


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 3, 2011  
**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER   
**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF EXPANDING MEALS ON WHEELS TO INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF A SUNDAY MEAL

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of expanding the Meals on Wheels (MOW) program to include the provision of a Sunday meal.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council receive this report and determine whether or not it wishes to expand the Meals on Wheels program at this time to include the provision of a Sunday meal.

**BACKGROUND:** At the City Council meeting on January 25, 2011, Council members requested information on the fiscal impact and feasibility of adding Sunday meal delivery to the current MOW program. Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) is a valued partner in achieving the goal of helping seniors remain safely in their homes. Businesses in the community demonstrate their support of this service through their generous contributions. Should the City desire to support this effort, an additional appropriation of \$57,353 per year could be made to provide meals on Sundays. Council could also want to make a decision on this program expansion as part of the FY 2012 budget process.

**DISCUSSION:** The MOW program is designed to reduce poor nutrition and social isolation of seniors in the community. The City of Alexandria contracts with SSA to recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers to deliver the meals with a food vendor, The Hermitage, to prepare the meals. The Virginia Department of Aging (VDA) subsidizes some of the MOW program for qualified seniors and homebound individuals. Each MOW delivery consists of two meals (one hot and one cold), referred to as a "meal unit."

In Fiscal Year 2010, SSA was able to leverage funding to support the preparation and delivery of meals on holidays. Starting in January, additional funding leveraged by SSA from the Rotary Club and the Yellow Cab, has made the preparation and delivery of a Saturday meal possible.

In addition to delivering meals to the VDA-subsidized seniors, SSA also delivers meals to clients who are able to pay for the cost of the meal. The expansion of the program to include the provision of Sunday meals only addresses the cost for providing meals to the approximate 75 VDA-qualified MOW recipients.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The cost to coordinate the delivery of meals by SSA during Fiscal Year 2010 was \$74,981, of which the City paid \$19,436, from a pass-through from VDA, and \$14,400 from the Community Partnership Fund (CPF). The budget for Fiscal Year 2011 for SSA to arrange for the delivery of the meals is \$75,996, and the City is supporting the program with \$20,816 from VDA and \$10,000 from CPF, for a total of \$30,816.

The calculations for the program expansion include both the cost of purchasing the meals and the anticipated additional administrative overhead for SSA to arrange volunteer delivery on Sundays. This expansion will require contracting with a different vendor to provide the meals, as The Hermitage is unable to supply meals on Sunday. Therefore there will be an upfront equipment cost of \$500. The possible vendor that was identified that can prepare Sunday meals charges \$13.00 per “meal unit” (compared to \$7.33 currently for each weekday meal unit). Therefore, the cost for the preparation of the meals would be \$51,700. To coordinate and arrange delivery, Senior Services will incur an additional cost of approximately \$5,653 to pay staff for weekend time in coordinating and arranging volunteers to deliver the meals. The total cost for one year of coordinating volunteers to deliver 75 meal units would be \$57,353. This cost would be prorated should Council elect to begin implementation of the expansion during the current fiscal year.

The funds that Council may wish to allocate to cover the provision of a Sunday meal could derive from Council’s FY 2011 Contingent Reserves which has a current undesignated balance of \$507,314 (including \$350,000 not needed for WMATA subsidy increase in FY 2011). Any contingent reserves not expended in FY 2011 become funds available for FY 2012.

**STAFF:**

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