

City of Alexandria, Virginia
BUDGET AND FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BFAAC)

Monthly Meeting

May 16, 2023

City Hall, Sister Cities Conference Room

Summary Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Amy Friedlander (Chair), Janet Blair-Fleetwood (Vice Chair), Kathy Stenzel, John Ruthinoski, Antonio Tamariz, Deb Derrick, Chris Ferrara, Karen Graf, Laurie MacNamara, Julio Ramirez

Excused/Absent:

Rob Rapanut, Tom Gates, Skip Maginniss,

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Staff:

Morgan Routt, Julia Taylor

Agenda:

1. **Call to Order: Chair Friedlander** called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. with a quorum present.
 2. **Approval of the Minutes from the April 18, 2023 meeting: Blair-Fleetwood** moved to approve the minutes; **Graf** seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.
 3. **Final Approval of Joint BFAAC/BAC Memo: MacNamara** asked if there was any response to the draft memo at the joint City Council/School Board meeting the previous evening. **Stenzel** and **Routt** reported that the two bodies engaged in a process where they prioritized a list of areas where the City and the Schools could potentially share operations, as was recommended in the memo. The top areas identified were:
 - Real estate (including shared office space)
 - Youth Employment
 - Transportation
 - Human Resources (although health insurance was a sticking point)
 - Legislative services
- Derrick** moved approval of the joint BFAAC/BAC memo. **Stenzel** seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.
4. **OMB Report: Routt** and **Taylor** reported that the FY 24 budget was adopted on May 4th. The approved budget will be out by July 3rd. The Council's final decisions for budget adoption can be found in Budget Memo number 84.

5. **Role of BFAAC Discussion (continued): Friedlander** opened by stating that this time was set aside for BFAAC to continue the discussion that was begun in the April meeting on the purpose of BFAAC.
- **MacNamara** began by recommending that BFAAC meet with Council in the fall, outside of the budget process. She also suggested the BFAAC focus on more long-term policy issues rather than reacting to the items in an individual budget.
 - **Friedlander** stated that the Council looks to the BFAAC to weigh in on policy, although that is not mentioned in the BFAAC's charter.
 - **Stenzel** stated that in the past, BFAAC has focused on the bigger picture items because Council is too busy dealing with what is happening right now.
 - **Blair-Fleetwood** stated that the BFAAC needs to step up its game in the thought leadership area and focus its memos on specific areas, as we did in the past, such as compensation for city employees, the debt limit, or affordable housing. If the BFAAC develops such memos, the ideas explored in those memos could be incorporated into the budget memo. Without those ideas, the BFAAC's budget memos will not be as powerful or impactful. She added that there is a lot of expertise around the table at BFAAC that needs to be tapped into.
 - **Friedlander** suggested that City Academy be considered a prerequisite for BFAAC. She also asked OMB if they could set up a Budget 101 meeting in the fall.
 - Several suggestions were made about where the BFAAC should look for direction:
 - The Strategic Plan (Rouff noted that it has expired and been replaced by the Council Priorities Document)
 - City Department Heads
 - OMB
 - The City Manager, who previously came to a BFAAC meeting and indicated he would be asking the Board to research specific issues.
 - **Blair-Fleetwood** suggested that over the Summer, each BFAAC member should think of topics and that at the first meeting in September the BFAAC should put together committees of 2-3 people to work on each of them.
 - **Friedlander** added that in addition to ideas for topics, BFAAC members also need to recommend a strategy for how the work will be done and where the data will come from.
 - **MacNamara** stated that when she was first on BFAAC (from 2006-2009), the committee was divided up into topic area subcommittees. The 3-4 person committees would then look each year into the most important policy issue in each of the following areas:
 - Revenue
 - Operations
 - CIP
 - There was general agreement about the use of this structure and process. After some discussion, Compensation was recommended as fourth committee.

- **Blair-Fleetwood** volunteered to write up the proposed process and structure and send it to all BFAAC Members. BFAAC members were asked to talk to their appointing members over the summer as they are developing their list of ideas. She also asked BFAAC members to send her ideas for issues with the topic areas over the summer so that the board can come to the September meeting ready to start work on developing the list.
 - **Friedlander** requested that the Budget 101 meeting be a sperate meeting in September, prior to the regular BFAAC meeting.
6. **Adjournment: Graf** moved the meeting be adjourned. **Stenzel** seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.
7. **Upcoming Meetings/Significant Dates:**
- Budget 101 Presentation – TBA, September 2023
 - BFAAC Regular Meeting – September 19, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.