

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of March 23, 2006
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached to file copy.)

President John Jennison began by thanking Sally Ormsby and Carol Hawn for a fantastic and successful Citizen of the Year banquet. He introduced Fairfax County Executive Tony Griffin.

Program —

Tony Griffin noted that the county budget, as advertised, does not initiate or expand many programs. There are about 156 new positions, of which two-thirds are for public safety. All but nine of the new positions are either for public safety or in support of new facilities. The remaining nine are workload-related.

The budget builds on seven vision elements and six priorities adopted by the Board of Supervisors two years ago. Education is the highest priority. The other five priorities include public safety and gang prevention; affordable housing (846 affordable units were preserved this year, and 600 are estimated for next year, meaning the goal of preserving 1000 units during the Supervisors' current term will likely be exceeded), the environment (he noted the tax "penny" in stormwater management), transportation (another bond referendum is possible in 2007), and revenue diversification.

On the issue of revenue, the budget recommends a 7-cent reduction in the tax rate, but the Supervisors are likely to reduce the rate by another 2 or 3 cents. The cost of eliminating the decal fee is equivalent to about one penny on the tax rate, or \$20.9 million. He has heard some pushback on eliminating the decal because the sticker is needed for other purposes; it is no longer needed, however, to enforce the personal property tax on vehicles.

The school system's proposed budget currently represents an 8.8 percent increase in the transfer amount. The guideline from the county was 6 percent, which would fund the first two "tiers" listed in the school system budget. An additional \$40 million would be needed for full funding of the remaining two tiers. The Board of Supervisors will probably not go significantly beyond 6 percent and will not approve an additional \$40 million. The expenditures required for the No Child Left Behind law are in the third tier. The Board would also like to see more of the money in the school budget going toward teachers' salaries.

The third quarter review of the county budget provided some additional funds. Tony Griffin has recommended some of this money be used to fully fund the rainy day fund (the revenue stabilization fund). The county has 2 percent of its budget in a managed reserved fund and 2 percent in the rainy day fund; he wishes to get the latter to 3 percent, which would be full funding. The county's AAA bond rating is in part based on the fact that these funds exist, and the Katrina disaster has again demonstrated the importance of adequate financial reserves for local governments.

He responded to questions on the amount of money in the budget for pedestrian and bike trail improvements, as recommended by the pedestrian safety task force; the allocation of the third-quarter overage beyond the rainy day fund and the timing of that allocation; the merit pay increase for non-public-safety employees; the pay for performance system; penalties for agencies that exceed the budgeted salary increases under pay for performance (they must fund the excess themselves); the way that assessments are established; the recommended increase in the supervisors' salaries (after the next election); the cost of No Child Left Behind; a second tax "penny" for affordable housing; and why the budget includes costs for the Medical Reserve Corps and similar federally supported programs.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the February 16 membership meeting, which were published in the most recent Federation newsletter, were approved unanimously as written.
- b. Steve DelBianco of the Land Use Committee introduced a proposed resolution on the first Zoning Ordinance Amendments, which address minimum yard requirements, fence heights, etc., with a view to testifying that evening on a public hearing before the Planning Commission. The resolution was moved, seconded, and approved on a 23-0 vote.
- c. Sally Ormsby of the Legislative Committee introduced a proposed resolution on the county budget, which was moved and seconded. The membership voted 18 to 7 in favor of retaining the \$25 decals for vehicles in the county, an issue on which the Federation Board was evenly split at its meeting, producing no recommendation to the membership on this point. Charles Dane introduced an amendment to the budget resolution that the county's budget should take into consideration any reduction in budgeted income from the state, given that the state budget still remains unresolved. It was approved on a 25-0 vote. The budget resolution, as amended, was then unanimously approved.
- d. Patrick Rea reported that a further membership mailing is planned to twenty nonmember associations in each district.
- e. Charles Dane reported that the Education and Youth Committee had had a thorough meeting on the budget and would meet again on any reductions to the FCPS budget that may be needed, given the existing gap between the increase in the County transfer amounts proposed by the School Board and the Board of Supervisors (respectively, as stated by Tony Griffin, 8.8 percent and 6 percent). As in past years when this has occurred, the committee may need to prepare and present testimony on the reductions without further input from the Board or membership, due to the timing of County decisions and the School Board hearing.
- f. Walt Sisson reported for the Environment Committee that the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee meeting was scheduled for the following Monday. The Potomac River Watershed Cleanup is scheduled for April 8. Some proposed bills of concern in the recent General Assembly session included allowing mercury emissions trading, an energy bill to allow offshore drilling, and a rule to regulate surface water withdrawals only after adverse impacts have been demonstrated.
- g. Sally Ormsby reported for the Legislation Committee that transportation funding, and thus the entire budget, remains unresolved by the General Assembly.
- h. Judy Harbeck reported from the Mount Vernon Council that the council's County budget position was similar to the Federation's, except that it supports a second penny for affordable housing.
- i. Mike Thompson reported on the Springfield District Council's recent meeting with Representative Tom Davis, which included an interesting discussion of some less-publicized immigration issues, including as the lack of banking facilities for undocumented immigrants. This creates a situation that can lead to large cash thefts (indirectly supporting the growth of gangs), predatory lending, and other consequences. He noted that a significant proportion of undocumented immigrants remain in that position because of long government delays in processing their paperwork. Following Mike Thompson's report, it was suggested that immigration might be a good topic for a meeting next year.
- j. John Jennison reported the Citizen of the Year banquet was very successful, with 172 attendees.

Next Membership Meeting: April 27, 2006, "Report from Richmond" by State Senator Dick Saslaw and Delegate Dave Albo

Next Board Meeting (tentative): April 20, 2006

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.