

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 24, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #67: BUDGET QUESTIONS & ANSWERS #20-22

Please find attached Budget Questions and Answers #20-22. Question & Answer #20 is in response to a follow up question to Q&A #9 from Councilman Krupicka regarding the pistol range. Question & Answer #21 is in response to Vice-Mayor Macdonald's inquiry into adding \$100,000 to the budget for planting trees. Question & Answer #22 is in response to Vice-Mayor Macdonald's inquiry into adding \$50,000 to advertise for open-air farmers' markets.

Attachment: FY 2008 Budget Questions & Answers #20-22

FY 2008 Proposed Budget Questions & Answers

Q&A #20: Councilman Krupicka asked: What is the current value/opportunity cost of the land the pistol range is sitting on?

The value of this land (5261 Eisenhower Avenue) would depend on its potential use and may be more than the \$4.1 million listed in the 2007 assessment records depending on what type of use and density the City would permit on the property. However, given it is immediately adjacent to the waste-to-energy plant, its potential for office or residential use would be limited.

Q&A #21: Vice-Mayor Macdonald asked: What would be the effect of adding \$100,000 to the FY 2008 RPCA budget for additional tree planting?

The RPCA budget currently includes \$80,000 per year through the CIP to plant new trees and replace, old removed trees. The department's operating budget also includes approximately \$500,000 for maintaining existing City trees. It costs the City approximately \$350 to plant a tree, so an additional \$100,000 would fund the planting of close to 286 new trees. However, during a tree's establishment period (first three years after planting) it would cost the City around \$270 in annual mulching, pruning, guy-wiring, and watering expenses to provide optimal maintenance. If the \$100,000 were used for both planting and maintaining trees for the establishment period, around 86 new trees could be planted each year. Currently, the RPCA Department does not have the budget resources to provide optimal maintenance for every new tree planted, but instead provides some level of maintenance between the minimum and optimum levels. The other important cost associated with planting new trees is pruning. On average, a street or right-of-way tree (typically not a park tree) needs to be pruned once every five to seven years at an average cost of \$175. Potentially, some additional amount above the \$100,000 would need to be added to the RPCA budget in order to cover the expenses of pruning these new trees.

Q&A #22: Vice-Mayor Macdonald asked: What would be the effect of adding \$50,000 for advertising City open-air markets?

There are a few different avenues the City could choose in order to advertise for these open-air markets.

- One would be to fund limited marketing activities within City departments. This could include providing some funding to the Arts and Marketing Program of the RPCA budget. They would utilize the funding to advertise for the markets through inserts in their program guide, which is distributed three times per year. A one page ad for the open air markets in each of the three mailings would cost around \$2,000. The City could also use some of the money to distribute posters, flyers, and pamphlets around Alexandria. The City's Electronic Publishing Office could design and produce a couple hundred copies of a full-color 11x17 poster for around \$200.

The City would also need to put some thought into where these posters should be distributed and who would provide the labor. It is reasonable to suspect 1 FTE for a week could be occupied with the task of distributing posters or flyers. The City could also post some information about these farmers' markets on its web site for a nominal cost. Overall, this option would leave a large dollar amount to utilize in some other manner.

- A second avenue would be to increase the annual contribution to ACVA with the understanding that \$50,000 be used to target open air markets specifically. ACVA has reported that they would use such funding to target day trippers in the Greater Washington area. They suggested using possible program elements such as advertising in the Washington Post Weekend, advertising in Connection Newspapers, local radio ads, transit ads (busbacks, Metro, etc.), free press coverage (PR outreach), email blasts, internet ads, and FYI Alexandria inserts. Overall, ACVA would more greatly highlight the farmers' markets as one of many reasons (shopping, dining, etc.) to visit Alexandria for the day. This additional \$50,000 would comprise around 5.5% of the total ACVA Communications & Marketing FY 2008 annual budget (\$917,160).
- Finally, the City could always choose to hire an outside agency to develop an advertising campaign for the open-air markets, but ACVA would be a more cost effective alternative.