

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**Special Public Hearing Meeting
Monday, March 7, 2011 - - 4:00 p.m.**

Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Kerry J. Donley, Members of Council Frank H. Fannon, Alicia R. Hughes, K. Rob Krupicka, Redella S. Pepper and Paul C. Smedberg.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Hartmann, City Manager; Mr. Banks, City Attorney; Ms. Evans, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Jinks, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Stewart, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Boyd, City Manager's Office; Police Captain Ogden; Mr. Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services; Ms. Marks, Transportation and Environmental Services; Fire Chief Thiel; Ms. Niebauer, Director, Office of Human Rights; Mr. Castrilli, Director, Office of Communications; Ms. Collins, Assistant City Manager; 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 the members of Council were present. (Councilwoman Hughes arrived at 4:45 p.m.)

2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2012 (Including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2012-2021 (including the School CIP.) Adoption is Scheduled for Monday, May 2, 2011. A public hearing on the ordinance establishing the real property tax rate will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

Director of Transportation and Environmental Services Baier made a presentation of the commercial add-on tax and he responded to questions from City Council.

The following persons participated in the public hearing:

(1) Dak Hardwick, 5181 Brawner Place, vice-chair of the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee, said they are pleased to see that the City Manager has taken a cautious approach to his proposals and the theme should continue to be one of constraint and fiscal prudence. They are encouraged that this year's budget is linked closer to the strategic goals, though they believe more could be done, and they are pleased to see that the CIP continues to show at a 10-year horizon. Mr. Hardwick said they continue to recommend further strengthening Alexandria's long-term forecasting model. They support balance between City employee salary and benefits and a total compensation approach, one that makes the compensation structure competitive with its neighboring jurisdictions, and they appreciate the work done to review and reclassify positions, engage in the benchmarking process and develop a means for adjusting salaries as necessary so that public servants are fairly and competitively compensated. Mr. Hardwick said they continue to recommend that Council closely scrutinize and analyze all additional personnel expenditures and they look forward to the results of the Ad-hoc Retirement Benefit Advisory Group. They continue to support the concept of using the cost of current services as a foundation for building the budget and endorse the use of the managing for results initiative budgeting tool, and they will address many of the major financial issues facing the City, including compensation and benefits proposals, capital funding request of the Schools, the debt burden from the construction of the Potomac Yard Metro Station, the add-on tax for commercial real estate to fund priority transportation projects and the effect of a business and professional occupancy license tax reduction on the City's general fund, financial guidelines for the use of cash capital, the use and funding of consultants and contractors, and the development of a matrix to evaluate total burden on City residents and businesses from taxes and fees.

(2) Tina Leone, president/CEO Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, 801 N. Fairfax Street, said they are happy to see that the funding for AEDP, ACVA and SPDC has been increased this year for its commitment to public education and for supporting public safety members. She said the Chamber is in opposition to the commercial add-on tax and have a petition with 323 signatures, who are business owners, employees and residents of Alexandria. They have several issues with the BPOL reduction and think it is a separate issue from the commercial add-on tax, and BPOL should be reduced. Ms. Leone said any reduction should be shared equally among the businesses.

(3) Mike Anderson, 4580 Duke Street, chair, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, said he has been a resident of the City since 1972, and a restaurant/business owner since 1979, and he spoke of the commercial add-on tax, noting that a typical business already provides 3-6 times as much tax revenue as a resident, and he asked why businesses should provide even more revenue for services that benefit the entire population. Any additional revenue for transportation should be raised in an equitable manner, in the same way any other needs would be funded. Mr. Anderson said the City has increased the average assessment for commercial property by an average of four percent, so the tax for commercial property owners will be increasing even without consideration of the add-on tax.

(4) Skip Maginniss, 209 Commerce Street, vice chair, government relations, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, said the business community believes there are many unanswered questions about the type, quantity and timing of projects and this gets to the cost side of the equation as opposed to the revenue side. If Council wants to demonstrate and act on a vision that will anticipate increased densities and revenue due to those developments, transportation can be supported like it is in Arlington and Fairfax Counties, but they don't believe it is an accurate model for Alexandria to take. They believe that the projects need to be looked at with a totally different vision, as they see a lot of the projects have come off the shelf or been kicking around for years and now have been put back on the table, as it looks like it has a source of finding money somewhere. Mr. Maginniss encouraged the City to take a fresher look at that and look at it in terms of other types of priorities and whether they are actually needed for Alexandria, and they encourage Council and the City to reexamine that list and look at it in a different light. The initiative should be timed to support real development and to coincide with the actual completion of that development, rather than put in place and wait for the development and pay operation on those costs. They should treat all transportation costs and issues as part of the general fund issue.

(5) Julie Rocchio, 5052 Kilburn Street, said she has had children in ACPS schools since 2003. She asked for Council's support for funding a new Jefferson Houston K-8 school building. She noted the success story of Jefferson Houston, saying that their children love attending Jefferson Houston, and they are exceeding all of their expectations academically. She said moving forward with Dr. Sherman's recommendation is prudent, and she is persuaded that the cost of maintaining the current aging facility, combined with needed basic renovations to address increased capacity needs, is almost the same as funding a new building with more space. She asked Council to support a new school building to allow Jefferson Houstons excellent programs to grow and thrive and to help alleviate citywide school overcrowding.

(6) Charlotte Hall, chair, First Night Alexandria, said 2010 was a great night for First Night. She said they had 100 percent participation from the Board of Directors for fundraising and for personal contributions, and they also partnered with ACVA on publicity. Ms. Hall said the Masonic Temple and First Night premiered on the front page of the Washington Post, and Fox 5, NBC, ABC, and CBS covered it as well. First Night generated overnight hotel stays and dining in their restaurants, 55 percent of the attendees were from outside Alexandria, 69 percent said they would not have come to Alexandria on New Year's Eve if it had not been for First Night being hosted in Alexandria. She said over \$400,000 was spent in Alexandria by First Night attendees and over the past 10 years, a total of \$4 million has been returned to City businesses as a result of First Night. She asked for Council's continued support.

(7) Brenda D'Sylva, 181 E. Reed Avenue, said she represents employees who are troubled by certain aspects of the budget. She said that for over two decades, they have endured reductions in pay and benefits, reduction in workforce and reduction in their value as employees. She asked Council to reverse the trend and move toward fair and equitable consideration of their compensation needs. She said they have

waited over the last four years while the City went through numerous phases in an effort to establish the benchmarking of all City jobs. The City has found that the employees fall seven percent behind the market on the payscale, and in order to meet the seven percent deficiency, the City has proposed changing the payscales without adjusting the employee salaries accordingly. She said the process of adding additional steps and subtracting others is a method to artificially change the mid point of the current employees to give the appearance that they have improved the pay position with the competitors while neglecting to compensate the majority of the employees fairly. Of concern is the one percent increase in the employees pension plan as the proposal amounts to a further reduction in pay for the employees. She asked Council to remove the one percent pension payment from the budget and she urged Council to give the seven percent market rate adjustment to the employees and implement the benchmark study for all employees.

(8) Barbara Ellsworth, 4600 Duke Street, spoke about the employees pension, noting that the current City employees should not have to pay into their pension plan at all, as when people were hired, they were given a promise that they would not have to pay into the pension. She said it is one thing to have new City employees operating under new rules, but to change the rules for those who have been working for many years is not fair.

(9) Cheryl Fuller, 6608 Tall Oak Drive, said \$2,772,160 was earned by parking enforcement last year on ticket revenue, \$203,000 was earned in booting revenue last year, and it was earned by a group of employees that have to struggle daily with how to feed their children and pay their bills. She said that for years the employees have gone without merit increases and haven't had a cost of living raise in over four years. Ms. Fuller said the cost of everything has gone up and the one percent proposed pension increase is ludicrous and employees can't afford to take that kind of pay cut.

(10) Michael Kochis, 2003 Mill Road, Alexandria Police Union, spoke in opposition to the City Manager's proposed pay cut to Alexandria Police Officers. He said he has not spoken on the budget for the last three years about pay freezes, cuts or balancing the budget on the back of the cops, as they understand what the citizens are going through. He said that according to the City's Chief Financial Officer, the Police and Fire Pension plan is solvent and has recovered very well. He noted the job the Police Officers do every day and noted that they only want to be treated fairly. He said police and firefighters contribute eight percent every two weeks into their retirement, and the increase to nine percent would not be a big deal if it made sense or someone could tell them why. He said they have not received a raise in pay in three years and last year merit increases were approved, but with the rise in medical insurance contribution, it amounted to a pay cut or the pay remained flat. Mr. Kochis said that other than to balance the budget on the backs of the cops, he asked if anyone could answer why with anything other than "just in case."

(11) Monique Edwards, 2003 Mill Road, vice president, Alexandria Sheriff's

Association, spoke in objection to the proposal for deputies and other employees to contribute one percent to the City's supplemental retirement plan. She said customer service has improved, and they have accomplished more with less and remain dedicated to serving their community. She said promises of future compensation and market rate adjustments will not pay mortgages, taxes, babysitting fees, groceries, gas money, school bills and utility bills. The increased proposal for the one percent contribution to the City supplemental retirement plan effects everyone at every level.

(12) Chris O'Dell, 2003 Mill Road, president, Alexandria Sheriff's Association, said he represents 80 percent of sworn deputy sheriff's. He expressed the sheriff's association opposition to the City Manager's proposed 2012 budget, specifically to the proposal of having deputies and other City employees contribute a one percent minimum to the employee share of the cost of the City's supplemental retirement plan. He said that equates to \$1.6 million that employees would have to pay out of their own pockets over fiscal year 2012. City employees have been doing more with less over the last several years, which is illustrated in the number of employees from 2009 as compared in the 2012 budget. The proposed 2012 budget does not include an across-the-board pay increase/market rate adjustment and without the market rate adjustments, salary divisions as compared to neighboring jurisdictions continue to emerge. Mr. O'Dell said that of the 2021 City employees, 49 percent of those employees would bring home less money every payday when coupled with the increase in the employee share of health insurance, which could result in \$1,800 less for the employee and their family. When it has been reported that multi million dollar increases have incurred in the City employment retirement trust fund in recent months, why are employees being asked to sacrifice, and with the newly formed ad-hoc committee on benefits, why is the proposal regarding pay and retirement being discussed prior to the newly formed groups first meeting.

(13) Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, 2003 Mill Road, said the last few speakers have summed up his argument, which is that the employees for the last several years have been asked to be patient and absorb the economic shortfalls the City has been facing, and they have done that. He said that this year when the budget came out, the word was that they were turning the corner, only to learn that the one percent tax on the pension was going to wipe out any merits that would be received. Sheriff Lawhorne said the time has come and it is unfair to ask the employees to again be patient.

(14) Dorrie Todd, 1000 Colonial Avenue, a facility manager in the Police Department, said that one percent in the employees retirement is unspeakable for the employees. She said she is a grade 2 and is not getting much as it is. She said she pays taxes in Alexandria, and she hoped the Council would give her a cost of living raise, as everything is going up. She asked Council to consider removing the one percent from the employees retirement plan.

(15) Glenn Eugster, 4022 Ellicott Street, said the Ft. Ward Advisory Group members unanimously supports the recommendations and the priorities for action in the executive summary. He said he supports the report and the priority

recommendations. He urged Council to adopt and implement the Ft. Ward report by taking the following actions: provide 2002 funds to continue, if not complete, the historical and archaeological research for the park; provide 2012 funds to take short-term low cost and low impact stormwater management measures to stop the runoff from park land that is desecrating the graves and grave stones of the Oakland Baptist Church cemetery and other African-Americans buried in the park; provide 2012 funds to do pre-planning work for the Ft. Ward Park master plan and stormwater plan; and appoint an interim commission or advisory group to observe the progress being made by the Recreation Department, Transportation Department and the Office of Historic Alexandria to implement the plan recommendations and provide public input, access and information to discussions about the actions.

(16) Mary Craige, 5308 Weymouth Drive, spoke to the pay and compensation issues for employees, noting that they have to fight to stay marginally behind other jurisdictions. She said they had hoped that the Watson Tower study would fix many issues relating to benchmarks and payscale inequities, but the study did little to solve the problems that affect a large portion of employees. She asked that the one percent minimum payment to the City supplemental retirement benefit be removed from consideration. She said the City is now enjoying its first surplus in several years and the City wants employees to take home less money for pay and benefits, and it doesn't seem fair and makes no sense. Ms. Craige said for those employees in the \$30,000 pay range, it will hit them hard, the employees will also pay more for health insurance after July 1, and it will severely impact many of the lowest paid employees in the City.

(17) Thomas Welsh, 2100 Mt. Vernon Avenue, said he is a business owner in the City since 1995, and he spoke to the commercial add-on tax. He said the add-on tax is something they can do, but it is not something they have to do. He said 12 1/2 cents on a commercial property is a lot of money, and it is an unfair burden and asked why Council doesn't raise all the property taxes to a certain level. Mr. Welsh said it is unfair and said there must be other avenues within the budget.

(18) Kathleen Pepper, 5320 Thayer Avenue, speaking on behalf of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission, said they are recommending that the 2012 budget appropriate \$75,000 to complete the initial historical and archaeological research into Ft. Ward and they recommend Council adopt the recommendations of the Ft. Ward Ad Hoc Advisory Group. She said the \$75,000 appropriation to continue the research is a necessary pre-cursor to adopting a master plan for Ft. Ward. The joint operation between the Office of Historic Alexandria and Parks and Recreation would be better served with a master plan so there is coordination between the departments and input from the community. The appropriation will also help goal seven of the City's strategic plan, which involves aiding and recognizing and learning more about the diverse community.

(19) Jason Middough, 7202 King Street, said he represents the City on the Northern Virginia Community College Board. Mr. Middough asked Council to embrace the City Manager's recommendation of support of NOVA's capital plan. Each year,

Alexandria provides local capital matched dollars to help NOVA leverage a significant return for its building program. Mr. Middough said each local dollar committed returns an average of \$29.00 in state capital dollars, and they need to keep a steady flow of capital dollars to keep pace with the steady enrollment growth. Each fall, they accept 20 percent of T.C. Williams graduating class, and they are currently serving 4,500 Alexandria residents, 2,500 in workforce development training and 100 of the City's high school students are duly enrolled at NOVA and T.C. Williams to get a jump on college education. By continuing to support a gradual ramp-up in local capital support, they are allowing NOVA to keep pace with the double-digit enrollment growth.

(20) Marietta Robinson, 2430 Eisenhower Avenue, said she has worked for the City as a civilian for 20 years and was hired at a certain salary, with periodic increases and certain benefits, and over the years things have continued to change. She said when one spends 3-4 years at the end of the payscale with no merit increase, no cost of living for four years and the last years paying a six percent increase in health care, adding the one percent retirement cost makes the total deductions much larger than the simply stated one percent. This, coupled with the fact that a large majority of civilian positions are not benchmarked, and may never be comparative to surrounding jurisdictions, leaves a lot of employees underpaid and it is now proposed to reduce their paychecks even more. She asked that the one percent be removed from the table.

(21) Richard Estes, 2034 Eisenhower Avenue, vice president, Alexandria government employees association, said that on February 15, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Alexandria to the 2011 list of a dozen distinctive designations, saying that Alexandria is one of the most culturally rich destinations in the country, Alexandria was recognized as one of the top 100 walking cities in America and the best in the state, and in 2010, *Money Magazine* picked Alexandria as one of the top 100 cities to live. He said that once again, the workers are placed last on the list when it comes to the budget, and these are the same workers who have made Alexandria what it has become - a great place to live and visit. Now that the economy seems to be recovering, they are being asked to continue to make more sacrifices. By forcing workers to pay cost share, the majority of workers net pay will be less. It's been determined through the payscale studies that a large number of employees have been underpaid when compared to their counterparts. He said if the benchmarking payscale were completed this year, it is estimated that it would cost the City around \$1.6 million to implement, but if drawn over the next three years, the amount will increase to \$2.3 million. Mr. Estes said the City needs to eliminate any cost sharing increases for retirement pension plans for City employees, institute the recommended payscale benchmarking this year, and employees haven't seen a COLA in four years.

(22) Larry Lee, 8 Whitestone Drive, Stafford, said he is a fireman and has served Alexandria for 23 years. He spoke to the proposed increase in cost-sharing for the employees retirement program, but when the pay is cut, it is a pay cut and they are not sharing anything. He said they are being told it's a tough budget year, but the Alexandria Fire Department had a tough year too. In February 2010, Fire Department employees stayed a whole week during the back-to-back blizzards. Firefighters from

the Powhatan Street station responded to 501 Slaters Lane and rescued a man from his burning apartment. Paramedics from the East Windsor Avenue station treated that man and transported him to the Washington Hospital Center Burn Unit. In October, the chapel at the Episcopal Seminary caught fire and firefighters saved an historic building next door. Later that same night, on Kurshner Court, firefighters responded to a house fully involved and saved the garage, wherein the resident had her home business. He said he comes to work ready to protect the citizens of Alexandria, and he said he has every faith that Council will stand up and protect the employees and remove it from the budget.

(23) John Stephenson, 133 N. Payne Street, president, Alexandria Taxpayers United, commended Council on putting together a budget that is very cautious and is very careful in its design, however, he did express great concern about the commercial add-on tax, a \$12 million tax hike on Alexandria businesses. He said he is aware that transportation needs exist, but he is suggesting that perhaps the Council should work to find ways to think outside the box. The needs of the City are great and the pressures on the City with the economy with vacancy rates and businesses need to raise the prices of services or cut back jobs.

(24) Karen McManis, 308 Kentucky Avenue, president, Alexandria PTA Council, representing the 16 PTA's and PTSA's in the school system, said she has spent hundreds of hours volunteering for ACPS as a PTA member, a classroom volunteer and a tutor, and she does it because she believes a strong public school system is the heart of a strong community. She said the PTA Council has serious concerns about the wide disparity between the Superintendents proposed budget and the City Manager's recommendation. Ms. McManis said she cannot state with certainty that the predictions of enrollment are on target, but she does value data over conjecture and this is the best and the only data it has. She said the School system is struggling under the weight of unanticipated surging enrollment and aging facilities. She spoke of the enrollment numbers, noting that more have enrolled than was forecasted and yet new high density development continues. The Superintendents budget takes into account the projected growth in student population, but the City Manager's budget simply funds ACPS based on historical averages. She said funding 42 percent of the 10 year request isn't just disappointing, its potentially devastating.

(25) Mary Agee, 10455 White Granite Drive, Oakton, with Northern Virginia Family Service, said they are a member of Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations, and she thanked Debra Collins and her staff and Council for listening this past year to some of their concerns about the contracting processes and looking at making some adjustments to that. Ms. Agee spoke about Healthy Families Alexandria, noting the program began in 1993 and is a huge collaborator with all of the public and private organizations working on behalf of children and families. Given the significant cut to Healthy Families Virginia, the City is looking at a \$73,000 loss of State funds for the program, which will result in the loss of at least one position and services to at least 25 families. Ms. Agee said they hope to have a dialogue with Council to look at ways to mitigate that reduction.

Councilman Krupicka asked that the City take a look at all the grant supported programs they work with and discuss which ones make more sense to turn into contracts.

(26) Andrew Macdonald, 217 N. Columbus Street, said the transportation tax is neither fair nor equitable to tax one group of people to pay for a public benefit. If it needs to raise additional funds for transportation improvements, they need to do it and ask everybody in the community to pay for it. The community would also pay for not having a reduction in the salary of the employees if they see it's to the good of the community. Mr. Macdonald said the City feels very strongly that the City hasn't done the best job of analyzing the very problems they say they want more money for. He said it is great to have a Metro at Potomac Yard but asked if it is reasonable to spend 30 years of revenue to build a system that may not solve the transportation problems. He said Council needs to address more carefully what the transportation needs are, what it is trying to accomplish, and then it needs to ask everyone in the City to pay a little bit if that is necessary. Ft. Ward Park is worth spending money on doing that kind of historic research. Mr. Macdonald said if there is a process to address the issue of pension, it needs to have that debate before it takes it away.

(27) Wanda Dowell, 3 N. French Street, spoke in support of the report submitted by the Ft. Ward Park Advisory Group. She said she served as director of the Ft. Ward Museum and Historic Site for 22 years and prior to that, was assistant director for 15 years. Ms. Dowell said Alexandria was one of only six cities to be given recognition by the National Civil War Centennial Commission, and the site is also on the National Register of Historic Places. She said it is less expensive to keep up than it is to catch up. She said when visitors come to Alexandria and they visit a site that doesn't look like it did like on the web when they looked it up, or on the brochures that they received, it is an embarrassment to everyone. The grounds were well kept and the signage was appropriate, and this no longer is the case. She urged Council to prioritize the preservation of Ft. Ward. The Ft. Ward Advisory Group is to be commended for the hours they have contributed in developing the report and the recommendations, and they have also expanded ones knowledge of the history of the site. She urged Council to implement the recommendations made by the Advisory Group.

(28) Ron Wise, 2001 Mill Road, said he has been employed by the City for the past 24 years. He voiced his opposition to the proposed one percent pension requirement for all City employees. If the objective of the strategic plan goal #5 is as stated, to maintain a competitive compensation program that attracts, retains and motivates a workforce that can deliver quality services and programs to the community, and provides for the fair and equitable treatment of all employees, he seriously doubted that the current budget proposal would achieve the objective. He said City employees have sacrificed for the last four years, and the cost of living the region and the cost of transportation continue to rise while the modest increase in salaries are not keeping pace with the increases. He said there are little to no incentives other than pay and compensation to recognize City employees who strive for excellence. Mr. Wise said the combination of reduced benefits and the lack of a means for employee recognition

could negatively impact the ability to attract, retain and motivate a workforce that is being asked to do more with less. New employees are required to pay \$5,000 toward their benefits, which were previously paid for by the City, while entry level salaries remain unchanged. A baseline \$2,500 salary adjustment is warranted to offset this cost and serve to attract, retain and motivate staff.

(29) Susan Corrigan, 225 N. Fairfax Street, president, Torpedo Factory Board, said the Board is full of energy and drive to make the center a premiere art center. She said they want to continue to engage the community to help shape the Board to make a vibrant art center, and they need structural changes inside and out, an exciting, comprehensive marketing and promotion campaign to make the center what it needs to be. Ms. Corrigan said they have begun by developing the governance policies and procedures, they are putting financial management processes in place, they have begun a resource development plan, they have marketing programs underway, and they are beginning to recruit an executive. She said they started without any funds to do those things, so they ask for a one time only start-up funding to help through the transition when they take over the Torpedo Factory fully on July 1, 2011, of \$75,000.

(30) Stephen Mostow, 303 E. Nelson Avenue, treasurer of Jefferson Houston PTA, spoke about Jefferson Houston being in the beginning stages of its candidacy to become an international baccalaureate program. He said his son is receiving a best in class educational experience on par with any other school system in the country, however, it was built as a school without walls and it is not configured to support 21st Century education at the K-8 level. He said they need a new school and spoke to the 2 million square feet of space to be maintained, 12 of the buses are over 15 years old, environmental upgrades are urgent, and the City is out of space and enrollment will continue to climb. He asked Council to full fund the CIP budget as proposed by the Schools.

(31) William Rivers, 15 W. Mount Ida Avenue, representing the Miracle Field Working Group, which is comprised of members of the therapeutic recreation community, the youth sports community and other citizens, requested that the installation of a Miracle Field be moved from the 2014 CIP to the 2013 CIP. He said the Miracle Field is a rubberized surface baseball diamond that allows special needs kids and adults with wheelchairs and walkers the ability to play baseball and softball in a safe environment, and it can be used for other activities. It will cost the City about \$285,000, and another \$135,000 will be collected from private sector donors to complete the field. He said their efforts have been endorsed by the Therapeutic Recreation Council, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Youth Sports Advisory Board, Alexandria Little League, Alexandria Sportsmans Club, as well as others.

(32) Shirl Mammarella, 2003 Mill Road, said she is a 23 year employee with the City, is a Lieutenant with the Police Department and is a member of the Police/Fire Pension Board. Employees who switched to the plan in 2004 were required to sign a release and to release the City from all claims from the retirement income account. She said the current plan is healthy due to the hard work of board members, as well as

the City pension staff, and it's fiscally sound and continually monitored and reviewed for growth potential. She said she was surprised to hear about the one percent employee increase proposal, as it is unnecessary and unfair and she asked Council to reconsider it.

(33) John Morehead, Jr., 900 2nd Street, president, Black Fire Service Professionals of Alexandria, spoke in support of the Fire Department and the City employees. He spoke in support of the proposed merit increase but against any increase in the pension payments or against the new ad-hoc committee for the pension. The proposed merit increase helps to maintain and attract quality employees and assists in being competitive with the surrounding jurisdictions, and they are against any increase in the pension payments and against the new ad-hoc committee. He said the fire, police and sheriffs will put their lives on the line in defense of the City. During the attacks of 9-11 and snowmagedden in 2010, the fire, police and sheriffs stayed for days at work, as well as other natural and man-made disasters. He said they have kept their promises and they implore Council to keep its promises. Mr. Morehead said they have five committees to look at their pension and he asked why they needed one more.

(34) Beth Coast, 1602 Boyle Street, PTA president at Jefferson Houston, spoke about the critical need for a new building. She asked Council to approve the CIP budget the School's have presented. She said that in order to keep parents from moving to other school districts, the City needs to start replacing the aging buildings and fully supporting the school system. Many of the school buildings are in desperate need of replacement: Patrick Henry has a mold issue, Cora Kelly is built on a floodplain, and there is Jefferson Houston. They will need to replace aging school buses and upgrade the sprinkler system. She said that with most elementary schools being overcrowded, they need to make certain that the class sizes remain low and there are available seats in every closed classroom for the new students. She urged Council to visit the schools and see why the buildings need to be replaced, and to make the ACPS CIP a priority in Council's discussions.

(35) Carey Sullivan, 2504 Davis Avenue, president, George Mason Elementary School PTA, asked Council to consider the School Board's budget request with as much information as possible. Ms. Sullivan said George Mason has grown from a school of 350 students to 441 students, and the optimal capacity was to be 300 students with a maximum of 360. She said they have lost band rooms, music rooms, technology rooms and special education rooms, and have lost key personnel to budget cuts and are the largest elementary school without a full time assistant principal. They serve lunch in the cafeteria at 10:30 and have a tough time providing adequate eating time to the last class in line. She said they are full because the number of students in the district is increasing, due to the no child left behind legislation where if a school is not making adequate yearly progress, the parents at that school have a right to chose to go to a school that is making progress, and as a result, they have many transfers from Jefferson Houston and other schools. Most of George Mason's classrooms are interior spaces with no windows, few walls and even less storage. Ms. Sullivan said the school was built in 1939 and needs constant TLC and that costs money, and the overcrowding

only serves to exasperate the problem.

(36) Melynda Wilcox, 403 Jackson Place, president, George Washington Middle School PTA, said that two years ago, she was a community representative to the School Superintendent special task force on facilities planning. She said each year, more students are showing up at the elementary schools, and another 400 students are expected for the coming school year. She spoke of the rising enrollment at George Mason Elementary School. She said they are taxing the limits of the facilities - lunchrooms and gymnasiums, which were not designed for the numbers of kids they are serving, and they are taxing the ability to deliver the wide range of programs required to serve their diverse population. Similar enrollment patterns at other schools have left them with no more space. She said that even with the construction of 20 new modular classrooms this summer, they only have 18 rooms left among the 13 elementary schools, enough to get them through one or two more years of growth similar to that of the past five years, without substantially increasing class sizes. The school system needs to move forward now with two new K-8 schools on the Jefferson Houston site and the Patrick Henry site to alleviate pressure on the middle schools and elementary schools. ACPS also requires sufficient funds to address the facility maintenance needs that have been identified by an outside engineering firm.

(37) Nancy Jennings, 2115 Marlboro Drive, spoke in support of funding for Ft. Ward Park. Since three City departments manage the park, Historic Alexandria, Parks and Recreation and Transportation and Environmental Services, she is guessing that three funding items are necessary. She urged Council to fully fund all of the advisory Groups recommendations for the park and to instruct City staff to expedite the needed work. The process to arrive at the recommendations has taken years, and their happy park continues to decline. Funding them in the 2012 budget will begin the restoration of the jewel to a sparkling park that the City can be proud of during the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

(38) Mary Anne Weber, 124 Roberts Lane, Apt. 201, chair, Community Services Board, expressed support for the City Manager's budget and said they are pleased that another round of service reductions is not in the proposed budget. she said they served more than 5,100 residents last year and only 10 percent earn more than \$25,000 a year. The Board has improved efficiencies as much as possible by increasing productivity, eliminating non-essential personnel and reducing capacity and lower priority in administrative programs. Any further reductions would result in fewer services for the people who need them the most. She said Riley's Place, a program to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals with mental illness or substance abuse, opened and now 12 people are rebuilding their lives. Forty-five percent of the children in residential care have been returned to the community, thanks to the Child Family and Prevention Services. The teen wellness center opened inside T.C. Williams High School and two CSB staff provide mental health services. CSB's emergency services is working with the Police and Sheriff's Departments to create crisis intervention teams. She said that because of Council's continued support for Alexandrians with mental health, substance abuse and intellectual disabilities, the staff

and volunteers have been able to serve the City's most fragile citizens.

(39) Fay Slotnick, 311 Second Street, director, Parent Leadership Training Institute, and a member of the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations, said that when budgets are constrained, there is a greater, not a lesser, 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 it not create so much increased need that even as the economy now regains strength, it won't be able to stem the tide of the increased need. The PLTI of Alexandria is exclusively concerned with the welfare of children and families, and it provides a safety net by expanding the network of those who will work for the welfare of Alexandrians. The alumni continue to serve on numerous City boards and commissions, ACPS committees and PTA's and in community organizations. PLTI affects lives in so many ways, providing a safe place to learn and expand, resulting in the unintended benefit that English language learners are able to deliver their public speeches entirely in English. Ms. Slotnick said they are grateful that the City Manager has set a two year funding cycle for the fund for human services, and does not recommend cuts to the funding this year, but they implore Council to restore funding to the FY 2009 level. Ms. Slotnick asked Council to raise the taxes to a level that will assure that the quality of life for all Alexandrians remains intact.

(40) Laura Fries, 1904 La Grande Avenue, spoke about the importance of including the Miracle Field initiative in the 2013 CIP. Ms. Fries said her daughter is at George Washington Middle School, and her family had walked around Del Ray with their son Brian, who was wheelchair bound. He was born with a rare chromosome disorder in February 2001, and they quickly learned about the life of a child with special needs, which is a constant battle. They have to readjust their dreams of simple things like little league and games of catch. She said Brian loved being outside, and although he had trouble with motor skills, he could sit up and swing in the park, but there wasn't much for him to do and he sat watching other children play. She said Brian fought various health issues for his nearly five years, and she showed support to the EMS who came to their house so many times. Ms. Fries said Brian died in November 2005 and she can't get the thought of other children like him sitting on the sidelines of life just watching while other children play. The Miracle Field is a field of dreams where kids and adults and families with special needs can participate. An adaptive field can be used by all and is safer for everyone, and she asked Council to make Alexandria the all-inclusive town that embraces all and offers a safe and happy place for every child of all abilities by including the Miracle Field initiative in the 2013 CIP budget.

(41) Frances Terrell, 1005 N. Quaker Lane, president, Seminary Civic Association, founding member of the Ft. Ward and Seminary African-American Descendants Society and an officer of the Oakland Baptist Church, spoke in support of the recommendations of the Ft. Ward and Museum Advisory Committee in achieving efficient and effective management of the multi-faceted park and to encourage adoption of the recommendations as quickly as possible. She said her community has a vested

interest in the Fort, as descendants of homeowners actually living on the land post Civil War until the City moved them out in the 50's and early 60's, and having their ancestral family members buried in the Oakland Baptist Church cemetery in the park since the early 1900's. She said it is a major bone of contention for them as they have watched the gradual erosion and desecration of the church cemetery over the years. She asked the City for funding for corrective measures and with the City's recent archaeological finding, those corrective measures would include the necessary realignment of the cemetery to include those graves left on the outside. Ms. Terrell submitted a letter for the record with 80 signatures in support of the ad-hoc committee recommendations and encouraging a 2012 budget sufficient to meet the challenges of the park's management and the restoration and respect of the cemetery.

(42) Adrian Washington, 3413 Woods Avenue, director, Ft. Ward and Seminary African-American descendants society, a member of the Ad-hoc committee on Ft. Ward, a member of the Alexandria History Work Group Committee on Ft. Ward, and a member of the sign committee, spoke about the face of Ft. Ward and the descendants. She showed photos of her family who lived in Ft. Ward and Seminary. She said this is not just about getting money for a park, this is about saving their history and bringing the history back, respecting their graves, making right the wrong that was done over 50 years ago when the property was taken in an unconscionable way. Ms. Washington said they would like to see that history restored and those graves restored. Unless it gets the money for the archaeological study, they won't be able to get the water runoff change, to do more history that needs to be done to bring that park back up to the jewel it is as an historic park. In exchange for the money, they can offer an historic curriculum to the City school system so the students have a fuller picture of what the contributions of African-Americans are to the Civil War and to the City. The project would generate revenue, as they would be able to bring back an African-American curriculum program that could be used to get tourists to Alexandria for the heritage trail programs.

(43) Charlene Jeanes, 4801 Kenmore Avenue, Apt. 1203, said she is a resident and business owner in the West End, and she spoke of the Parent Leadership Training Institute, and is in support of funding for human services organizations, including the PLTI. Ms. Jeanes said it is a wonderful institution and asset to the City and it is important to her because its given her the courage to reestablish her voice in the community. The community projects are an important part of the PLTI, and they give back through education, health and safety. She said her project is called Believe, Unite, Educate, which is for legislators, educators, administrators, and parents united to teach parents how to better teach their children in the home as an extension of the classroom. She asked Council to support funding for the PLTI of Alexandria and for human services organizations throughout the City.

(44) David Denardo, 922 S. Washington Street, #312, president, Alexandria Firefighters, Inc., Local 2141, expressed their disappointment regarding the one percent increase contribution into public employees pensions. Fire and Police already pay eight percent into their pensions, and if its increased to nine percent, factor in a three percent

increase to the health benefits, no market rate adjustment for the last four years and the fact that they are the lowest paid public safety force in the region, and that one percent starts to look a whole lot bigger. Mr. Denardo said the City has been balancing the budget on the backs of the employees for too long, and they cannot absorb the hit anymore. A merit increase and a longevity step are not going to cut it. Mr. Denardo said their plan is solvent, is not in jeopardy and he asked to not get caught up in the political hype surrounding public workers and their pensions. He said when they talk about compensation, it means competitive pay, health benefits, security of the pension, staffing and providing them with the equipment needed to safely and efficiently provide the type of service delivery the citizens expect. He asked Council to support the firefighters, police officers, paramedics and public employees and delete the proposed one percent increase from the budget and to leave the pensions alone.

(46) Kenneth Fuller, 9400 Ivy Park Street, Capital Heights, Md., said he has been giving to the City since 1987. There used to be a hotline in Alexandria, and he contributed hundreds and hundreds of hours to that in crisis intervention. Mr. Fuller said he heard it all and knows how to listen. He heard what Council was saying that they don't want to balance the budget on the backs of the citizens and don't want to raise their taxes, and he heard the businesses saying don't put the burden on the businesses. He said he's seen mistakes the City has made, as he's there picking up the trash in the public sector. Mr. Fuller said they are overlooking one vital infrastructure - the people in the City that make the City and that make things work. They were there in snow storms, hurricanes, clearing the roads with trees and putting their lives on the line. He said they are what make the City shine. He asked Council to not balance the budget on their backs, and they are hurting the employees that produce for the City.

(47) Jacqueline Walker, 1301 Princess Street, member of the community outreach and public advocacy committee at Hopkins House Pre-School Academy, spoke in support of the City Manager's budget for support of his funding of early childhood care. Ms. Walker noted a growing matter of concern, that of the declining access to quality child care and preschool for children of low income families. In 2008, 58 percent of the children enrolled at Hopkins House were from low income families, and today, that number has fallen to only 24 percent. Current policies make it increasingly more difficult for preschools who serve large numbers of children from low income families to survive. The market rate that sets the amount of tuition preschools receive to serve government subsidized children has not been updated in years. Preschools no longer receive tuition for government subsidized children when the preschools are required to close due to severe and unsafe weather conditions, and it requires training for staff but does not reimburse it for the training. Ms. Walker said they support the City Manager's proposed budget for \$450,000 for early childhood programs but urged the City convene an inter-agency workgroup to bring forward specific recommendations to use the funds in a fashion that helps to mitigate the state policies which result in reduced access to quality child care for the City's low income children.

(48) David Caplan, 418 Queen Street, said Council must decide how to invest

in the future mobility of the City's residents, workers and visitors. He said they don't get there without dedicated funding for transportation. He said they must be mindful of the need to foster, not cut off renewed economic growth of the unique struggles facing small businesses and of commercial property vacancy rates. If the City doesn't solve the issues by deferring their unmet transportation needs to another budget cycle, grid-lock on the roads, insufficient capacity in the transit systems and poor connections to employment centers, aren't the way to sell Alexandria to prospective residents and businesses. Mr. Caplan said if Council says no to dedicated transportation funding, it will be continued uncertainty for businesses and nothing gained. He said by moving forward now, it shows businesses that they are ready, willing and able to invest in the future. He said he supports the commercial add-on tax at the rate proposed by the City Manager. He said that as a result of the reduction to the BPOL tax, if that means his own residential property taxes have to go up to fund core City services, he would accept that. He said the increase in ACVA's budget is justified. He said they need dedicated transportation funding and one is regional connectivity. All the redevelopment going on in neighboring jurisdictions impacts the City. High capacity transit is coming to Arlington and Fairfax, and they need to make sure people travelling to and from Alexandria can connect to the systems. He said the list of proposed projects is a thoughtful list developed over several months of outreach sessions with stakeholders, and the projects promote mass transit, improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and target the areas where they anticipate population and job growth.

(50) Michael Nardolili, 4022 Hummer Road, president, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, said it NVCT is an award-winning charity that saves nearby nature by helping everyone to voluntarily preserve natural areas, trails, streams and parks that contribute to the high quality of life in the City. He said the NVCT is a proud partner in helping implement the City's open space plan and is pleased to see the budget allows for the continuation of the successful public-private partnership. He said NVCT has conserved almost 10 acres of open space in the City, and they are having on-going discussions with other landowners regarding how they can tap into state and federal tax benefits to conserve their land. Mr. Nardolili said the City and NVCT developed a work plan for 2011 to increase the outreach work. He said the Trust for Public Land examined the economic benefits of parks and protected natural areas in Nassau and Suffolk Counties in Long Island, New York, and found that parks and protected natural areas raise property values and generate tourism revenue, lowers stormwater management costs, saved healthcare costs and reduced air pollution costs, and it found that parks and protected open space were a key economic driver that contributes at least \$2.74 billion annually in economic benefits.

(51) Kelly Dresen, 501 E. Luray Avenue, encouraged Council to take a serious look at the CIP budget. She noted the increase of children on her block since 2001 and she said the population growth will continue. Ms. Dresen said her kids go to Jefferson Houston School and they are more than thrilled with the quality of education that both their children receive. The building is in desperate need of not just renovation, but replacement, so she asked Council to look at the CIP and fund it fully.

(52) Phillip Voorhees, 4524 LaSalle Avenue, spoke in favor of funding for Ft. Ward Park, and said that while he is speaking for himself, he also served as a member of the ad-hoc Ft. Ward Advisory Group. He said they all assumed that Council took seriously the issues that were coming up, and the resolution of the problems. He said it was unfortunate to see that the budget falls short of what is needed for Ft. Ward to address the issues that are in the recommendations. Mr. Voorhees said the root of many of the issues facing Ft. Ward is the complex management relationship involving Parks and Recreation, the Office of Historic Alexandria, and the Transportation and Environmental Services Department, and it will only work if the responsibilities are clearly defined and an over-arching management plan is developed with input of the affected agencies and the public that clearly defines the hierarchy of purposes that Ft. Ward is expected to serve for Alexandria, and no such management plan is now available.

(53) Mr. Walt Travers, 520 King Street, representing Alexandria Sheriffs, said he was born and raised in Alexandria, went to school in Alexandria and has worked for the City for over 30 years. Mr. Travers said that as a taxpayer he is against the budget and he asked Council to take away the one percent toward the retirement, as it is wrong.

(54) Angela Lynch, 133 S. Quaker Lane, said she was born and raised in Alexandria and attended public schools in Alexandria. Ms. Lynch said she started with the City in 1986, and she said when it snows, storms, and rains, whatever it takes for the solid waste division to get it done, they get it done. Last year when it had the large amount of snow, for the first time in history, the trash wasn't picked up for a week, and not one time did they have citizens complain. She said she is the first female assistant superintendent with the solid waste division, and there are 35 guys under her, and they take pride in their job.

(55) Sonya Finley, 5597 Seminary Road, said she wished to share how the one percent would affect her personally. She said they can't afford to have any decreases in pay. A lot will go into default on homes, losing their apartments and/or vehicles, and it affects everyone. She said she has already downsized her vehicle, she has had to pull her daughter out of college, and there is no more for her to dig into her pocket, as her pocket is already empty.

(56) Anthony Q. Mayes, 4223 S. 12th Road, #22, said he works for solid waste and he wished to speak about "the balance." He said he worries every day coming from his job to his apartment, wondering if his things are outside and who has picked over them if they are. He said he tells his car when its on half, that's it, as he can't afford to fill it up. Mr. Mayes said part of his balance is wondering if he should pay his car insurance or should he get something to eat. He said if the one percent clicks through, it upsets his balance and it leaves him a working homeless human being. He said that every day, he makes a conscious decision to get up, go to work and to be a responsible man. He said when he started on this job, he promised himself to uphold his part no matter what it is he goes through, and without a doubt, he has done that

every day for the last eight or nine years. Mr. Mayes asked Council to uphold its part.

(57) Tim Lovain, 2606 Davis Avenue, speaking on behalf of the Northern Virginia Streetcar Coalition, reiterated their support for the commercial add-on tax for transportation. He said the City has urgent transportation needs right now and it will just get worse, and the commercial add-on tax is the primary broad based tool the Commonwealth has given municipalities for transportation, their neighbors have implemented it and so should Alexandria. He said transportation can drive development. If it lays highways, it gets sprawl. If it does nothing, it will be a sea of townhomes with total gridlock. But if it chooses to implement rail transit in the City, as the heart of its transit corridors, it will induce mixed use, walkable, transit-oriented development and special places that people will want to work, live and visit.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Smedberg and carried unanimously, City Council adjourned the special public hearing meeting of March 7, 2011 at 8:01 p.m. The voting was as follows:

Pepper	"aye"	Donley	"aye"
Smedberg	"aye"	Fannon	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Hughes	absent
	Krupicka	"aye"	

APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM D. EUILLE

MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC
City Clerk and Clerk of Council