


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: ADDENDUM TO PROPOSED CITY LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE FOR THE 2011 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

ISSUE: Consideration of addendum items for the proposed City Legislative Package for the 2011 General Assembly Session.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Receive these additional proposals for the City's 2011 Legislative Package (Attachment 1), as recommended by Council's Legislative Subcommittee; and
- (2) Include these items, with the other legislative package proposals, for public hearing on Saturday, November 13.

DISCUSSION: The City's proposed 2011 Legislative Package was submitted to Council at the October 26 legislative meeting. Since the Package was prepared, several additional items have been proposed for consideration.

State Nutrition Funding for Seniors (Vice Mayor Donley): The Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA) believes that Virginia diverts a significant portion of the federal funding intended for providing nutrition assistance to seniors (such as Meals on Wheels) to cover administrative expenses. The State receives over \$12 million for nutrition assistance, and diverts over 20 percent of these funds to administrative purposes. While MOWAA is not alleging that the State is doing anything illegal, it notes that such a diversion lessens the funds available to provide seniors with meals. In addition, MOWAA says, other states such as West Virginia use 100 percent of such funding to purchase meals for seniors.

Vice Mayor Donley has requested that the City ask its delegation to propose budget language (or other legislation if appropriate) that would require the State to use a greater proportion of these federal funds for the actual provision of meals.

Job Training and Other Recommendations from the Economic Opportunities Commission:

The Economic Opportunities Commission has asked that the City include in the proposed Legislative Package support for job training and retraining programs. The Commission believes this is especially important in the current economic environment with its high level of unemployment. It asks, however, that any funds for this purpose not be taken from existing State programs that help the most vulnerable. More specifically, the Commission asks that the City support job training and re-training programs in the Commonwealth; programs to help ex-prisoners earn a GED; and vocational training programs for ex-offenders. As it has in the past, the Commission recommends that the City support Virginia CARES (a Statewide network of programs that provide transitional assistance to ex-offenders who are leaving prison) for these purposes.

The Economic Opportunities Commission has also indicated its support for Items A.3 and B.7 (Increased Tobacco Taxes and Predatory Lending) from the Proposed Legislative Package presented to Council at its October 26 legislative meeting.

New or Old Package Items: At the October 26 Council meeting, Mayor Euille asked staff to indicate which of the proposed Legislative Package items are new and which are not. Attachment 1 provides that information.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Proposed City Package Items: New or Old

STAFF: Bernard Caton, Legislative Director

PROPOSED CITY PACKAGE ITEMS: NEW OR OLD

A. Legislation to Introduce

1. **Unfinished Buildings**--legislation to broaden the laws dealing with building permits issued for repairs or renovation to require timely completion of the work. **This is a new position.**
2. **Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program (VASAP)**—Amend the State Code to authorize localities, under guidelines set by the State VASAP program, to set participant fees sufficient to fund the program's costs. **This is a new position.**
3. **Increased Tobacco Taxes**—Introduce legislation to significantly increase the excise tax on cigarettes (e.g., by \$1 per pack). **This is a new position, although a similar proposal was included in the City's 2004 Legislative Package.**

B. Legislation to support

1. **VRS**—The General Assembly should provide appropriate appropriations to VRS, and refrain from the practice of underfunding retirement rates. **This is a new position.**
2. **LEED Construction--State Buildings**—Support legislation to require state agencies to build to standards as stringent as either the Green Globes standard or LEED. **This issue was in the City Package for the first time last year.**
3. **Restoration of Voting Rights for Felons**—Support the automatic restoration of voting rights to ex-felons, either by statute or a Constitutional amendment. **This issue has been in most City Packages for the last 10 years.**
4. **Voting Rights and Election Laws.** Support legislation to allow unrestricted early voting. **This issue has been in the City Package for several years.**
5. **Statutory Protection Against Employment Discrimination for State Employees**—Support legislation that would prohibit workplace discrimination against State employees. **This issue was in the City Package for the first time last year.**
6. **Virginia Human Rights Act/Virginia Council on Human Rights.** Support legislation that would expand tools such as subpoena power to enhance the investigatory or enforcement powers of human rights councils. **The City has asked for legislation to strengthen the Virginia Human Rights Act in the past, but has not asked specifically for subpoena power.**
7. **Predatory Lending**—Support efforts to reduce the interest rates that can be charged for pay day and car title loans. **This issue has been in the City Package every year since 2007.**

8. **NVAN platform**—As additional funding becomes available, support a number of proposals from the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN). **Support of the NVAN platform has been in the City Package for a number of years, but the issues included in the NVAN platform change annually.**

9. **Transportation Funding, including Revenue Sharing**—Seek additional funding for transportation. **This issue has been in the City Package since 2004.**

10. **State Budget & Local Revenues/State Structural Imbalance**—Oppose State action to restrict local revenue authority; impose new funding requirements on local governments; or shift state funding responsibilities onto local governments. **Positions opposing State actions detrimental to local revenues have been in the City Package at various times.**

C. Legislation to Oppose

1. **Local Business Tax Reform Policy**—Until a thorough study is completed, oppose efforts to limit local government taxing authority, including Business, Professional and Occupational License tax and Machinery and Tools taxes. **Opposition positions to State proposals to limit or repeal these taxes have been included in the City Package at various times in the past.**

2. **Education Funding**—Oppose policies that lower state contributions to K-12 education programs, including the Northern Virginia Cost of Competing. **Efforts to have the State pay its share of K-12 education funding have been in the City Package in most recent years.**

3. **Issues Related to the Privatization of ABC Sales**—If privatization occurs, the City opposes any limits on the City's zoning authority over stores selling hard liquor. **This is a new position.**

4. **Pre-trial Release Program.** Oppose legislation that would put restrictions on the use of pre-trial release programs. **This is a new position.**

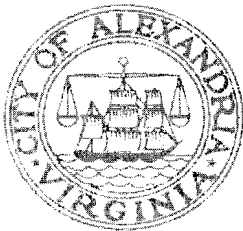
5. **Legislation Related to Immigration.** Oppose legislation like that enacted in Arizona, which includes provisions that have already been considered and rejected by the General Assembly as federal issues over which the states have little control or authority. **Issues relating to immigration have been in the City Package for several years, but specific opposition to legislation similar to that passed in Arizona is new this year.**

6. **Undocumented Students.** Oppose restrictions on access to higher education by undocumented persons, unless they include safeguards such as those proposed by Governor Warner in 2003. **This is an issue that has been in the City Package every year since 2007.**

D. Addenda Items

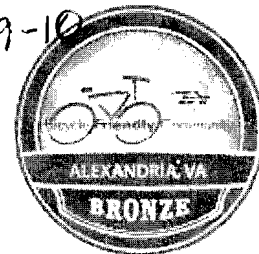
1. **State Nutrition Funding for Seniors.** Propose legislation requiring the State to use more of these federal funds for the actual provision of meals. **This is a new position.**

2. **Job Training.** Support Job Training programs in the Commonwealth. **The City has supported proposals such as this in past Legislative Packages, although not recently.**



City of Alexandria, Virginia
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Rob Krupicka
Member of Council

(703) 746-4500
Fax: (703) 746-6433
council@krupicka.com

Eco-CITY  ALEXANDRIA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CC: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
BERNIE CATON, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

FROM: COUNCILMAN K. ROB KRUPICKA

SUBJECT: 2011 LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

As we consider our legislative package, I'd like to propose the following 4 items:

1. **Support for the Arts:**

That the City Council endorses the following statement and request the General Assembly to do likewise:

The City of Alexandria recognizes that tourism represents a \$19.2 billion industry that generates over 210,000 jobs in Virginia. All manner of cultural tourism opportunities -- museums and galleries; venues for music and performing arts of all kinds; and regional and community theaters -- provide unique opportunities for hundreds and thousands of Virginia residents and visitors from all parts of the nation and the world. Virginia school children benefit from educational programs that support SOLs and increase their cultural awareness and appreciation.

The City of Alexandria supports equitable and sustainable funding for the arts in Virginia toward a goal of \$1 per capita for the Virginia Commission for the Arts, whose grants leverage these dollars in Alexandria, Northern Virginia, and the Commonwealth.

2. **Support for Libraries**

That the City Council oppose further cuts to funding for libraries. State Aid to Public Libraries has been cut repeatedly since full-funding was last achieved in FY 2001. A 5% cut (\$860,000) made in September 2009 and a 10% cut (\$1.7 million) for FY 2011 and 2012 were approved at the 2010 General Assembly. These cuts, following others previously made as Virginia weathered a historic recession, as well as the state's continued failure to meet its obligations to its localities to fully fund the State Aid to local libraries formula, leave State Aid at only 56% of the level mandated by the Code of Virginia. The \$14.58 million FY 2011 appropriation produces a shortfall in State Aid of about \$11.7 million per year over the amount required by state law.

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

In a time of vastly increasing demand, State Aid plays a critical role in the ability of local public libraries to provide Virginians with the free (and sometimes only) community access point to current print and electronic resources, and funding for staff (up to 25% of state aid may be used for staff). In 2001 State Aid accounted for 90% or more of the materials budget at over one-third of Virginia's 90 local public library systems and more than 50% of the materials budget at all but 13 library systems.

3) **School Flexibility:**

In light of budget pressures on local school districts, the City Council asks that the General Assembly to appoint JLARC, or another appropriate body And the Board of Education to review all state mandates related to local school administration with the goal of identifying areas where local districts could be given more flexibility without harming student achievement.

4) **Disabled Parking:**

Given Alexandria's analysis that up to 90% of the people using handicap parking are not legitimate users of this service, Alexandria would like to ask that the state remove the cap on the size of the fine that local governments can charge for improper use of handicap parking spaces. Given the high administrative cost to police the use of these parking spaces, we request the ability to set the fine to a level that covers the full cost of enforcement.