

MORNING

2K
4-16-11

-Good Afternoon. My name is Ed Milner. I am currently employed as a Sergeant with the Alexandria police department and have been a city employee for over 22 years.

I am the current Vice President of the Alexandria Police Association and a current board member of the Police Union. I also serve as a member of the Police and Fire Pension board and serve on the newly formed AD HOC Retirement Advisory Group. Today, I am speaking on behalf of the Police Association and Police Union regarding the proposed increased pension costs to City employees.

In my 22 years with the city, I have heard numerous promises from past and present council members. I have seen very few promises kept, especially when it would benefit the City employees. In the past, employees have asked for financial compensation. The typical response from the City was that a study must be performed and the decision to give this compensation would be based on the outcome. When the studies favored the City employee, the City retracted its promise and never gave the duly owed compensation. The findings have always turned out in favor of the employee and the excuses are always the same. City council will do it in the future or there is no money to give because times are tough.

This time , you, the counsel, said we will form an AD HOC Retirement Advisory Group to see what the city should do about the increased costs relating to the employees pensions. But before this Advisory Group was even formed, the City Manger presented a proposed budget that increased the employees cost without ANY input from the now formed advisory committee.

I am asking you to consider treating the city's greatest assets, which are its employees, with the same careful thought and respect that you treat the property tax rates. Always, the budget is designed to protect property tax rates from an annual increase. It is about time you realize that the property tax rates are not what make this City an attractive place to live and visit. It is the City employees. It is the police department giving the city a 43 year low crime rate. It is the sanitation employees that keep the City streets spotless so tourists want to come and spend their money. It is the Fire and EMS units quick response that saves Alexandrian lives and protects property. It is the Parks and Recreation Department employees that keep our City Parks welcoming residents and tourists alike all year long. All of these accomplishments, mind you, have been made in spite of past budget and staffing cuts.

We expect the counsel to recognize its employees and protect the pension much like it protects its property tax rates. I respectfully request that you keep your promise. Afford the AD Hoc Advisory Board the opportunity to present its findings to you prior to any implementation of any proposed increase to the Pension. Strike the increase from the proposed budget and end this debate. Thank you.