

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of March 19, 2009
MINUTES

The March 19 membership meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached to file copy.) President Jeff Parnes introduced the guest speaker, County Executive Tony Griffin, who spoke on the proposed FY 2010 county budget.

Program

Tony Griffin noted that the county is experiencing extraordinary pressure on its ability to provide services at the expected quality while maintaining the same tax effort from the average homeowner. Due to reduced assessments of home values, keeping the individual tax payment the same—on average—would mean a 12 cent increase in the tax rate from 92 cents to \$1.04. The Board of Supervisors has advertised a rate of up to \$1.05, so it has up to 1 cent of flexibility. At today's rates, one penny on the tax rate is equivalent to \$20.5 million.

He has also recommended reinstating the local vehicle registration fee, which was formerly tied to the vehicle decal (without reinstating the physical decal). The budget as proposed, however, does not rely on that fee being implemented. In addition, he has recommended transitioning from the current "stormwater penny" within the general fund to a countywide stormwater district funded by a 1.5 cent ad valorem fee. The 1.5 cent amount preserves the original stormwater penny for capital projects, he said, with the half cent is for the associated staff costs. At this point in the meeting, there was an extended question-and-answer discussion on stormwater management funding and related subjects.

Resuming his presentation, he noted that if the average homeowner pays the same amount as in the past, that would still not be sufficient to balance the county budget, because every revenue stream is down, including sales tax, business licenses, investment income, and so on. There is a \$58 million hole in the current budget, although this will be balanced by the end of the current fiscal year. To deal with the situation for the FY 2010 budget, he has held the school transfer amount constant (which makes it 54 percent this year as opposed to 53.1 percent last year), but has suggested \$106 million in reductions on the county side. This includes cuts to public safety and human services, which he could not hold because of the amount of overall cuts which were needed. At the beginning of the process, every agency provided priorities and possible cuts of up to 15 percent reductions, at his request. Not all cuts were appropriate, so not all were taken. The cuts that were made are not judgments on the value of the affected programs; rather, the decision was more about what costs were critical to core programs.

He then answered questions on the possible use of volunteers to defray clerical costs, on the effect of the economic downturn on the need for human services, on the budgeting process, on the role of fees in addition to taxes, on fiscal projections beyond 2010, on the county's rainy day fund, on comparisons with the county's FY 2001 budget, on possible impacts from the federal stimulus, on a pilot program that uses a contractor for some after-school programs, on the sewer service rate, on the prospects of building new rail projects in the region, on state transportation funding, and on health centers in the county.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the February 19 membership meeting, which were taken by Ed Wyse, were unanimously approved.
- b. President Jeff Parnes stated that any remaining business for the evening would be deferred, either until the end of the meeting or until the April membership meeting, in order to turn to the proposed resolution on the county budget. He then asked Budget Committee Chair Kosmo Tatalias to chair the discussion of the committee's budget resolution. Approval of the resolution was moved and seconded, opening the floor to the discussion.

c. In the Education section, Charles Dane moved that the paragraph related to School Resource Officers be deleted and supplied a handout in support of this motion. Bill Hanks seconded the motion. Carey Campbell called the question. The motion carried by a voice vote.

d. Under Human Services, Charles Dane also offered a motion supported by a handout. Esther Ferington asked that the issues on the handout be treated as separate motions. Carey Campbell seconded the motion to separate, which was approved by voice vote. Subsequent multi-topic motions in other subject areas were separated without a formal vote to do so, following the practice set by this vote.

e. Charles Dane then moved that the set-aside for payment of previously issued, but unused, Go-Taxi coupons be eliminated. Tim Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

f. Charles Dane also moved that the Federation recommend retention of \$200,000 for the home based care budget, while supporting the rest of the overall cut and new approach in this area. Gail Parker seconded the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

g. Charles Dane offered a motion, supported by a handout, suggesting that no choice be made at present between the utility and special district approaches to funding stormwater management projects. Tim Thompson seconded the motion. After discussion, Carey Campbell called the question. The motion was defeated with 13 in favor and 14 against.

h. Bill Hanks suggested changing the text of the budget resolution to refer to stormwater funding as a service district, rather than a utility. The change was accepted as a friendly amendment.

i. Tim Thompson moved that funding for the four county staff positions responsible for Air Quality Protection reporting to the EPA be deleted. Charles Dane seconded the motion. The motion was defeated by a voice vote.

j. Charles Dane moved that the wording in support of restoring the motor carrier safety program should be strengthened and supplied a handout with the proposed text. Tim Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

k. Charles Dane moved that the Crime Reduction Program should be removed from the list of suggested restorations, and supplied a handout on the motion. Tim Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

l. Charles Dane moved that language be added to the Budget Process section, detailed in a handout which he supplied, to encourage the possible use of funds now committed to the Economic Development Authority (EDA) for other purposes, including restoring cuts in priority programs. Tim Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed by a voice vote.

m. Esther Ferington moved that the specific rate of 1.5 cents, or the fee equivalent, as recommended by the County Executive, be established for the special stormwater district. Bob Jordan seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 15 in favor and 11 opposed.

n. The review and discussion of the budget resolution being complete, a motion to accept the budget resolution, as modified, passed by voice vote.

o. Resuming the chair, President Jeff Parnes thanked the Budget Committee for their work. He also thanked everyone who had worked so hard on the Citizen of the Year (COY) banquet to make it a success, paying special tribute to John Jennison as the banquet chair and to Carol Hawn for her work

on the program. He also recognized the late Sally Ormsby for her work in organizing the COY banquet in past years.

Next Membership Meeting: April 16, 2009. "Report from the Reps" presentation from Federation representatives to the Engineering Standards Review Committee (Jim Davis), the Trails and Sidewalks Committee (Mark Tipton), and the School Board Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities (Jeff Nolan), plus an update on the FCPS Transportation Task Force.

Next Board Meeting: April 23, 2009.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm