were cut from care and for all eligible families who are on the waiting list. She asked Council to approve additional funds for the child day care fee system and allow children to move off the waiting list much more quickly. She also asked for additional funding for the children's fund, which has not seen an increase in funding for many years.

52. Mary Beth Flowers, 1225 Martha Custis Drive, #807, asked for funding for an important tutoring program being sponsored by the Urban Passage to be implemented at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home, called Reading is Power. She said she is a voluntary advocate for services of parents and youth at the detention home and they are seeking funding not only from the City but any faith based groups, corporations or organizations. She said the cost for initial implementation of

the program is \$1,000 per student and they are recruiting voluntary tutors. She noted statistics that profile youth in correctional facilities. She said they hope the Reading is Power program will help the incarcerated youth break their patterns about academic failure and negative behavior and will help them to have more academic successes. She asked Council to consider funding the tutoring program.

53. Jonathan Berger, 2935 Bryan Street, said he has been inspired by a visit to Hopkins House, as the company he worked for decided to do community outreach and has given time and money to Hopkins House. He asked for funding for Hopkins House, the \$1.1 million to help the kids and others to receive care and attention.

54. Tom Parry, 317 Skyhill Road, said that last November, Council set a serious, meaningful target, and several members of Council spoke expressly to acknowledge that at the time the target was set. He asked what is an appropriate standard for exceeding the target. He said it is reasonable that if there are changed circumstance or new information that would justify exceeding the target, otherwise, it is proposed that there be substantial deference to the target. The reason is to respect the process. He asked if there have been changed circumstances or new information. He suggested not looking at the COLA, as it was discussed and Council decided to defer to the City Manager, and the City Manager proposed a step increase for certain employees and the Superintendent was to make a proposal within the target. Mr. Parry said the second main driver of the increased costs are the School budget, and they are not new items and were known last November. He said the task now is to not adjust the target but to prioritize. He said if Council doesn't respect the process and that target, it is a sham.

55. Mimi Carter, 106 East Cliff Street, PTA president of Mt. Vernon Community School, said she doesn't want to respect the process and the target. She said she wanted to speak about kids, as that has nothing to do with kids or a target. She said that by not fully funding the school budget, they threaten the programs that reach into the homes of low-income children. She said all schools have an increased need for social services and have special education needs and it is expensive. She said by not fully funding the School budget, they will threaten the student achievement of those kids. She said that while the health benefits of the teachers are strong, and the administrators health benefits are strong, the population of students are more difficult.

56. Bernie Schulz, 200 Luna Park Drive, #339, representing the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, spoke about preservation of historic treasures. He said that in 2006, General Services commissioned a comprehensive assessment of their historic facilities and it identified \$3.4 million in capital needs for OHA properties to be performed, including plastering repair, painting, floor restoration, HVAC, electrical and plumbing components, and \$1.2 million worth of work is currently underway with the \$2.2 million in the balance proposed for funding in this upcoming budget. He said this means \$370,000 per year through FY2008 to FY2013. He said the budget presented by the City Manager represents a significant step forward in making sure

they do all they can to preserve the treasures of the past and he urged Council's adoption of the budget to support the preservation of the City's historic facilities.

57. Raymond Johnson, 505 S. Henry Street, president of the City of Alexandria Employees Local 2737, requested that Council adopt budget that adopts a minimum of two percent of a COLA for City employees. He said that over the last ten or so years, the City has adopted COLA's that have been below consumer price indexes, which has eroded away salaries. He said they have seen the ability to fill vacant jobs through natural attrition increasingly difficult and they have had to increase offering salaries, which makes it lopsided for people in similar positions. He noted that employees are paying a higher premium for health insurance and higher and more co-pays. He said the type of skill-sets they bring to the City to serve the Council and the citizens are high professional, high technical skills and they should be fairly compensated.

58. Basil Kiwah, 4667 Kirkland Place, treasurer of the Stonegate Mews Homeowners Association, spoke about transportation and the abolition of the Route 7b Metro bus which serves their community. He said his community was opposed to the abolition of the bus and said that at the hearing. He said the change short-serves them all, as will add 20-30 minutes each way to people's commute and people who can afford it will abandon Metro completely and drive to work.

Councilman Krupicka asked for a staff memo on the topic, as it seems City funding plays a role in that, and it would be helpful for staff to identify what that means and what the ramifications are. Perhaps it could look at the state transportation funding options as one vehicle.

59. Robert Dugger, 10 Wolfe Street, stressed the urgency and value of investing in the lives of kids. He said they find that quality interventions early in a child's life increases graduation, reduces crime, frees up resources in the public schools. He said when it has a five year old of good health, social, emotional and cognitive capacities, when they go into the public school system, they actually free up resources, as they don't require as much time.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Gaines, seconded by Vice Mayor Macdonald and carried unanimously, City Council closed the public hearing. The voting was as follows:

Gaines	"aye"	Krupicka	"aye"
Macdonald	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Pepper	"aye"
	Smedberg	"aye"	

* * * * *

WORK SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SPECIAL MEETING

1. Discussion of Revenue Options (Budget Memo #14.)

City Council held a work session to discuss revenue options.

* * * * *

SPECIAL MEETING (CONTINUED)

OTHER

EXECUTIVE SESSION

3. Consideration of Convening An Executive Session Closed to the Public For Discussion of Potential Litigation.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Krupicka, seconded by Councilman Smedberg and carried unanimously, at 8:38 p.m., City Council convened in executive session, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(a)(3) for the purpose of discussing the acquisition of real property for a public purpose. The voting was as follows:

Krupicka	"aye"	Macdonald	"aye"
Smedberg	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
	Pepper	"aye"	

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Krupicka, seconded by Councilman Smedberg and carried unanimously, at 9:11 p.m., City Council reconvened the special meeting. The voting was as follows:

Krupicka	"aye"	Macdonald	"aye"
Smedberg	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
	Pepper	"aye"	

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Krupicka, seconded by Councilman Smedberg and carried unanimously, City Council authorized the City Manager and City Attorney to acquire the property at 48 South Early Street, along the lines discussed with Council. The voting was as follows:

Krupicka	"aye"	Macdonald	"aye"
Smedberg	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
	Pepper	"aye"	

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Krupicka, seconded by Councilman

Smedberg and carried unanimously, City Council adopted the resolution certifying compliance with FOIA which has been circulated to City Council. The voting was as follows:

Krupicka	"aye"	Macdonald	"aye"
Smedberg	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
	Pepper	"aye"	

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 2222

WHEREAS, the Alexandria City Council has this 9th day of April 2007, recessed into executive session pursuant to a motion made and adopted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the city council that such executive session was conducted in accordance with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the city council does hereby certify that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters that were identified in the motion by which the executive session was convened, and that are lawfully exempted by the Freedom of Information Act from the Act's open meeting requirements, were heard, discussed or considered by council during the executive session.

* * * * *

THERE BE NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilman Krupicka, seconded by Vice Mayor Macdonald and carried unanimously, the Special City Council meeting of April 9, 2007, was adjourned at 9:13 p.m. The voting was as follows:

Krupicka	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Macdonald	"aye"	Lovain	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Pepper	"aye"
	Smedberg	"aye"	

APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC, City Clerk