

Minutes
Fairlington Citizens Association Executive Board Meeting
Fairlington Community Center, Room 103
3308 South Stafford Street
Arlington, Virginia
November 12, 2009, as approved

Board Members Present:

President Sam Anthony
Vice President Tom McNally
Secretary Carol Dabbs
Director Christine Chirichella
Director Stan Hanzel
Director Brenda Kriegel
Director Maureen Ryan
Director Greg Van Hoey

Board Member Absent:

Treasurer Ed Hilz

Business Meeting

Call to Order: President Anthony called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Ad Manager's report: Beth Andrews asked that we provide her with the policy for rotation of full page advertisers by December 1. President Anthony indicated that he would find the notes from Board discussions on this subject.

Approval of minutes: Minutes from September were approved as edited, 8-0. October minutes were presented in draft; directors were asked to provide any comments within one week.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Hilz's usual three reports had been provided in advance, as he was not able to attend. They were approved 8-0.

Guest Speaker:

Mary Hynes, a member of the County Board, was introduced by Director Kriegel, and spoke about the county budget, HOT Lanes, and helicopter noise to a group of 14 citizens, in addition to the FCA Board and AFB editor.

2011 County Budget

Ms Hynes provided us with a copy of the Board Guidance to the County Manager for the preparation of the Manger's 2011 Budget, and discussed most of the principles identified there. She explained that the real estate tax rates must be identical for residential and commercial properties, which presents difficulties because residential properties have declined only 5%, while commercial properties have declined 12-17% in value. The total budget is about \$1.2-1.3 billion dollars, and they anticipate a deficit of about \$80-100

million in FY 2010, due to lost revenue and increased expenses. Unemployment is about 4.7% in Arlington, and shows up in a doubling of requests for food assistance, as well as increases in demand for other services as well. HHS is being moved to a different building, which will reduce rent; savings will be applied to increase ART bus lines. Revenue sharing with Arlington Public Schools continues per the agreement made in 2001, which means that APS will receive \$6 million more in FY 2011 due to increases in enrollment. The Board has asked for a professional assessment of their borrowing power. For some programs, such as Project Family, which started as an adult literacy program and has become a parenting improvement program, public-private partnerships with non-profits are appropriate and under consideration. Budget hearings will take place in March, and will be announced on the web. Her expectations are that it will be 2013 when we notice an economic uptick.

HOT Lanes

Arlington County is suing the Governor, VDOT, and the US Federal Highway Administration, on the grounds that the federal environmental assessment was cut short. It ends at Eads Street, with no agreement to extend even to the DC line. There are no plans for mitigation nor how to pay for it.

Helicopter Noise

Ms Hynes chairs the Aviation Policy Committee of the Council of Governments, which is working to meet with appropriate officials to get helicopters to fly higher. It's also a question of routes; the military doesn't want to follow established routes for security reasons. Treasurer Hilz is our representative to this group.

Questions and Answers

- How will the new County Manager deal with the recently-hired Department heads in the County government?

She believes that the county has strong managers. In addition, there is some flexibility for the new manager to do some hiring, so she doesn't think there will be problems. They are currently interviewing for the County Manager position.

- What's the difference between ART (Arlington Transport) and Metro?
ART is county-run—the buses run on natural gas. ART is designed to augment Metro, and has the flexibility to change routes more easily than Metro.
- Concern was expressed about the animal shelter, comparing it to volunteer groups which save more animals.

Ms Hynes acknowledged the issues raised as legitimate and serious. The contract with the County provides most of the funding for the Arlington Animal Welfare League (AAWL). There are plans for another discussion before year's end re: euthanasia, measurements, transparency, and what the County wants in the next contract, which will be let next summer.

- Concern was expressed that this situation with the Animal Welfare League doesn't bode well for public-private partnerships, such as the homeless shelter. Ms Hynes indicated that the County Board and citizens don't have much control in these situations.

- What about the AWLA capital campaign and bigger budget? This is a rich organization that doesn't provide services.
There's nothing in the county budget now.
- How will the reduced budget for FY 2011 impact Fairlington directly? What about keeping the fire station open?
It's too early to say. Staff are looking at options, but there's not much more that can be cut out of administrative costs. There are no worries about the exterior renovation of the FCC; it's already funded with a bond issue. There is little Capital Improvement Program funding, which is not good for a county of Arlington's age.
- A comment was made that AWLA turns away retarded student volunteers.
- Was the Washington Post article about transport in Arlington wrong?
Yes. Since 2006, improvements have been made in streets, bikelanes, parking ("curbside management"), Metro, buses, walking arrangements, and traffic demand management (incentives not to drive).
- Will the moving and renovation costs for the new HSS building absorb 10 years of savings in rent?
No. A renovation was needed at the old building as well; the new building will be more functional and has more space.

AES Update: Michelle Marston, PTA Co-President for Abingdon Elementary School (AES), indicated that potential cuts to balance the 2011 budget include special programs including science lab, architectural updates, communications, and violin lessons (currently provided to all 4th graders). All teachers at AES have specialized skills for these "Wheel" classes.

Business Meeting continued:

Fairlington Fun Night Deposit: President Anthony discussed the questions we had about liabilities should we provide the \$500 deposit for this event with Arlington County staff. There were no answers available regarding what liabilities to us could be created, nor why this policy had not been mentioned to the organizers earlier. He indicated he'd get more information, especially about whether we could be held liable for damages that exceed the deposit, and that we could then vote by email.

5th outdoor sign: It was passed 6-2 that up to \$200 be spent on a 5th outdoor sign to advertise our meetings, and that Board members assist twice each year in assembling the signs and placing and removing and storing them. However, discussion continued, and concerns were raised regarding the time and labor required for the signs. It was passed 8-0 that the implementation of the above motion be deferred for 3 months, and be reconsidered after broader dissemination of the existing signs, 2 in North Fairlington and 2 in South Fairlington, during that period.

Adjournment: President Anthony adjourned the meeting at just after 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Dabbs, Secretary