

Resolution on Need for Greater Cooperation between Fairfax County and Fairfax School County Board

Background

In a sequence of three Joint Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and Fairfax County Public School Board (SB) Committees over the past 5 years, the supervisors and school board members have expanded existing cooperative actions, but as the most recent joint BOS/SB Budget Committee has stated “the wants/needs can not be achieved with the projected revenues”.

Information on Previous Efforts Seeking Budget Reductions through Cooperation Between Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County School Board, including summaries of the accomplishments and shortcomings of the three Joint BOS and SB Committees, is provided in Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION

The Need for Greater Cooperation between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County School Board

Whereas, the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (Federation) appreciates the improved communication and cooperative efforts between the Fairfax County’s Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the Fairfax County Public School Board (FCPSB) members, and encourages continued discourse and additional collaboration, and

Whereas, future Fairfax County revenues appear to be inadequate for the needs of the desired County programs and public school programs, and

Whereas, the Federation believes that significant savings to the County’s taxpayers can be achieved through even greater cooperation, and

Whereas, the Joint Budget Committee, which completed its report in 2014, has outlined the most comprehensive description of areas for cooperation that have the potential for the most significant savings, implementing these recommendations will depend upon the commitment of the County and School Boards.

Whereas, fair and comparable compensation is important to (or enables) retention of quality County and FCPS administrative staff and support personal, and

Whereas, competitive compensation is important for the retention of quality teachers, and

Whereas, elections for all County supervisors and members of the Public School Board are scheduled for the fall of 2015, and the election of supervisors and school board members supportive of expanded cooperative efforts will be critical to obtaining the savings necessary to continue present important County and School programs.

Therefore,

Be It Resolved that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (Federation) appreciates the improved communication between the Fairfax County’s Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Public School Board members, and encourages continued cooperation, especially that will enable additional efficiencies and/or cost savings to the Fairfax County taxpayer, and

Be It Further Resolved that the Federation, encourages District Councils, Citizen Associations, and other county citizen organizations to focus on the issue of joint Board cooperation, including compensation structure

and merging of some activities and facilities, and to ask question of all Board candidates in order to help determine each candidate's commitment to expanding cooperative undertakings.

Attachment 1

Information on Previous Efforts Seeking Budget Reductions through Cooperation Between Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County School Board

The Joint County and FCPS Smart Services Committee produced an extensive list of existing cooperation between the County and FCPS (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/budget/smart-services-matrix.pdf), and recent areas of cooperation include funding "turf" fields for selected schools, funding for all-day Mondays, early childhood education, and participation in neighborhood readiness teams. As a result of the Smart Services Committee (1) a new model to provide child care (SACC) was developed allowing for increased student participation, (2) cooperation with the County's legal services was expanded, and (3) planned development of a new financial data storage and retrieval system [part of FOCUS] was continued.

Although this Smart Services Committee looked for savings through possible mergers of departments, through shared services, and through joint use of facilities, none of these possibilities came to fruition, few savings were realized, and the development of a combined information system for human resources and others was eventually abandoned.

The Joint County and FCPS Committee on Infrastructure established a common understanding of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) terms, identified the magnitude of County and School facility construction and renovation needs, and designated \$13 M in additional funding for FCPS CIP projects^{1/}, and both organizations committed to setting aside, when possible, additional monies from year end funds for CIP projects. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/infrastructure-financing-committee.htm).

This Infrastructure Committee did not (1) establish a common basis for deciding on the priority of renovation and construction projects, (2) establish a common queue for County and FCPS CIP projects, (3) identify joint use of facilities, (4) recommend combining any of the different design and construction groups within the county, (5) realize any savings, (6) identify the reason for different construction costs between the County and FCPS, and (7) adequately discuss the use of Economic Development Authority bonds.

In odd numbered calendar years, the County's CIP has programmed bond referendums for voter approval of FCPS construction and renovation bonds. The County will continue to utilize the voter approved referendum as the basis to sell \$155 million annually in general obligation bonds for FCPS. The County has used both voter approved General Obligation bonds and Economic Development Authority bonds^{2/} for some of its capital improvement projects which do not require voter approval and carry 0.2 to 0.25 percent higher interest rates (in the current market).

The Joint County and FCPS Budget Committee which completed its work in 2014, outlined the most encouraging cooperative steps, and recognized that "What We Need/Want is more than What We Have", and thus recognized the need to prioritize expenditures and to look for savings, noting that projected revenue increases are expected to be limited to 3 percent (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/jointboards).

The Joint County and FCPS Budget Committee members developed a better understanding of each others budget, and the committee made several positive recommendations including (1) the use of common terminology, (2) the development of a similar approach to funding common budget requirements, (3) a list of budget process recommendations that will enable all parties to better understand and compare budget

documents, (4) reaching agreement on multi-year budgeting and use end-of-year (carryover) funds only for one-time expenses, (5) recommending a review of leased facilities to eliminate excess space, and (6) most importantly encouraged both organizations “to evaluate opportunities for providing services jointly or on behalf of both organizations to eliminate waste, redundancies and inefficiencies”.

Furthermore, the Joint Budget committee recommended that “the approach to funding common budget requirements should be similar in the areas of developing and fundinglong-term liabilities such as retirement, and supporting compensation increases” and went on to outline specific tasks including determining “shared costs drivers such as salary increase, retirement and health rates, and contractual increases” which would be “used by both organizations to develop a comprehensive and comparable summary of fiscal needs. However, since that Joint Budget Committee recommendation was developed the County has independently established a projected County employee salary increase structure through 2025.

- 1/ Note while this additional funding had been scheduled for FY2016, the County’s Executive Director in his Advertized FY2016 Budget has proposed delaying this funding until FY2017, and the BOS has agreed to provide this funding from EOY monies if available.
- 2/ FCPS projects funded with EDA funds include South County Secondary School and School Administration building for a total of \$130.769M, and County projects funded with EDA funds include Herrity and Pennino buildings, Laurel Hill Golf Course, Mott, Gum Spring, Baileys, James Lee and Providence Community Centers, Herndon Harbor House/Adult Day Health Care Center, South Fairfax County Government Center, Weihle Avenue Metrorail Parking Garage, Mid-County Mental Health Center, and the Public Safety Headquarters. For a total of \$510.42 M although revenue from some of these projects may cover the cost and perhaps County bonds could not have been used for some of the projects, such as public-private partnerships.