

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of March 29, 2007
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m (attendance list attached to file copy). The February 15 membership meeting was canceled due to inclement weather; the program with Supervisor Cathy Hudgins on Growth and the Council of Governments originally planned for that date was held on March 22.

President John Jennison began with a calendar review. He noted the successful Citizen of the Year program and thanked Sally Ormsby (who was also the honoree) and Carol Hawn for their efforts on that banquet. He also thanked Merrily Pierce for her work on the March 22 exercise on growth.

He mentioned the April 19 membership meeting will be on tourism (FXVA and Virginia 2007). This will be followed on April 26 by an "Issues Fairfax" forum for which the Federation is one of four participating organizations; those who wish to take part should let him know, although spaces are limited. On May 10, there will be a report to civic associations at the Government Center to disseminate information from the forum and the Federation will facilitate this. The May 17 membership meeting will be a "Report from Richmond" with members of the General Assembly, as well as the Federation elections. The June 21 membership meeting will be a "State of the County" program with Chairman Connolly and a picnic.

The minutes for the January 18 membership meeting were approved unanimously. The Treasurers Report was received and filed. President Jennison introduced the evening's speaker, County Executive Anthony Griffin, who presented information on the proposed FY 08 county budget.

Program —

Mr. Griffin noted that he had brought copies of the presentation overheads, the *Citizens Guide to the Budget*, and the budget CD, and made these available to the group. He said that the budget is not significantly different from last year's, except for some increased costs for compensation and fuel. It maintains existing programs and the tax rate is unchanged. Residential assessments are very slightly down, but commercial assessments increased. The budget could be maintained at a level similar to last year's partly due to the increased commercial assessments and partly due to funds carried over from last year, as an exception to normal practice. In addition, the personnel component of all departmental budgets has been reduced from what it would normally have been by 2 percent, saving about \$16 million.

Some facility expansions undertaken due to past commitments have led to added costs now. These include community libraries coming online in Oakton and Burke, the expansion to the courthouse, and the new public safety/transportation operations center, 20 percent of which is funded by the state. There is also a new fire station at Crosspoint in the south part of the county. The Police Department had launched a pilot domestic violence program with eight police officers; this budget restores eight positions so that the program can continue. In all, 70 positions have been added, virtually all related to the expansion of physical facilities. A total of 1/2 million square feet is being added, bringing the total space managed by the county to 8 million square feet. Mr. Griffin referred to a conversation with Charles Dane before the meeting and said he will get back to him on the specifics of the capital renewal budget.

The recent drop in the yearly change in residential assessments is a greater change than in 1992. But in 1992, commercial assessments dropped as well. This year they are up 13 percent. This also means commercial real estate has gone from 17 to 19 percent of the revenue base, a healthy change. He has cautioned the Board of Supervisors about FY 2009. Residential assessments may be down 1.5 percent next year and commercial values may increase less. Of the commercial buildings under construction, two thirds have no tenants, so rental rates, and thus commercial values, will become more competitive.

The county population is expected to top out in about 20 years at 1.3 to 1.5 million people. There is already a significant slowdown in growth to about 5,000 additional residents a year. The population might already have stabilized or decreased if it were not for immigration. There has been outmigration to Prince William and Loudoun counties and many retirees have moved further west or south. Still, senior citizens are a growing segment of the population and the Board of Supervisors has created a committee on seniors.

The childcare subsidy for working people will no longer come from the state. Governor Kaine was helpful in the transition, which came without advance notice, so the county did not have to disenroll children already in daycare. The waiting list, which had been under 1000, has grown to about 3500. The proposed county budget does not address this, but simply prevents disenrollment and allows added enrollments as openings occur. It would require \$4 to 5 million to make a dent in the waiting list. Because of the growing waiting list, it will be much more difficult to get people off welfare, since they cannot get help with childcare.

Mr. Griffin noted that rail to Dulles will be the largest capital investment the county has made or will make for years. The county's transfer of about 55 percent of the budget to the school system is much higher than the transfer in Arlington, which is about 30 percent, but considerably lower than in Loudoun, which is over 70 percent. [Charles Dane, chair of the Federation's Education Committee, notes that the proposed FY 2008 transfer is 52.3 percent including debt service, or 47.8 percent not including debt service.] Mr. Griffin also answered questions on BRAC, health insurance for county and school employees, green building practices, use of windpower-generated electricity, and transit funding.

Business Meeting —

a. Sally Ormsby presented the proposed resolution on the county budget. Approval was moved and seconded. Several friendly amendments were accepted and are reflected in the final draft.

Carey Campbell made a motion, which was seconded, to dedicate a penny from the county budget for commuter rail, to be provided by increasing the tax rate by one penny. The motion failed 8 to 9.

Jeffrey Nolan made a motion, which was seconded, to restore funding for several items related to education, and specifically to special needs and gifted students. The motion failed by a vote of 8 to 9.

Charles Dane made a motion, which was seconded, to dedicate a penny from the county budget both to replace the childcare subsidy previously provided by the state for working families and to restore additional education-related budget items. The motion failed 2 to 17. He then made a motion, which was seconded, to dedicate half a penny for the childcare subsidy. The motion failed 7 to 9.

The budget resolution, as amended, carried 17 to 0. President John Jennison thanked Sally Ormsby.

b. Flint Webb reported that his committee is reviewing the Fort Belvoir draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). He also reported that amendments to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) on the 8-hour ozone standard have been proposed and will be the subject of public hearings.

c. Charles Dane had prepared a resolution regarding No Child Left Behind requirements but agreed to defer consideration to the next Board and membership meetings due to the lateness of the hour.

d. Esther Ferington reported on behalf of Art Wells on recent Braddock District Council events.

Next Membership Meeting: April 19, 2007. Tourism in Fairfax County (FXVA and Virginia 2007).

Next Board Meeting: April 26, 2007.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.