

DRAFT
FCFCA Membership Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2001

1. Program – Supervisor Gerry Connolly, former Federation president and current Providence District supervisor, spoke on issues on interest and concern to Fairfax County. Before his presentation Bill Hanks presented a tongue-in-cheek Special Resolution focusing on the need for a larger office for the Providence District supervisor, which was approved unanimously (attached).

Supervisor Connolly noted that a strong citizen voice is needed for balance of opinion in the County, especially on such issues as location of churches. He noted the County redistricting process earlier this year, the plan for which was approved unanimously by the Board.

Connolly spoke about four critical issues:

- a. Emergency preparedness. The County was somewhat prepared to respond to the September 11 attack because it had prepared for the Y2K crisis that never occurred. The County has identified 172 possible targets. Concerns center on (a) regional response and tight coordination, (b) our inadequate emergency telecommunications center on Woodburn Road, and (c) an insufficient Red Cross presence in the County.
- b. Fiscal situation. About half of the County revenues come from the real estate tax. Assessments increased by 11 percent this year and are expected to do the same next year. The other half of the revenue pie is growing at 0.6 percent. To date this fiscal year sales tax revenue is down \$14.6M, interest on investments is down \$18.6M, building and inspection fees are down \$3M, the transient occupancy tax is down \$1M, and other revenues are down \$1.3M. Personal property tax revenues are up by \$19.3M and recordation taxes are up \$4.3M. The bottom line is a revenue reduction of \$13M this fiscal year. The County Executive has directed a 5 percent reduction across the board except for public safety. It looks doubtful that the real estate tax rate can be cut next fiscal year.
- c. General Assembly.
 - (1) Funding. The state is facing a \$1B shortfall in its current year budget so the County cannot expect much help from the state. The composite index used for state aid works against the County because of our “ability to pay.” All income tax revenues are paid to and kept by the state—no local share. The composite index was just revised from .73 to .77 which means a reduction of \$20 million in school support. The state is supposed to fund 55% of the SOQ costs; if done, Fairfax would get another \$70M. Fairfax has 14% of the state’s student enrollment. When the state funded \$110M for school construction statewide, Fairfax received \$4M.
 - (2) Fair share. We must protect our local revenue base. Each year Fairfax send \$2B to Richmond and gets back 19 cents on the dollar.
 - (3) Dillon Rule. This should be reversed in its interpretation.

(4) Sales tax referendum. The legislation to permit a referendum on a one-cent increase in the sales tax with half for transportation and half for education was mauled. Instead of locally based, it would have been regional in N. VA and the funding would have been funneled through the Transportation Authority. The education portion was a question among jurisdictions. The Fairfax BOS supports the full one cent for both transportation and education. If education is not included, PTAs and school supporters would be angry and vote against the transportation referendum. House majority leader Vance Wilkins has indicated that the bill will not pass if education is included.

- d. Open space and parks. In the past three years Fairfax has expanded its park and open space acreage by 25%. The referendum passed three years ago included \$10M for acquisition. Each year's budget has included some funding to supplement the bond funds.
- e. Land use. He raised the issue of large dry cleaning establishments in C and I Districts next to residential areas. He also addressed cash proffers for infrastructure and questioned whether they could be used to supplement proffers. In response to a question, he indicated that the County is not getting enough funding from developers, especially for school facilities. The cash proffers would assess a specific amount based on the type of facilities with a maximum of \$11,720 per unit. Chesterfield County uses these proffers, but he feels they may be a false promise.
- f. Q&A session.
 - a. Tobacco settlement money. The governor borrowed against this fund to pay for the fourth year of personal property tax relief.
 - b. Asked about no budget funding for trails and sidewalks in this year's budget, Supervisor Connolly explained that there was an increasing construction backlog so money was not included. The federal government will contribute 25% of the cost of the cross-County trail. He does grants waivers for sidewalks or trails only if the developer escrows comparable funding for sidewalks or trails in Providence District.
 - c. Asked about the possible impact of a cash proffer system on affordable housing, he said there would be none because such housing would not be included in the program.
 - d. In response to a query about use of an auditor by FCPS to save money, he said because the County auditor has saved millions of dollars they suggested this approach to FCPS, but they feel they don't need it.

2. Business Meeting

- a. Legislative Program: Sally Ormsby moved adoption of the draft 2002 Legislative Program. The membership considered the sections *ad seriatim* and accepted minor additions to the Education and Taxation and Finance sections and revise the wording of the Dillon Rule section.

A motion by Steve DelBianco to delete the hand-held cell phone item under Public Safety passed.

A motion by Michael Wolter to add the following item under Public Safety passed: “Support legislation to increase the penalties for reckless, improper or distracted driving (*Code of Virginia, Section 46.2-852*).

Clay Peters asked that a statement be included in the President’s testimony to the BOS on November 19 include support for the proposed County legislative initiatives on preservation of trees and that, if the BOS includes them in its legislative program, we write to our legislators to urge their support of such legislation.

The main motion as amended was approved. The membership then set the legislative priorities by adding two items to the 2001 list: (1) Reversal of the “Dillon Rule” and (2) state and local tax structure modernization.

George Waters recommended issuance of a press release about the 2002 legislative program following the BOS public hearing on November 19.

- b. Budget – Charlie Dane presented a Treasurer’s Report and moved adoption of the draft 2001-2002 Federation budget (attached). The budget passed unanimously.
 - c. Membership – Since the County address labels are out of date, Wade Smith asked the District Councils for a list of their current members. The current membership is 80 associations; 20 more are needed to meet budget projections.
 - d. Banquet – The time, date and place are under consideration.
 - e. Education – There will be a committee meeting next week. Six of the nine districts are represented.
 - f. Announcements
 - (1) Holmes Run Acres is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with celebrations throughout the year.
 - (2) The next membership meeting will be held on December 13 with the County Executive and Assistant Fire Chief Wheatley talking about emergency preparedness.
 - (3) The new Coalition for Good Schools will meet for the second time on November 28. Among the members are Supervisors McConnell, Bulova and Connolly, Senator Saslaw, Delegate Dillard, the South County Coalition and the Democratic and Republican Committees. They are working hard for inclusion of education in the sales tax referendum bill.
3. The meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Sally B. Ormsby
Recording Secretary *pro tem*

Board meeting – November 29, 7:30 p.m.