

**CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

**Special Public Hearing Meeting  
Wednesday, March 11, 2009 - - 6:30 p.m.**

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Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Redella S. Pepper, Members of Council Ludwig P. Gaines, K. Rob Krupicka, Timothy B. Lovain and Justin M. Wilson.

Absent: Member of Council Paul C. Smedberg.

Also Present: Mr. Hartmann, City Manager; Mr. Spera, Acting City Attorney; Ms. Evans, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Castrilli, Communications Director, City Manager's Office; Mr. Gates, Assistant City Manager; Police Captain Ogden; Ms. Boyd, Director, Citizen Assistance; Mr. Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Collins, Assistant City Manager/Director, Human Services; Mr. Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services; Mr. McCobb, Transportation and Environmental Services; Ms. Smith-Page, Director, Real Estate Assessments; Ms. Niebauer, Director, Office of Human Rights; Mr. Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Arts and Cultural Activities; Dr. Gilmore, Director, Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse; Mr. Catlett, Director, Office of Code Administration; Mr. McPike, General Services; Mr. Coleman, General Services; and Mr. Lloyd.

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

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**OPENING**

1. Calling the Roll.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Euille, and the City Clerk called the roll; all the members of Council were present, with the exception of Councilman Smedberg, who was absent.

2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2010 (Including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2010-2015 (including the School CIP.) Adoption is Scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2009. A second public hearing on the budget will be held on Monday, April 13, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. In addition, a public hearing on the ordinance establishing the real property tax rate will be held on April 18, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

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

1. Patrick Cozzy, 2001 Mill Road, president, Alexandria Sheriff's Association, noted that in 1990, Council approved the concept of retirement parity for all Public Safety personnel that all plans would be funded equally. From 1990 to 2008, there have been modifications in all the retirement plans, however, equal funding remained the constant per Council's 1990 action. Last year funding on Police and Fire retirement plans increased by 18 percent while there was no raise for the Sheriff's retirement funding, and he noted the continued disparity of the Sheriffs. He said the City Manager's budget will begin to deduct two percent of all new deputy sheriff's pay toward retirement costs, and the City Manager's budget increases funds for the Police and Fire retirement plans. He requested restoration of the retirement parity with Council action, noting that the deputy sheriff's want to be treated in a fair and equitable manner with other public safety personnel.

2. Nina Randolph, 424 N. Union Street, chair of the resource development committee for Healthy Families Alexandria, noted that investing in children and families in the beginning is the best answer for serving the children's future. Healthy Families provides voluntary home visiting services for first time parents. She noted that the program served 225 families, however, there are nearly 600 families needing this level of service. Ms. Randolph said they are concerned about the 17.6 percent cut to the early childhood fund and asked Council to reinstate all funding to the early childhood fund to maintain the programs to give a positive beginning for the children.

3. Ivor Braden-Horn, 29 W. Braddock Road, said she is a volunteer board member with Northern Virginia Family Service, and she spoke of the 17.6 percent reduction in all three funds--the children, youth and community funds. The partnership funds are the non-profits that provide critical services to the most at risk. She asked Council to restore full funding to all three funds. She said the General Assembly could not proceed with an investment in Alexandria Healthy Families, but they continued the Healthy Families program statewide at level funding. She said the second program is the Alexandria Access to Medication program funding, which served 275 low income residents who received medications for chronic health problems. She asked Council to hold firm to the dedicated penny tax for the housing trust fund.

4. Fay Slotnick, 311 Second Street, director of the Parent Leadership Training Institute of Alexandria, and a member of the Alexandria Council of Human Services Organizations, said it would seem that when budgets are constrained, there is a greater, not lessor, need for services. She asked if they took the risk of failing to provide medical and mental health services, early childhood intervention and education, teen pregnancy prevention programs and other human services, will they not create so much increased need that even when the economy regains strength, they won't be able to stem the tide of that increased need. She said the children are their first concern. She thanked Council for its support of PLTI and said they need Council, through the Alexandria Fund for Human Services to fund their budget. She asked Council to raise

taxes to a level that will assure that the quality of life for all Alexandrians remain intact.

5. Lauren Tusso, 6040 Edsall Road, Apt. 203, said she volunteers at Brent Place tutoring and mentoring and she spoke about the program that is to be cut and Ms. Amalia Quinone's position at Brent Place. She said the children will become responsible citizens because of the education and role models the community has provided for them. If the programs are cut, what will they do after school and she noted that they will no longer be getting that opportunity to succeed. She suggested making more parking meters, decreasing recycling pick-up, and even lowering salaries.

6. Claudia Medal, 3755 S. Reynolds Street, Apt. 705, representing the Brent Place Modern Mothers group, spoke about the school mentoring program and said the Modern Mothers group consists of many single parent mothers like herself. She said the program has exposed her to many services she did not know about.

7. Chris Plunghe, 375 S. Reynolds Street, with the Brent Place Youth and Family programs, said his daughter goes to Tucker Elementary and expressed his support for the school mentoring program and Ms. Quinone.

8. Olga Alvarado, said she is a student at Hammond Middle School and she spoke in support of the Brent Place tutoring and mentoring program at Hammond and in support of Ms. Quinone and her programs at Brent Place and at Tucker Elementary. She said she and other families want Ms. Quinone to stay at Brent Place.

9. Alessandra Torres, 375 S. Reynolds Street, Apt. 407, said she is a student at Tucker Elementary School and she spoke of the program at Tucker and how important Ms. Quinone is to her and noted how Ms. Quinone helps her and other students at Tucker and at Brent Place.

10. Ivan Medal, 3755 S. Reynolds Street, Apt. 705, said he is a second grade student at Tucker and he spoke in support of the Brent Place mentoring program and his help from Ms. Quinone in the after school program.

11. Audrey Kwakye, S. Reynolds Street, Apt. 1414, spoke of her support of Ms. Quinone and noted that she helps her and other kids with their homework and asked that she continue to work at Tucker Elementary.

12. Amina Uwwais, 5851 Quantrell Avenue, #412, said she is a student at T.C. Williams High School, and she spoke in favor of the program therapist at the school. She said the therapist does amazing things and many children wouldn't have anyone to talk to without the school therapist. She said she thought there were other alternative ways to fund the program.

13. Chanel Smith, 507 S. Alfred Street, said she is a student at T.C. Williams High School, and she spoke in support of the prevention therapist position at her school and said how she has developed leadership skills and how to deal with peer pressure.

She noted that when she is older, the likelihood of her using drugs has been decreased. She said she has been given opportunities to grow and expand her horizons because of the prevention therapist.

14. Mary Anne Weber, 720 N. St. Asaph Street, chair, Alexandria Community Services Board, asked Council to re-think the positions cut and budget reductions, noting that City and State reductions will weaken their safety net. The proposed budget contains the elimination of 24.8 health and welfare positions and a budget reduction of almost of \$3.6 million, and the proposed reductions do not include the decreases in state aide that will result in the loss of another \$300,000 and 3.75 positions in the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. She noted that the residents served are indeed the most vulnerable in the community. She said that within the Department of Mental Health, 42 percent of the consumers have incomes of less than \$10,000 a year and only eleven percent have incomes over \$25,000, and they have no other options for receiving services. She asked Council to raise taxes by an additional penny so the cuts can be restored, and said a one cent tax increase would cost the average homeowner \$48 annually.

15. Jeff Zack, 5000 Polk Avenue, president, Polk Elementary PTA, and a member of the Alexandria PTA Council, spoke in support of retaining funds in the Schools CIP program for things that would improve Polk. Mr. Zack spoke in favor of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning and gymnasium and ADA compliance for the school, which started in the 2002 CIP and every year it kept moving further out. He said the heating, ventilation and air conditioning work has already started. He said he hoped that his kids will have a gymnasium at Polk and the ADA compliance will be done.

16. Star Dobier, 5000 Polk Avenue, parent and Polk PTA secretary, spoke about her son's physical problems due to a birth defect, noting that he uses a walker and a wheelchair. She said the staff at Polk is wonderful, but the building is not ADA compliant. She said there are 18 steps to get him to music and art, and the new gym design includes plans to make the school ADA compliant, which will make it safe and accessible for all the children in the neighborhood.

17. Elizabeth Atkinson, 5000 Polk Avenue, president, Polk PTA, spoke in support of funding for the Polk gym to be restored. She noted that her daughter's PE class shares a class with another class and this puts 49 children in a multipurpose room that is below the state recommended gym size of 4,000 square feet, as it is about 2,900 square feet. She said they need to see the multipurpose room to see how desperately a real gym is needed. She urged Council to raise the real estate tax by one cent to fund the gym.

18. Gary Carr, 216 Aspen Street, spoke about the restoration of the running tracks at George Washington Middle School and Frances Hammond Middle School. He spoke of the years it will take to restore the tracks, noting that it was scheduled in the School budget for 2010 at Hammond and 2011, but it gets cut, so they have lost a

generation of children that have not had a running track and do not know how to run.

19. Glenn Hopkins, 1224 Princess Street, president, Hopkins House, said he sent a letter yesterday with several recommendations regarding the budget. Mr. Hopkins said Hopkins House and Campagna Center are not here to ask for money, but instead to ask that City Council use the difficult period as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship and the collaboration between the City and its non-profits. Through modest but significant changes in its grant making process to non-profits, the City has the opportunity to expand the funding resources available to benefit Alexandria residents without substantial increase in cost. He asked Council to add to the existing priorities for the Alexandria Human Services fund projects that have a high likelihood of leveraging new, current or additional private and public funds into the City, and that Council add a priority to projects that offer a sustainability strategy that can be realistically accomplished within three years. They also recommend that Council set aside a portion of the children's fund to help serve children ages 0-5 that are ineligible for federal or state funding.

20. Lavern J. Chatman, 1315 Duke Street, with the Northern Virginia Urban League, spoke about her helping a young man in Southeast Washington who scored off the charts on his SAT's, stating that she took him to Brown University and Harvard. She said that young man doesn't have the stop gaps they have in Alexandria. She asked Council to maintain their budgets, if not increase them. She spoke about pages 1520 and 1525 in the Department of Human Services budget and the programs that serve kids and give leadership training. She said they are petitioning for the Community Services for Youth, New Horizons, the Grandfathers Group, and Alexandria Resource Mothers.

21. Kevin Bergen, 1402 Oakbrooke Avenue, trustee at Hopkins House and chair of the community outreach and public advocacy committee, spoke about support for Hopkins House children and early childhood education throughout the City. He asked Council to put people and vital services and programs that serve and sustain them ahead of things. The Hopkins House trustees have developed a legislative package with six initiatives and he highlighted two of them. As of January 2009, more than 300 children are on the waiting list for child care fee subsidies and unless funding is identified and allocated, these children will be unable to access the childcare services they need to prepare for success in kindergarten. Between \$4-800,000 will be needed to clear the waiting list and Hopkins House trustees encourage efforts to obtain a set-aside of monies in the children's fund FY2010 budget to clear at least half of the children's fee subsidy waiting list. The City has several groups and organizations invested in early childhood public policy and funding - the Early Childhood Commission, non-profits, City public schools, Early Childhood Directors Group and the Alexandria-Arlington School Readiness Council, and these and the Alexandria Community Trust and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation play an important role in funding early childhood programs in the City. Children and families of the City could be better served by a single comprehensive framework that includes participation of all invested partners and they encourage the efforts to streamline coordination of early

childhood public policy and funding.

22. Julie Jakopic, 3210 Landover Street, executive board member at Hopkins House, said Council has approached the budget challenge with a tremendous amount of fairness and transparency, and she spoke about the tax rate and tax increases. She thanked Council for making few cuts to the Department of Human Services, but also stated that there has been a 30 percent increase in need and applications in the Department of Human Services. She said a one cent tax increase is less than one dollar a week in an average household, and a four cent tax increase is a latte a week for the average household.

23. Jon Sargeant, 800 N. Pryor Street, vice president, Brookville Seminary Valley Civic Association, submitted written comments with regard to the Polk gym and the parent members of the PTA have explained the history in the need for a new gym and it is a necessary investment that would be used for years to come. The Polk gym is on the stimulus funding wish-list and they urge the City to continue to push for the funding. If the stimulus funding is not obtained, they request that Council add an additional penny to the real estate tax rate, so that the gym and other projects can be funded.

24. Brooksie Koopman, 116 West Maple Street, acting chair, Alexandria Library Board, spoke of the library usage and budget reduction. She said the usage has been up and is busier than ever--computer use is up, patrons count is up, and circulation of materials increased 18 percent at Duncan and 23 percent at Barrett. She noted the reductions that were accepted by the City Manager's Office, as well as those that were not accepted, which were to furlough their employees. She said the library is already run at a very tight ship, and the hiring freeze added to that level of leanness, and the new budget cuts require them to reduce even more.

25. Elizabeth (Betty) A. Livingston, 2019 Scroggins Road, Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center, said she supports the Community Services Board, as they help clients with rent, utilities, medications and other problems. She said the City departments and non-profits need to work better together on less duplication and provide as many services as they can for children. She noted that she is not against her taxes being raised.

26. Allison Cryor Dinardo, 100 N. Pitt Street, chair, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership Board, stated that reliance on real estate taxes has become an increasingly heavier burden on the residents and limits how it can grow as a caring community. She said the answer is simple - it needs long term solutions for diversifying the City's revenues. She said the new economic development board has seized the opportunity for a new day in Alexandria's economic development and noted their priority is to promote the City as a premiere location for businesses by capitalizing on the City's assets. She said the AEDP shares the Council's dedication to finding ways to decrease the reliance on real estate taxes, with a renewed focus on attracting and attaining businesses to the City. She said they need to reach out to the current businesses to

encourage them to stay in Alexandria, and they have the opportunity to ramp up the efforts for new businesses to be drawn to Alexandria. She said smart investment in economic development will create future revenue.

27. Chuck Collins, 3129 Mt. Vernon Avenue, member of the board of directors of the Alexandria Economic Redevelopment Partnership, highlighted a key recommendation from the Mayor's Economic Sustainability Workgroup - the need to expand business retention and recruit more business to the City. He said they share the view that the City needs to find additional sources of revenue and grow the commercial tax base, they need to recruit more taxpaying businesses, but they need to retain those who have already chosen to be part of the community. Mr. Collins said they need to position the City to emerge from the recession to take full advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. He noted that several trade associations are being lured away from neighboring jurisdictions and a technology business has been contacted by an economic development office out west. He said any cut to the economic development program will result in more severe under-funding and prevent them from completing work that's so important to the City's economic health.

28. Allen Lomax, 5021 Seminary Road, #730, chair, Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria, spoke about the Substance Abuse Prevention Planned for Alexandria report that provides recommendations to reduce youth substance use and abuse, which include additional affective substance abuse prevention programs and practices and effective evidence based parenting education. Mr. Lomax said the services provided by the staff in Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse are essential to move forward to better address risk factors and reduce substance abuse in the City. He said the budget reduces two full-time and one half-time positions that provide services to the schools, specifically two bilingual substance abuse therapist positions at Patrick Henry and Tucker Elementary and Brent Place apartments, and one substance abuse therapist position at George Washington Middle School, and eliminating the positions could result in an increase in youth risk behaviors, and SAPCA opposes the elimination of the staff positions and suggests additional revenue sources to avoid the staff reductions. They recommend eliminating free parking in the area between North Fairfax Street and North St. Asaph Street and Pendleton and Montgomery Streets and install multi-space parking meters. They also propose adding an additional \$5.00 to the annual cost to purchase City vehicle decals, and to reduce recycling efforts from once a week to once every other week.

29. Jonelle Wallmeyer, 311 Cameron Street, executive director, Alexandria Community Trust, said she is also the co-convenor of the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations. She said the recommendations in their community-wide assessment done in 2008 provide a great roadmap of where they need to go to best leverage the existing organization against the needs of the community. Ms. Wallmeyer said the membership is working to ensure that providers and the community know what services they do have, who provides them and how to access them. They are also working to convene issue based meetings to map out the organizations agencies that are serving the basic safety net needs - food, housing and health. To help make the

most of the fewer resources, she asked that they keep in mind the opportunity that they bring to the table - there is already a place that human service organizations are working, planning and collaborating should be leveraged.

30. Jason Middogh, 2702 King Street, City representative to the Northern Virginia Community College Board, said Council will soon receive a letter detailing how well the City's local commitment to NOVA is leveraged to bring additional state dollars to Northern Virginia. NOVA has been honored to be a part of the community since its inception and NOVA is the second largest community college system in the United States, and each year they capture 20 percent of T.C. Williams High School graduating class. Mr. Middogh said they are seeing new types of students. He requested that Council give them an opportunity to work with them to determine how best to increase the local capital contribution, so they can continue using it to leverage State dollars.

31. Mark Sossa, 3912 Elbert Avenue, said he is the lead case manager for Community Lodgings, a non-profit transition housing program. Mr. Sossa spoke of the affordable housing problems, noting that shelters are full, and it is a pressing need. He also spoke of the need for effective programs that make a change in the population and where it changes their lives. He said the indigent population is out of control, specifically the hispanics and undocumented persons, and what will they do with the suffering human beings.

32. Alan Wile, 4825 Little Falls Road, Arlington, president, Alexandria Arts Forum and past-president of the Alexandria Harmonizers, spoke in support of continued commitment for arts in Alexandria. The arts forum members serves to enhance the City's cultural reputation, and in addition, the arts exert a strong economic influence on those individuals and businesses that seek to locate in areas that offer a wide-range of diverse and vibrant cultural programs. He said they believe in and advocate for the full support to take positive action to maintain a viable financial grant program, which will enhance the City's cultural image and further promote Alexandria as a desirable destination for tourism, business and community. He said the arts in Alexandria cannot compete with other jurisdictions without proper funding, and they ask that the previous funding level for arts grants be maintained and be increased.

33. Gene Kendall, 209 E. Luray Avenue, speaking on behalf of the board of directors of the Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc., spoke in appreciation for Council's continued support, noting that they have almost 10,000 people that consider ANHSI as their health care home. In 2008, they had a 30 percent increase in the number of patients who came to get health care at ANHSI, and a 40 percent increase in the number of visits - over 32,000 doctors visits, mental health care visits and pediatric visits in the last year. Mr. Kendall said they have a great opportunity with the stimulus bill that includes \$1.5 billion for construction, renovation, equipment and IT for community health centers across the country, so they are putting their heads together to figure how to take advantage of the stimulus money.

34. Ellen K. Donald, 210 E. Alexandria Avenue, speaking on behalf of the

Friends of the Local History Branch, Alexandria Library, spoke about the staff needed to make the 20,000 volumes available to the public. She said the Library Board did their best to try to affect the least number of users, but user number alone is not the only criteria to consider. She said a comparison between the user numbers at Local History are smaller than those at the larger branches is misleading, given the different ways in which patrons utilize the branches. Ms. Donald said the budget cuts proposed for the branch are drastic, in terms of hours of operation and staffing. Not only will it be open only three days a week and one Saturday a month, but it has cut to only two staff positions. She asked Council take a close look at it to find a way to mitigate the impact of the budget shortfall. She said the loss of staff will have the most impact. She said the City must find a way to not only restore but to enhance its support for this valuable resource, as it must stand behind its belief that its history matters.

35. Ulysses James, 4009 Gibbs Street, music director, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association, the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, and the Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra, said the programs involves about 190 musicians from ages 11-73. He asked that the grant program for arts not be reduced and if possible, expanded. He spoke about the services and concerts they provide and stated that most of the funding comes from private donations. Mr. James said the City has assisted them in such a way that about 12 percent of the costs are covered by a grant. He said one of the most important programs in the City is the arts. He suggested that Council try to maintain the focus.

36. Ronald V. Minionis, 603 King Street, managing attorney for Legal Services of Northern Virginia and also a member of the Alexandria Council of Human Services Organizations, said Legal Services are the front line of responding to the fundamental and immediate demands for assistance of the impoverished in the Alexandria community. When funding gets cut for the organizations, it is a double-wammy in terms of less resources to deal with more demands. He noted examples of some of the things they do, noting how it helps the City. He encouraged Council to keep in mind that the demand for the safety net is increasing and they need to preserve that and try to maintain funding for the organizations.

37. Marcy Anderson, 820 Cameron Street, said she is the new chair of the Alexandria Small Business Development Center, thanked Council for funding that has been allocated to the Small Business Development Center this year. She said that realizing times are tough, now more than ever businesses need assistance and guidance to navigate the current economic climate. It's been recommended that the City funding be cut five percent for the Small Business Development Center this year, and although they do appreciate the funding, they would be remiss not to point out the direct impact the cuts will have on services to small businesses. They are also facing cutbacks in the private sector contributions and project their total shortfall will be approximately \$15,000, which translates into a need to cut consulting services and 60 businesses will not be able to meet at the center as a result. The Board is taking aggressive steps to fill the gap with private sector sources and fundraising events and they would welcome and be open to ideas, input or dialogue from Council for ways to

make up for the shortfall.

38. Bea Porter, 1727 Cameron Street, spoke about the proposed cuts to discontinue or cut the senior tax services, noting that it would be a disservice to the elderly. Ms. Porter spoke of the cost to house an inmate in a penitentiary and if they had received more help that is available now in the schools and day care facilities, it would have probably taken their lives in better directions. She said the future of their children depend on the services they currently provide and they must have outreach programs. Ms. Porter spoke of the elimination of the infants development specialist, mental health and substance abuse therapist positions, residential counselor, reduction to the budget for substance abuse counseling prevention services at George Washington, Patrick Henry and Tuckers Schools, reduction of adolescent health clinic staffing, cutting back hours at recreation centers, closing of the Lee and Colasanto pools, eliminating after-school programs at Maury and George Mason Schools. Ms. Porter backs the extra taxes.

39. Bill Colosimo, 5730 N. 22 Street, Arlington, director, Alexandria Singers, challenged the City Manager's proposal to cut the grant funding administered to arts organizations by the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. He said he is aware that a modest investment in and commitment to the performing arts benefits the City and its vision to be recognized as a regional leader in support and patronage of the arts in a number of ways. Vital performing arts organizations feed the community with educational opportunities for students and adult life-long learners in vocal music performance. The use of grant funding in innovative cost-effective ways can align performing arts organizations in ways which leverage their vast creative resources to feature the vibrancy of the Alexandria arts community. He spoke of building a premiere performing arts facility in Alexandria. Mr. Colosimo said any cuts in already stretched arts grants funding jeopardizes the achievement of the benefits.

40. George Chadwick, 2930 Holly Street, chair, Alexandria Performing Arts Association, spoke of the reduction of \$30,000 in arts grant program funding. The last time the arts got an increase was in 2005, and from 2005 to 2008, the purchasing power of the arts grant funding declined by 12.5 percent, and they had already lost more than \$30,000 in purchasing power since 2005, and a cut of \$30,000 and staffing will seriously impair the ability of the arts community to be competitive with Arlington and Fairfax County. Mr. Chadwick urged Council to reconsider the cut in arts funding.

41. Janice McLaury, 5232 Bessley Place, speaking on behalf of Tucker Elementary PTA, spoke in support of the position of Ms. Quinone at Brent Place Apartments and Tucker Elementary School. She said that on her own behalf, she advocated for the retention of similar positions at Patrick Henry Elementary and George Washington Middle Schools. She said that at Tucker, there are 200 third and fourth grade students who will not receive classroom based life science skill prevention programs, and at-risk kindergarten, first and second grade students will not receive drug prevention programs. She spoke of the programs the parents will not receive. She said the student population will not be exposed to twice yearly school-wide

substance abuse prevention campaigns. She spoke of the loss of the programs at Brent Place Apartments with the loss of Ms. Quinone, noting that a lot of the families will not get the help they need to navigate the City's system and the services they depend on.

42. Sahr Pombor, 117 S. Jordan Street, spoke in support of increased funding for the Parent Leadership Training Institute, noting that he is an immigrant from Sierra Leon in West Africa and has lived in Alexandria since 1992. He said many immigrants do not know how the City government impacts their lives, as what they know is work, work and work, and they miss on the important aspect of taking part in community debates. He said he understands how the City and the government works and how it impacts his life because of PLTI. He said he was a poll worker for the last presidential election and he visited the State and House session in Richmond in February. He said he has gained valuable community skills to organize, inform and mobilize immigrants and parents to participate in the Alexandria community democracy. He asked Council to fund PLTI.

43. Michael Bowers, 1304 Roundhouse Lane, #304, board member, Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association, said he is personally committed to keeping the safety net intact. One of the factors that mattered to his board of directors when he brought his organization to Alexandria was the cultural life of the City. Giving people an opportunity to participate in a rich, diverse cultural life is important to creating alternatives to other options they would have in their lives. He said they are committed to full funding for the arts because of the positive benefits. He said whatever is in Council's power to do in modest levels for taxes is not a problem because of a modest increases in taxes and fees.

44. Ted Pulliam, 2506 Sanford Street, spoke of the cutbacks to the local history branch of the Library Special Collections Branch. He asked Council to reconsider the balance of the terms of the cutbacks. A cutback in a day to the special collections is not the same as a day in any other branch of the library, because in special collections, there are books that are microfilmed and photographs and are not available any other place in the library system. The books cannot be taken out of the library. Another difference between special collections and the branch library is that the special collections is for use by every Alexandrian. Mr. Pulliam said he is willing to pay more in taxes to solve the problem.

45. Pat Miller, 1806 N. Cliff Street, chair, Alexandria Commission for the Arts, asked Council to not cut the grant program. She said they only have a little pot of money that they give out to over 30-35 different arts organizations, and when it doesn't fund as it fully can, it then affects an arts organization in that they may not be able to make a performance. Ms. Miller said that for every dollar the government puts into the arts, the government gets \$7.00 back. Anyone that comes to an organizational arts function tends to spend money here and that on average is \$39.65. Ms. Miller stated her support for a percent for the arts.

46. David Cordell, 2408 Crest Street, asked Council to not make cuts to the most vulnerable. He said his child benefits from the services at the therapeutic recreation center and he was glad to see that is not on the table. He said he is shocked to see that there are significant cuts to the children's fund, youth fund and community partnership fund, which are organizations that help other organizations. Mr. Cordell spoke of the elimination of an infant development specialist at a time when diagnosis of children with autism and other intellectual disabilities is growing and he spoke of the elimination of several mental health and substance abuse therapists positions and elimination of a residential counselor providing services to those with intellectual disabilities. He asked Council to increase taxes to make sure the services are not cut. He suggested rotating library closings to one day a week, increase user fees for libraries, increase the restaurant tax, charge more for trash collections, advocate in Richmond for the right to impose a local income tax and charge politicians an increased fee for filing for elections and putting political signs out.

47. Tara Newton, 1005 Mt. Vernon Avenue, said she is a social worker at George Washington Middle School, speaking on behalf of the staff and students, advocated for the continued funding of the position of the substance abuse prevention specialist. She noted the specific duties that the person has done so far in the school this year, noting that his presence, knowledge and experience are a welcome asset to the team at the school, and if the position is removed, the atmosphere and optimum functionality of the school as relates to student services will significantly diminish.

48. Christianne Storm Van Leeuwen, 1113 Shipman Lane, McLean, said she has been a school psychologist at George Washington Middle School for eleven years and she said she works closely with the therapist providing substance abuse counseling. She noted the services the therapist provides to the students, parents and school staff, noting that the therapist acts as a major prevention service. She noted that it is extremely important to maintain the position of a prevention therapist at George Washington Middle School.

49. David Fromm, 2307 E. Randolph Avenue, president, Del Ray Citizens Association, said that not too long ago, they completed the purchase of a pocket park at 1 and 7 East Del Ray Avenue, and staff has produced an excellent design for that park. Mr. Fromm said there is a tremendous amount of neighborhood participation in the development of that design and people are anxious to start working on it. He said that to get to the final product they would appreciate if the City would release money from the open space fund to fund the design. The total for the completed project is \$310,000. He said if they don't release the entire amount, he asked that they release enough to move the planning process forward to complete the engineering designs needed to start the construction phase.

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**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED**, upon motion by Vice Mayor Pepper, seconded by Councilmember Lovain and carried 6-0, the City Council special public hearing meeting of March 11, 2009, was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

The voting was as follows:

Pepper	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Lovain	"aye"	Krupicka	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Smedberg	absent
Wilson		"aye"	

APPROVED BY:

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WILLIAM D. EUILLE    MAYOR

ATTEST:

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Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC, City Clerk