

Membership Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2017

Approved May 18, 2017

The March Membership meeting of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (FCFCA) was called to order on March 23, 2017, by President Tim Thompson, at 7:36 p.m. at the George Mason Regional Library (Meeting Room), 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale 22003.

Present:

BOARD:

Officers: Tim Thompson (President/Colvin's Glen-Colvin's Forest Citizens Association), Ed Wyse (First Vice President/Springfield/Membership/Civic Association of West Springfield Village), and George Becerra (Recording Secretary).

District Council Representatives: Peter Sitnik (Mount Vernon/Co-Chair, Legislation) and Flint Webb (Providence/Co-Chair, Environment).

Committee Chairs: Judy Harbeck (Co-Chair, Budget), Nancy Trainer (Co-Chair, Education/Potomac Hills Citizens Association), Ed Saperstein (Co-Chair, Budget; Co-Chair, Education/Glen Haven Farms Homeowners Association), and Patrick Smaldore (Co-Chair, Public Safety).

MEMBERSHIP:

Members: Joana Garcia (Crosspointe Swim and Racquet, Inc), Greg Doherty (Mason Hill Citizens Association), Suzie Wells (Sleepy Hollow Manor Civic Association), Julie Hirka (Stonewall Manor Community Association), and Ed Alzona (Wellington Civic Association).

Others: None

Invited Guests: None

Meeting Minutes: February's Membership meeting minutes was passed unanimously, with no corrections or edits.

Treasurer's Report: No report.

Membership Report: See Membership Committee report.

Citizen of the Year Banquet: President Thompson gave updates on sponsorships and ticket sales.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

1. Nancy Trainer, Education Co-Chair, presented the Education Committee's resolution on the Fairfax County FY 2018 Budget (Attachment 1).
This would be an addendum to the full resolution on the Fairfax County Advertised FY 2018 Budget.
Motion was made to support the resolution. Seconded.
Discussion held (no comments).
Motion Passed – 10 For, 4 Against, and 0 Abstentions.

2. Judy Harbeck, Budget Co-Chair, presented the Budget Committee's resolution on the Fairfax County Advertised Fiscal Year 2018 Budget (Attachment 2).
Discussion held. Edits made throughout the resolution.
 - a) Motion to merge/move the Education Committee's resolution into the Budget Committee's resolution (replace the "Where as" from the Education Committee resolution into the Budget Committee's resolution and remove the "therefore" portion of the Education Committee resolution).
Discussion Held.
Motion Passed – 14 For, 0 Against, and 0 Abstentions.
 - b) Vote on the edited Budget Committee's resolution on the Fairfax County Advertised Fiscal year 2018 Budget
Motion Passed – 10 For, 4 Against, and 0 Abstentions.

3. Patrick Smaldore, Public Safety Co-Chair, informed us about a Public Safety Awareness Program occurring on Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at the American Legion Post in Vienna at 7pm.

Board & Committee Reports

1. Budget – Judy Harbeck and Ed Saperstein – See New Business.
2. Citizens Association Services –No report.
3. Education – Nancy Trainer and Ed Saperstein – See New Business.
4. Environment – Flint Webb – Submitted report.
5. Human Services – No report.
6. Land Use – No report.
7. Legislation – No report.
8. Library – No report.
9. Membership – Ed Wyse – Provided membership sign-in sheets and vote cards for the meeting.
10. Public Safety – See New Business.
11. Resolutions – No report.
12. Revenue – No report.
13. Transportation – No report.
14. Website – No report.

District Council Reports & Membership – Open Floor

(Dranesville & Hunter Mill - N/A)

1. Braddock – No report.
2. Lee – No report.
3. Mason – No report.
4. Mt. Vernon – Peter Sitnik – Gave report.
5. Providence – Flint Webb – Submitted report at Board meeting on 3/16/17.
6. Sully – No report.
7. Membership – Open Floor – None.

Announcements: None

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Next Meetings:

Membership Meeting – April 20, 2017 at 7:30pm at the Mason Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale 22003.

Board Meeting – April 27, 2017 at 7:30pm at the Dunn Loring Center (Room 108).

Minutes prepared by George Becerra, Recording Secretary

DRAFT VERSION, March 16, 2017
Education Committee Resolution
on the Fairfax County Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

WHEREAS, the FCPS Advertised FY 2018 Budget requires a County transfer increase of approximately \$48 million more than the County Executive's proposed increase; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax County's multi-year budget plan in FY 2017 provided guidelines for FY 2018 that the County's transfer increase to FCPS would be 3 percent, though the County Executive's proposed budget provides a transfer increase to FCPS of 2.7 percent; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) began the 2015-2016 and 2016-17 school years with nearly 200 teacher vacancies, meaning that there were nearly 200 teaching positions for which FCPS could find no qualified applicant, a situation which Superintendent Karen Garza called "unprecedented"; and

WHEREAS, FCPS remains significantly below the market average for teacher salaries, such that according to a recent market study, FCPS teachers are paid over a 30-year teaching career \$142,000 less than the market average, and \$293,000 less than a teacher in neighboring Arlington County;¹ and

WHEREAS, FCPS has begun to close the teacher salary gap with the market average through targeted investments in the teacher salary scale, but the market average will continue shifting based on salary increases provided by surrounding school districts; and

WHEREAS, the size of the FCPS teacher salary gap is large enough so that even under FCPS' Advertised FY 2018 Budget, teacher salaries are not projected to become competitive with the market average until FY2021; and

WHEREAS, since FY2009 FCPS has increased class sizes three times; and

WHEREAS, FCPS' expenditures continue to increase due to enrollment growth and student demographic changes, as well as retirement and health care increases, including a required \$25.5 million payment to the Virginia Retirement System which represents an accelerated payment originally planned for FY 2019; and

¹ 2015-2016 Total Compensation Market Study, as presented by Segal Waters Consulting on December 7, 2015 to the FCPS School Board. The figures representing total compensation—which take into account benefits as well as salary—reveal a smaller but still material gap. In total compensation, FCPS teachers over a 30-year teaching career can expect to receive \$52,000 less than the market average, and \$141,000 less than a teacher in Arlington County.

WHEREAS, Fairfax County's continued economic growth and strong property values both depend on the excellence of its public schools, which is regularly recognized by the Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, who cite FCPS as one of the primary reasons businesses relocate to Fairfax County;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Federation urges the Board of Supervisors to increase the County's transfer to FCPS beyond the County Executive's recommendation, and to the extent possible given the constraints of other spending priorities.

FAIRFAX COUNTY
FEDERATION

of Citizens Associations Established 1940

www.fairfaxfederation.org ~|~ P.O. Box 3913, Merrifield, VA 22116-3913

**Resolution on the
Fairfax County Advertised Fiscal Year 2018 Budget**

**(Board Submits for Membership
Consideration on March 23, 2017)**

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Respectfully submitted to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Tim Thompson, President
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations

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ATTACHMENT

Education Committee Resolution on the Fairfax County Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (The Federation) is a 76-year old umbrella organization representing over 40,000 Fairfax County residences.

As homeowners, our members are acutely aware that about 65% of the Fairfax County FY2018 Budget is dependent on real property taxes, primarily residential.

The Federation is also aware that changing demographics in the county and failures by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Government to provide adequate funding of their various mandates and responsibilities, has multiplied costs, and has shifted the burden of maintaining our quality of life, infrastructure, and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to the county, and disproportionately to homeowners. This abdication of responsibility needs to be strongly addressed by all county elected representatives. But, while awaiting redress, we cannot permit degradation of our essential services and our schools, which the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has recognized as a priority asset and instrumental in attracting new residents and businesses, and building a diversified economy.

The Federation supported the recent Meals Tax Referendum as an important step in diversifying the revenue stream and providing critical support to schools and county services while slowing the rate of increase in property tax rates which would be otherwise required. The Federation believes it should not be assumed that the defeat of the Meals Tax Referendum signals an unwillingness on the part of taxpayers to support the growing needs of the county and its schools. Certainly, the upward trajectory of property tax increases is concerning but so are the needs to maintain citizens' quality of life and the primacy of FCPS as an economic stimulus to new businesses and property values.

Federation members recognize that our lifestyle comes at a cost, but continue to insist that the following critical needs are addressed by the budget and the BOS in FY2018 and successive years:

- (a) continued excellence of FCPS, which serve as a magnet for growth and provide the underpinning of the county's economic health;
- (b) a safe and secure community with a reasonable safety net for residents and families with mental, physical, or substance abuse issues or are homeless or living in poverty;
- (c) parks, recreational facilities, and libraries which are adequately maintained and staffed;

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- (d) responsive, transparent and proactive governance and financial planning and oversight, including maintenance of the county's AAA bond rating;
- (e) improvement of environmental quality, recycling and pest management.

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B. FINDINGS

I. Revenues

WHEREAS, the changing needs and demographics of the county and schools are reflected in rising property tax rates, and additional fees that directly affect homeowners (such as storm water fees and waste disposal fees) disproportionately increase the tax burden on homeowners; and

WHEREAS, under the “Dillon Rule”, counties in Virginia have limited authority to raise and collect revenue compared to rights granted to cities, but the BOS has not fully implemented the authorities available to it including (but not limited to): (1) adopting a zoning ordinance to assess and impose transportation impact fees on by-right commercial or mixed-use development to defray costs of reasonable road improvements; (2) using new transportation revenues from fuel taxes to alleviate transportation congestion, or (3) imposing taxes, such as the Business/Professional/Occupational Licenses (BPOL) tax, at rates comparable to surrounding jurisdictions;

WHEREAS diversification of revenue is essential to good business and fiscal planning, and achieving revenue-generating authority on a par with that granted to cities would improve diversification and over-reliance on a single source revenue stream; and

WHEREAS fully exercising current revenue authority and seeking city-county parity would also ameliorate the tax burden of homeowners for whom rising tax bills do not necessarily reflect rising income or disposable wealth; and

II. Compensation and Benefits

WHEREAS, increases in life expectancy, early full retirement eligibility (police and uniformed), lump sum payments under the Deferred Retirement Option Payment (DROP) program, and a specified floor for cost of living increases for pensioners have combined to make annual county retirement contributions very expensive while the long-term liability of the defined benefit pension fund is uncertain; and

WHEREAS, Fairfax County’s defined benefit plans are better funded than many other public entities, but it is apparent that some changes will be required to assure benefits will be there for current employees, to avoid the crisis situation felt elsewhere and to better reflect changing attitudes of employees and the private sector movement away from defined benefit plans; and therefore the following areas need attention:

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(a) development of a flexible combination of salary enhancement, defined benefit contributions and transportable retirement savings such as 401(k)s to reduce annual and long-term county liabilities and allow for employee preferences;

(b) an examination of extending retirement ages and consideration of a system which combines chronological age with years of service;

(c) phasing out the DROP program and/or converting to multiple tranches which reward employee longevity with periodic enhanced contributions to individual retirement accounts; and

WHEREAS it is in the interests of all citizens that the county (and FCPS, discussed below) maintain a quality workforce and provide compensation, both salary and benefits, which is competitive with those offered by surrounding jurisdictions and/or, to the greatest extent possible, the private sector for similar positions; and

WHEREAS the county should undertake and release a study comparing county employee salary and benefits in order to demonstrate to county taxpayers that any proposed increases are needed to maintain parity with competing jurisdictions in order to attract and retain qualified employees; and

III. Public Safety

WHEREAS the FY 2018 Advertised Budget includes necessary funding for an additional 26 public safety positions which are reasonably required to address population increases and demographic changes in the county; and

WHEREAS the FY 2018 Advertised Budget includes funding and makes appropriate lead time and organizational considerations for the 2022 opening of the new South County Police Station in a rapidly growing area of the county; and

“to the future”

WHEREAS the FY 2018 Advertised Budget does not fund the second tranche of the “Diversion First” program, begun in FY 2017, putting in doubt the continuation of this initiative which diverts mentally ill or challenged offenders from the judicial system and probable incarceration to appropriate treatment; and

WHEREAS “Diversion First” has the potential to save the county significant monetary costs in police time, legal processes and incarceration as well as significant human costs to individuals and families, and may also reduce the unfortunate scenarios that too often result from the collision of mental illness with the judicial system; and

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IV. Education Funding and School Transfer

WHEREAS Fairfax County's continued economic growth and strong property values both depend on the excellence of its public schools, and FCPS is regularly recognized as a priority asset of the county by homeowners, by the BOS, and by the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority; and

WHEREAS, as is more particularly set forth in the "FCFCA Education Committee Resolution on the Fairfax County Fiscal Year 2018 Budget" attached and incorporated herein, FCPS' necessary expenditures continue to increase due to rising enrollment and student demographic changes, unavoidable increases in retirement and healthcare expenses, and a need to bring teacher salaries to a competitive level compared to surrounding jurisdictions in order to attract and retain the best teachers; and

WHEREAS the FY 2018 Advertised Budget substantially underfunds FCPS and the School Transfer requested by the Fairfax County School Board, creating a current funding gap of over \$48M and threatening the ability of FCPS to meet needs, particularly in the priority area of teacher compensation; and

WHEREAS studies show that FCPS salaries are below market average, very significantly so in some experience ranges, which has caused the loss of experienced teachers and an unacceptable vacancy rate in teacher positions; and

WHEREAS in FY 2017 FCPS began a data-driven and targeted multiyear effort to close this salary gap by 2021, but the school transfer suggested in the FY 2018 Advertised Budget will hinder this effort; and

WHEREAS the inability to offer competitive salaries to qualified teachers threatens to dilute the excellence of FCPS and the economic health of the county because teacher quality is one of the most important factors in student achievement; and

V. Public Works and Environment

WHEREAS the BOS approved the "Cool Counties Pledge" committing to specified reductions in greenhouse gases (GhG) by 80% by 2050 compared to 2005 recorded levels; and

WHEREAS the county has reduced GhG but not to the agreed upon levels, necessitating additional action including, but not limited to: developing a comprehensive plan, establishing a Sustainability Office to assure goals are met and issuing annual reports on progress; and

WHEREAS the FY 2018 Advertised Budget includes funds for Fall Cankerworm eradication, which is not recommended by the County Urban Forestry Management

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Division and is opposed by many residents, and those funds should be used for other purposes; and

VI. FY 2018 Property Tax Rate

WHEREAS the FY 2018 Advertised Budget recommends the FY 2017 property tax rate (\$1.13 per \$100 of assessed valuation) be retained for FY 2018 which would cost the average homeowner only an additional \$41 for the year and increase revenue sufficient to technically balance the budget but not to provide adequate funding for FCPS or other county priorities; and

WHEREAS the maximum advertised tax rate was ^{omit} also set by the BOS at FY 2017 levels so that the FY 2018 rate may be lowered but not raised, which stifles the ability of citizens to discuss the proper balance of taxes and services, removes the flexibility of the BOS to respond to demonstrated needs, and may lead to precipitous raises in future years to address known needs, such as FCPS, Metro, and other Lines of Business (LOB); and

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C. REQUESTED ACTIONS

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED based on all of the foregoing that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations urges the BOS to take the following actions in adopting the FY 2018 Fairfax County Budget:

I. Revenues

- (1) the BOS should exercise all available authority to generate additional diversified revenue, including but not limited to: (a) raising the BPOL tax to at least that imposed by surrounding jurisdictions, (b) taking all necessary steps to collect impact fees, permitting fees, and fuel taxes; and
- (2) the BOS should pursue efforts to achieve city-county parity in taxing and other authorities, and should increase efforts, in concert with the Fairfax County School Board, to obtain a more equitable share of funding from the Commonwealth and federal government; and *an*

II. Compensation and Benefits

- (3) the BOS should accept suggested employee compensation increases with the proviso that in future years a comprehensive study be done and publicized which compares salary and benefits in surrounding jurisdictions in order to determine competitiveness and relative salary position before base salaries are increased beyond cost of living; and
- (4) the BOS should examine the retirement system and consider changes (targeting new and/or unvested employees) to retirement age, the DROP program, and annual cost of living increases and develop changes or reductions to the defined benefit plans to provide more flexible approaches to salary and retirement contributions (as reflected in the private sector) which may be more attractive to newer, younger employees while reducing potentially crippling long term liabilities; and

III. Public Safety

- (5) the BOS should adopt the increased staffing and salary projections in the county's FY 2018 Advertised Budget; and
- (6) the BOS should restore, as much as possible, second year funds for the "Diversion First" program which promises to save both money and human life in the future; and

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IV. Education Funding and School Transfer

(7) the BOS should increase the county's transfer to FCPS beyond the recommendations in the county FY 2018 Advertised Budget, and to the extent possible given the constraints of other spending priorities; and

V. Public Works and Environment

(8) the BOS should accelerate "Cool Counties" progress by developing a comprehensive plan to meet goals, establishing a Sustainability Office to assure goals are met and issuing annual progress reports, with funding for the Sustainability Office to be realized through energy savings; and

(9) the BOS should not expend funds for Fall Cankerworm eradication but should use funds saved for other pest management programs and/or public outreach about pest and invasive plant management; and

VI. FY 2018 Property Tax Rate

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BOS should adopt the maximum advertised tax rate as the actual rate for FY 2018 to avoid any further deterioration in services and school funding and should, for FY 2019, improve communication about fiscal matters and adopt a maximum advertised rate which does not effectively stifle citizen input on the proper balance of taxes and services and limit the BOS' flexibility.

Pending attachment of the Education Committee Addendum