

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations

Resolutions Executive Summary

Fairfax County Advertised Fiscal Year 2011 Budget

and

Fiscal Year 2011-2015 Capital Improvement Program

This document contains a summary of the Federation's resolution on the Fairfax County Advertised FY 2011 Budget and FY 2011-2015 CIP. The full version can be found at <http://www.fcfa.org/resolutions/ResolutionCountyBudgetFY11Approved20100325.pdf>.

EDUCATION

Whereas, recent General Assembly actions will result in the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) receiving a significantly higher amount of money from the Commonwealth than was anticipated in the FY 2011 FCPS Advertised Budget but incurring large and undeterminable shortfalls of at least \$100M in FY 2012 through 2014; and

Whereas, FCPS has recently proposed setting aside \$61.3M in FY 2011 as a reserve for future funding changes which will include (1) significantly increased Virginia Retirement System (VRS) contributions, with repayments including 7.5 percent to 7.8 percent interest, (2) expiration of federal stimulus monies, (3) payment of deferred FY 2011 fourth quarter VRS payment, (4) additional enrollment, (5) unknown inflation and health benefit costs, (6) a minimal 2.0 percent salary increase of about \$40M, after 2 years without any increase, (7) significant program reductions or revenue increases in FY 2012; and

Whereas, if the \$16.3M reduction proposed by the County Executive is restored to the FCPS transfer, resulting in the same transfer amount as FY 2010, class size increases will not be required, but there will still be reductions and cost avoidances including including (1) fee increases of \$4.3M, (2) elimination of 204 positions of which 99 are in the central office, (3) elimination of summer school except for those students needing one or two classes to graduate and the self supporting program, (4) the reduction of equipment replacement by 50 percent and the elimination of new bus and textbook purchases, (5) the closure of Pimmit Hills Alternative High School, and a further reduction of 66 custodian positions, and (6) no salary increases; and

Whereas, without the \$16.3M restoration, FCPS will have to either (1) remove additional funds from the proposed reserve, or (2) make additional reductions comparable to 297 additional positions or an increase in the average class size by one student per class, and

Whereas, the average class size has been increased by one student per class over each of the last 2 years; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (Federation) supports restoring \$8.15M to FCPS's transfer amount, and supports restoring the balance of \$8.15M requested by FCPS if additional funds can be found.

COUNTY SUPPORT FOR FCPS PROGRAMS

Whereas, the required debt service for FCPS facilities has decreased; and

Whereas, the County Executive proposed a reduction in maintenance of athletic fields; and

Whereas, there was no proposed reduction for school crossing guards; and

Whereas, the proposed changes in the School Age Child Care program (SACC) include (1) two additional classrooms at Mount Eagle Elementary School with position offsets from within the department, (2) an increase in SACC fees by 3.5 percent for all students, which for those paying full price amounts to \$10 per month per student, and (3) snacks were decreased; and

Whereas there is added support for Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) and Head Start program; and

Whereas, there is a proposed increase of one nurse for two new elementary schools – Laurel Hill and Luttie Lewis Coates, and the addition of two full-time nurses to serve as backup for school-aged children, both with positions offset from within the Health Department; and

Whereas, the Advertised County Budget places a moratorium on bond referenda which does not apply to FCPS renovation and construction projects, but does allow referenda for FCPS projects in the amount of \$240M in both FY 2011 and FY 2013, giving FCPS flexibility in issuing bonds; and

Whereas, the County Executive proposes elimination of funding for School Resource Officers at middle schools; positions that the Federation believes provide an essential information resource on illegal activities both within and outside of school, and positions which especially aid in gang prevention; and

Whereas, the County's Advertised Budget includes \$155M in bond issuance authority for FCPS, even though the need for renovation and construction of schools exceeds what can be accomplished with this annual funding for an extended time period; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Federation supports most school related items in the advertised budget, but requests that the SACC fee continues to be on a sliding scale with lower charge for lower income families, and also requests full funding of \$2.1M for the police School Resource Officers at FCPS middle schools, as is also requested in the Public Safety section of this package; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation encourages the Board of Supervisors to support an increase in bond issuance authority for FCPS greater than \$155M to the extent prudent to maintain the County's bond rating.

HUMAN SERVICES

Whereas, the Federation understands and recognizes that the current economic downturn in consecutive years has been challenging for the prioritization of programming by the various

Human Services agencies in service delivery to its neediest and most vulnerable population, and

Whereas, the Federation recognizes the County's efforts to build safety net partnerships with community organizations that need to be maintained and supported, especially during these difficult times. Further, the Federation is appreciative of the diligent and caring work of the County Human Service staff for providing quality service in an efficient manner; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation concurs with the following as advertised in the County's FY 2011 budget:

- The one time Federal Stimulus Funding in the amount of \$5.5M should not be used to fund new initiatives and should be used to bridge gaps in service for FY 2011.
- As directed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, a funding increase of \$877,424 will replace federal grant funding for public health preparedness and shall be used to add 9 additional staff to the Department of Public Health.
- A second reserve of \$1.0M for emergency support to community organizations in order to sustain the organizational operations and provision of short term adequate services. It is important to note that the same amount budgeted in FY 2010 is currently being used by the County to leverage \$4.0M in federal TANF Emergency Funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 through a local match program to the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- The \$8.97M budgeted for the Consolidated Community Funding Pool and Proposed Changes to the Consolidated Community Funding Pool Advisory Committee in cooperation with the County's nonprofit partners.
- A reduction of \$4,157,446 for the Department of Family Services (DFS) in accordance with the agency's restructuring of business processes and identifying opportunities for efficiencies. In particular, the SACC program has adjusted staff schedule to align with the school year calendar; successfully increased the use of technology; and increased programming fee by \$10. These initiatives will increase the income of DFS by approximately \$1.0M and will be used to offset part of the budgeted reduction.

FAIRFAX – FALLS CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

Whereas, the Fairfax County-Falls Church Community Services Board serves an important role in ensuring the mental and physical health of Fairfax County citizens; and

Whereas, some of the proposed budget reductions will seriously impair critical services, and create real hardships to individuals served; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Federation supports the restoration of \$1.974M for the following positions and services provided by Community Services Board:

Physical Health: the Adult Partial Hospital Program Service for individuals in North County Services (\$497,244); the contracted services for Infant and Toddler Therapeutic Service, without

which would result in delays in needed interventions (\$49,256); clinical service at the Woodburn facilities from midnight to 8:00 a.m. (\$66,904); home care relief service, as there is no other County or nonprofit organization providing these services (\$275,008); and

Mental Health: the Emergency Services at Northwest Center for Community Mental Health (\$88,388); Emergency Services at Mount Vernon Center for Community Mental Health (\$172,619); the 2.5 positions for Alcohol and Drug Services (\$194,796) and the two substance abuse counselors (\$146,150), without whom would result in an unacceptable extension of wait times; the one mental health forensic staff position at the Adult Detention Center, elimination of which may lead to increase risk of suicides or self injury (\$80,497); the one supervisory substance abuse counselor in preventative services, elimination of which would result in a critical loss to the Preventive Strategies Realignment Plan (\$84,235); the decreased operational expenses for Alcohol and Drug Service (Cornerstone Program) (\$80,000); and the Juvenile Forensics BETA program, reduction of which would impact the ability to treat some of the County's most at-risk youth and significantly increase the likelihood of criminal recidivism (\$238,795).

STORMWATER PROGRAM

Whereas, the Advertised Budget proposes to increase the stormwater service fee to \$0.015 per \$100 assessed evaluation; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation endorses this increase as necessary to maintain the stormwater infrastructure.

PARK AUTHORITY

Whereas, the Advertised Budget proposes reductions in cost-effective positions which (1) organize and oversee the Park Authority's volunteer workforce, and (2) perform strategic engineering analyses of the energy efficiency and long term operating costs of recreational facilities; and

Whereas, failure to maintain park facilities and provide nighttime lighting could lead to unsafe conditions, injuries, increased vandalism, and the use of parks for illegal activities; and

Whereas, summer programs such as summer camps and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Swimming Pool help to control the growth of gang activities and provide exercise for our youth; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation opposes the elimination or reduction of positions that support strategic initiatives, best utilizes volunteers, and decreases long term operating costs (Restore \$105,000 for Reduction 34; \$49,000, half of Reduction 35; and \$17,057 for Reduction 56); and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation encourages that the Administrative Assistant II position that supports communication functions be changed to a summer hire instead of being eliminated (Restore \$16,459, half of Reduction 55); and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation would encourage the Park Authority actively pursue increasing usage fees for monopoles in order to restore the Telecommunication/Monopole capital improvement fund (regarding Reduction 42); and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the Park Authority consider instituting a usage fee system to recoup the costs of night time lighting (regarding Reduction 45); and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the Park Authority consider leveraging summer park activities with local Scouting and Church organizations in order to expand the utilization of our parks by our youth rather than cutting this program further (regarding Reduction 47); and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the Park Authority investigate the possibility of getting grant funding and/or the institution of fees to support the Martin Luther King Jr. Swimming program and if unsuccessful, restore \$51,393 for Reduction 48); and be it finally

Resolved, that the Federation is concerned that reducing the maintenance of County Park fields could increase the chance of accidents and could lead to increased liabilities to the County over time. The Federation requests the restoration of \$79,741 for Reduction 39 and \$80,000 to Reduction 165 and the full restoration of the funding for Athletic Field Maintenance Programs in future years. The Federation feels that the maintenance of other fields could be accomplished by either increasing fees for the use of the fields and/or increasing the utilization of volunteers.

Summary: The Federation is requesting restoration of \$398,650 to the Park Authority and the Office of Capital Facilities.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Whereas, it may be necessary for the County to maintain some of the air quality monitors that were previously turned over to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality; and

Whereas, it is necessary that the County continue to support the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee Technical Advisory Committee; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation recommends that the County continue the Air Quality Program until EPA agrees that the Fairfax County monitors can be discontinued. The County should seek funding from the State to help fund the functions mandated by the Clean Air Act; in the interim the Federation recommends that \$100,000 be set aside for partial restoration of Reduction 79.

TRANSPORTATION

Whereas, Metro is facing a \$189M deficit for Fiscal Year 2011 and is required to balance the budget. Its four main options are: 1) Raise fares; 2) Reduce service; 3) Obtain additional subsidies from the local jurisdictions that fund Metro; and 4) Divert funds from capital budget; and

Whereas, a Metro fare increase of \$89M and service cuts of \$33.7M have been proposed, leaving an unfilled \$40M gap; and

Whereas, the essential nature of Metro and the commuter infrastructure to the region's economy, security and environmental health suggests that the service cuts would be harmful and short sighted; and

Whereas, the final WMATA budget request will not be resolved until June; and

Whereas, cuts in late evening and weekend Connector bus service is not consistent with the primary mission of bus mass transit to support workforce transportation; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation commends the funding for Metro in the Advertised Capital Budget and urges the County to maintain the flexibility to provide subsidies sufficient to avoid Metro rail or bus service cuts; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests an increase of \$3.9M in the General Fund transfer to Fund 100, to restore all of the "Reductions Resulting from the Loss of the Dulles Corridor Grant" especially evening and weekend Connector services coordinated with workers' hours at shopping malls and major businesses.

LAND USE

Whereas, the Performance Measurement Results for the Land Development Services (LDS) agency show that the workload of that unit has decreased consistently and substantially since FY2000; and

Whereas, the Performance Measurement Results show that turn-around times for reviews have increased since FY2000; and

Whereas, the LDS unit has increased the number of employees and funding since FY2000; and

Whereas, the workload of LDS is and can more so be supported by outsourcing; and

Whereas, some if not much of the work of the Economic Development Authority duplicates the work of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation agrees with the proposed decrease in the LDS personnel by a count of 10 under Community Development and another 8 under Public Safety (Budget Reduction Item #20), for a total reduction of \$3,661,904; however, Performance Measurement Results data¹ suggests that additional reductions can be made without injury to the performance of the agency such that the total budget reductions for this agency could amount to as much as \$10M. This represents a possible additional savings of up to \$6.3M; and be it further

Resolved, that to the extent that there exist in the County Executive's Advertised FY 2011 Budget funds that could be considered to support tourism over and above monies required by State law to be spent on tourism and the Economic Development Authority (EDA), the

¹ <http://www.fcfca.org/pdf/LDSstudy2010-03.pdf>

Federation requests that funds be backed out of the EDA account and used to offset some or all of the budget line item increases that the Federation has recommended.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Whereas, Public Safety accounts for \$406M, or 12.3 percent of the proposed FY 2011 operating budget; and

Whereas, Public Safety programs must be subjected to heightened fiscal scrutiny and bear their share of overall County budget cuts; and

Whereas, promotion of public safety is essential to Fairfax County's quality of life, the No. 1 County priority, and therefore must be balanced carefully against fiscal concerns; and

Whereas, physical well-being of the public and Fairfax's safety personnel must remain essential concerns of the County government, even in a troubled budget climate; and

Whereas, a diverse work force enhances the ability of police and firefighters to oppose youth crime and protect the broader community; and

Whereas, any restorations of Public Safety programs must be weighed against the costs and benefits of competing programs in other budget areas; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation supports the recommended cuts in Public Safety, except as specified below, as a responsible way of balancing of safety concerns and fiscal reality; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation recommends the restoration of \$2,104,480 to pay for 26 middle school resource officers, who play a central, and not easily replaced, role in the fight against youth gangs, as also requested in the Education section of this package; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation recommends the restoration of \$162,190 to pay for two positions in the police traffic safety program, noting that County budget documents say, "The potential negative impact is an increase in traffic safety related injuries and deaths"; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation recommends the restoration of \$452,825 for dedicated HazMat staffing, noting that budget documents say that failure to do so could compromise the Fire Department's ability to respond effectively to simultaneous major incidents with potentially grave public health consequences. Be it further

Resolved, that the Federation urges County officials to consider, if sufficient revenue becomes available, limited restoration of police pre-hiring program (current proposed cuts total \$623,084), with a focus of continuing to promote a culturally diverse police force; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation urges County officials to consider, if sufficient revenue becomes available, restoration of \$692,705 to staff a fire/rescue battalion, noting that budget documents says that failure to do so risks "compromising operational efficiency and firefighter safety on-scene"; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation urges County officials to *consider*, if sufficient revenue becomes available, restoration of \$953,735 in proposed cuts for Basic Life Support ambulance service, noting that budget documents say failure to do so “will lead to response time delays and will accelerate the already declining ability to meet response targets.” Be it further

Resolved, that the Federation urges County officials to review a recommendation to cut \$175,724 for medic trainee compensation, to ensure that this proposal is not a “false economy” that will trigger other offsetting costs; finally be it

Resolved, that the Federation urges County officials to conduct a public audit of operating increases of \$1,091,086 associated with the opening of the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center facility, and \$4,629,000 associated with ongoing Information Technology projects to assess whether any savings or deferrals can be realized, without compromising officer or public safety.

LIBRARIES

Whereas, a recent national study² funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation found that in 2009 libraries were a vital resource for an estimated 77 million Americans (a third of the teenage and adult US population), many of whom were low income, who used library computers to do research for homework and to seek jobs; and

Whereas, the proposed reduction in service hours at the regional and community libraries will adversely impact youth and adult library programs, such as the Summer Reading Program and preschool story times, and reduce the availability of meeting sites; and

Whereas, disabled and senior library users will no longer be able to order library materials for home delivery by the United States Postal Service or obtain them at 35 senior living facilities, nursing homes and adult care centers; and

Whereas, the FY 2011 Advertised Budget includes a reduction of \$2.5M in library funding and the elimination of 65 Full Time Equivalent staff positions; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Federation strongly opposes these reductions and requests that they be restored, even if an increase in the real estate tax is required for the funding; and be it further

Resolved, the Federation suggests that the library consider increasing fines and fees and consider instituting a fee of \$5 per hour for the use of meeting rooms and that these fees and fines be returned to the library operating budget.

COUNTY AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES PENSION FUNDS

Whereas, the actuarial values of the assets and liabilities depend on the assumed values of inflation and return on investment,

² <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/press-releases/Pages/opportunity-for-all-library-computer-use-study-100325.aspx>

Whereas, the currently assumed values of the rates of inflation and return on investment differ significantly from what has been experienced over the past ten years and from the longer-term S&P 500 rate, and

Whereas, under the current assumptions used by the County, a detailed study³ shows that the actuarial assets are less than the actuarial liabilities, indicating that the Fairfax County's defined-benefit pensions are currently under-funded; and

Whereas, the County's pension costs are already a major component of the County's expenses; and

Whereas, many private companies, as well as the Federal government, have reduced their pension expenses by changing from defined-benefit plans to defined-contribution plans; and

Whereas, clarity is needed in the County's financial reports; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation recommends that the actuarial values be re-computed under alternative assumptions, including (1) the last decade's average values for the rate of return of the pension and the inflation rate and (2) the high inflation rates anticipated by many economists; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the County evaluate adjusting the benefits of the defined-benefit plans and transitioning from the current defined-benefit plans to a new defined-contribution plan. The latter could apply to new employees only; however, a switch should also be evaluated if the new plan is applied to all employees for all of their future years, as was done in the Federal government; and finally be it

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB, Funds 603 and 692) reports be made to conform to those of the other funds in which the unrealized capital gains are separated from the sum of realized capital gains, interest income, and dividend income and that the titles to these items be made the same as in the other funds.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Whereas, the proposed total debt service for the County and FCPS is within the parameters set by the County's financial principles, which help us keep the AAA rating from all three ratings firms; and

Whereas, the paydown for capital projects supports only essential projects; and

Whereas, funding for the Blueprint for Affordable Housing is incomplete at this time; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Federation supports the County Executive's conservative approach to incurring debt while sustaining the County's ability to execute its programs and services over the long term; and be it further

³ <http://www.fcfa.org/pdf/PensionFundsStudy2010-03.pdf>

Resolved, that the Federation hopes that the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive can find County and private partnership funding of \$10M to meet the requirements identified in the Blueprint for Affordable Housing; and finally, be it

Resolved, that we reiterate our positions with respect to bonds for schools, athletic fields maintenance, the fee for stormwater management, and other CIP issues as stated in other sections of this resolution.

REVENUES

Whereas, the Federation has requested approximately \$20M in restorations of reductions proposed in the Fairfax County Advertised Budget for FY 2011 (comprised of \$8.15M in Education on page 1, \$1.974M for the Fairfax County-Falls Church Community Services Board on pages 3-4, \$0.399M for the Park Authority on pages 4-5, \$0.1M in the Health Department on page 5, \$3.9M in Transportation on page 6, \$2.7M in Public Safety on page 7, and \$2.5M for Libraries on page 8); and

Whereas, the Federation has identified possible savings in the Land Development Services of \$6.3M on page 6; and

Whereas, the Board of Supervisors has set the Advertised Real Estate Property Tax Rate at \$1.12 per \$100 assessed valuation; and

Whereas, the reinstatement of the vehicle registration fee and the increase in SACC fees, among others, will help balance the FY 2011 Budget; therefore be it

Resolved, the Federation endorses the increases in the vehicle registration fee and a sliding scale of SACC fees as necessary and reasonable; and

Resolved, that the Federation recommends that the real estate property tax rate be set at \$1.10 per \$100 of assessed valuation, amounting to an increase of \$18.7M above that proposed in the Advertised Budget, and which will, with the restorations and fee increase above, balance the County's FY 2011 budget to within \$1.3M; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests additional restorations of \$8.15M in Education (page 1), \$2.8M in Public Safety (pages 7-8), and \$10M for the Housing Blueprint (page 10) if funding can be found by the Board of Supervisors, which may include part of the \$21.7M advertised to be held in reserve in anticipation of possible State revenue reductions and part of funds backed out of the EDA account (pages 6-7).

COUNTY BUDGET PROCESS

Whereas, broad public information and community input always are essential to ensure support for County fiscal priorities, and are especially crucial during this year's severe budget shortfall, which affects large segments of Fairfax County's citizenry through program cuts and an increase in the property tax rate; and

Whereas, community input must not only be broad, but also be informed by a depth of knowledge that effectively employs the diverse expertise of those who live and work in Fairfax County; and

Whereas, the ongoing crisis creates extreme competition among vital programs, making carefully tailored cuts especially important, based on a close examination of community needs; and

Whereas, the average real dollar amount of Fairfax property taxes nearly doubled during 2000 - 2007, and citizens are being asked to continue paying that level of taxation at a time of growing personal duress; and

Whereas, Fairfax County has an obligation to ensure the most efficient use of tax dollars at a time of continuing shortfalls, to minimize damage to essential County programs, and to limit the strain on County taxpayers; and

Whereas, the Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County School Board have established a Smart Services Committee comprised of three persons from each Board to consider/explore County and School functions that can be combined or better coordinated so as to realize additional efficiencies and monetary savings; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Federation praises the County's extensive series of public meetings to solicit community input on spending priorities, and urges that such meetings be continued in future years; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation praises the County's improved online "drill-down" budget presentation, which makes it relatively easy, and more transparent, to explore proposed changes in specific departments. However, the Federation requests that all Performance Measurement results be reported in terms of accomplishments rather than activities such as attending meetings; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation continues to offer its praise and voluntary support for the Smart Services Committee, which brings together members of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board, and requests a brief public accounting of any economies achieved in the committee's first year-plus of activity; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the County augment its broad community outreach by reestablishing a citizens budget advisory committee, which can offer a community perspective that is informed by in-depth examination of County budget data, and that individual supervisors establish such committees to advise them on fiscal decisions; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation requests that the County consider expanding its financial auditing, possibly in the form of an independent Government Accountability Office, to increase the County's capacity to conduct internal performance audits and better identify opportunities for savings and more efficient use of County resources; be it finally

Resolved, that the Federation suggests that the County explain more fully the history and mission of individual programs and departments, as well as spending increases over the previous 5-10 years, to help the public assess whether spending increases are justified or sustainable in changing budget environments.

IN CLOSING

Whereas, the County Executive's FY 2011 Advertised Budget addresses the \$257M shortfall in part by proposing organizational efficiencies and numerous expenditure reductions, including staff reductions and cuts to County programs; and

Whereas, the Federation has proposed a few modifications to the Advertised Budget; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Federation appreciates that the County Executive submitted to the Board of Supervisors a fiscally responsible proposed budget recognizing a significant reduction of anticipated revenues; and be it further

Resolved, that the Federation appreciates the challenges that the Board of Supervisors faces and the hard choices that it will have to make because of reduced revenues and increasing needs throughout the schools and services sectors of the County.

***Approved at the Federation Membership Meeting on
March 25, 2010***