

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of March 31, 2005
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.) President Carol Hawn introduced County Executive Anthony Griffin.

Program —

Mr. Griffin said that the advertised FY 2006 county budget maintains a high quality of life while reducing the tax rate from \$1.13 to \$1.03. He expected the Supervisors might reduce it to \$1.00.

A penny of the tax rate would be dedicated to preserving affordable housing, following the recommendation of the Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force. This penny is equivalent to \$17.9 million, and the recommendation is to dedicate a penny for the next three years. He also anticipates dedicating a penny to stormwater management. The Stormwater Management Task Force has recommended a stormwater utility fee, but if no utility is established, he anticipates dedicating two pennies next year.

He said this is a unique fiscal year, as it is possible to establish a significantly lower tax rate but also dedicate pennies for certain objectives. This is the fifth year of double-digit residential assessment increases. All major northern Virginia jurisdictions had comparable increases, as did Montgomery County; District property value increases had outpaced Fairfax County in previous years but are lower this year. Even with the reduced tax rate, this means an increase in taxes paid.

The school transfer accounts for 52 percent of the budget. Initially the FCPS Superintendent requested a 9.7 percent increase from last year. The School Board reduced this request to the Board of Supervisors to 9.2 percent, and the Board then proposed an increase of 8.24 percent, which the School Board will accept. The School Board hopes to increase teachers' salaries for years 1 through 5, with a starting salary of \$40,000.

The largest increase on the county side is in compensation, especially in public safety. Salaries for police, fire, and rescue personnel are generally below 5 percent of the midpoint for those positions in surrounding jurisdictions, and he has recommended a pay adjustment; the sheriff's officers, who are generally at or above the midpoint, will receive a COLA but no similar pay adjustment. This is a change from pay parity. In all, 166 positions have been added to the county staff. More than 100 are public safety positions, most for new facilities. There will be 11.1 positions per 1000 residents, down from 15 in 1991.

Mr. Griffin answered questions on coordination between building permits and assessments; how commercial property is valued; personal property taxes; assessments; revenue projections for 2005 and 2006; the pay-for-performance system; and compensation for county workers. Looking ahead, he noted that in the past, years of high assessment increases have been followed by years of flat or even negative changes in property values; this creates the potential danger of a "rollercoaster effect" in county budgeting and tax rates.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the February 17 meeting were approved unanimously as read.
- b. Jeff Parnes presented the Treasurer's report. The Citizen of the Year banquet was a success, generating a profit of \$1140, exclusive of the Washington Post donation. He is requesting all outstanding invoices (for any purpose, not just the banquet) at this time. The membership drive resulted in 20 new memberships in the last two months. He has canceled the monthly online fee at the bank.

c. Sally Ormsby reviewed the draft Federation resolution on the county budget. Several amendments and clarifications were made by unanimous consent, including a change to the language regarding the EDA. The resolution was temporarily set aside to consider resolutions on stormwater and affordable housing. The meeting voted unanimously (a two-thirds majority being required) to suspend the rules to consider the stormwater resolution, which had not previously been circulated. The resolution was amended to call for “a public hearing” on a stormwater utility and then passed unanimously. The affordable housing resolution was amended to support dedication of a penny from the county tax rate and was also unanimously approved. Returning to consideration of the main budget resolution, the meeting approved amendments to the main resolution reflecting these changes to the separate stormwater and affordable housing resolutions. The budget resolution was passed unanimously. Several of those present thanked Sally Ormsby for her work on the resolution.

d. Art Wells reported that the Nominating Committee has been formed.

e. Charles Dane reported that the next meeting of the Education Committee will be May 16. The committee plans more discussion on the consolidation of the administration buildings and the resulting issue of surplus lands.

f. Flint Webb has been appointed to the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Advisory Committee. He is looking for help on the Environmental Committee and encourages any interested parties to consider joining.

g. Sally Ormsby reported on state legislative action. The bill to allow drilling off the Virginia coast has been vetoed, but the bill to allow landfills closer to water sources has passed. There is more money for education, but not significantly more for transportation. The Clean Smokestacks bill did not pass. Red-light camera ticketing will end after July 1, 2005.

h. Carol Hawn reported there are two vacancies to be filled on boards, authorities, and commissions: the Fairfax County 2007 Committee and the Criminal Justice Advisory Board.

i. Sally Ormsby reported from Providence District Council that the April 19 meeting is open to those from other areas and is on the topic of development in the county.

j. Jeff Parnes reported from Sully District Council that the April meeting will feature the Sully district’s elected representatives in Richmond. The May meeting will be on VDOT and transportation. The council’s website is www.sullydistrict.org. The council meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Sully Government Center.

k. Art Wells reported Braddock District Council is following up on its associations workshop.

l. Sally Ormsby reported there were 175 attendees at the Citizen of the Year banquet.

m. Jeff Parnes made a motion that a letter or certificate of thanks be presented to George Smith, long-time Federation Board member and head of the Transportation Committee, who recently left the area. Bill Hanks, who recruited George Smith to serve as Transportation Chairman in 1986, seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Next Membership Meeting: April 21, 2005. Next Board meeting: April 28, 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.