

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

Monthly Meeting

October 21, 2025

Alexandria City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
Sister Cities Conference Room #1101

Summary Minutes

Committee Members Present: John Ruthinoski (Chair), Randall Williams (Vice Chair), Nancy Drane (Secretary), Erica Kaster, Mindy Lyle, Lauren O'Brien, Mark Tonsetic

Excused/Absent: None

Staff Present: Morgan Routt, Meghan McGrane

1. **Call to Order:** Vice Chair **Ruthinoski** called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the September 16, 2025 Meeting:** **Lyle** made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 16 meeting, seconded by **Drane**, with one correction (change "BFFAC" to "BFAAC" on p.2). The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
3. **BFAAC Elections:** Nominations for the following officer positions were made during the meeting:
 - a. Chair – **Lyle** made and **Williams** seconded the nomination for **Ruthinoski** to serve as BFAAC Chair. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
 - b. Vice Chair – **Lyle** made and **Ruthinoski** seconded the nomination for **Williams** to serve as BFAAC Vice Chair. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
 - c. Secretary – **Ruthinoski** made and **Tonsetic** seconded the nomination for **Drane** to serve as BFAAC Secretary. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
4. **BFAAC Work Plan Items**
 - a. **Memo #1 – FY26 Workplan**

Ruthinoski began a discussion to review a draft outline of BFAAC's FY26 Workplan:

Framework for budget assessment, decision-making – **Ruthinoski** reviewed the language in the draft memo, and suggested this document include reference to the federal landscape. **Tonsetic** asked about the city's prior scoring system, which City staff shared is

no longer being used. City staff shared some background on the process of utilizing the tool and why it was discontinued. **Tonsetic** suggested the importance of how specific we are in laying out the scope and what we are committing to do. **Ruthinoski** suggested that what we intend to offer is a higher-level framework to help them navigate decision-making and explain their decisions to the public, not the type of detailed scoring system that was discontinued. **Williams** suggested that we emphasize the importance of Council buying into the process and fidelity in using any tool. **Kaster** suggested that AI could be a tool to utilize as we develop the framework. **Williams** shared that it might be wise to focus on the research element without committing to a deliverable. This will give Council the opportunity to react to the research and commit to utilizing a tool before we (or staff) go about developing the tool. **Drane** suggested adding some clarifying questions for discussion to ensure that we are on the right track. The group workshopped language changes to the draft that will be circulated again.

Update on BFAAC education series – **Williams** provided a plan for wrapping up the BFAAC education series. The idea is that BFAAC could create “BFAAC budget bites” that are 30-60 seconds long as a visual video component that would complement the summaries that we have already drafted. **Williams** created a few videos to demonstrate this idea. This would be a way for us to deliver on our promises to the Council re: the education series. The recommendation is that BFAAC could meet with the City’s communications staff to share what it has done and consider whether these internal BFAAC resources could be incorporated into budget-related communications intended for the public. The group workshopped language changes to the draft that will be circulated again.

b. Memo #2 – Recommendations for the FY27 Budget Guidance

Drane suggested that the budget guidance memo begin with an emphasis on Council using its pre-established priorities, goals, and actions to inform and guide the development of its guidance to the City Manager and its own future deliberations on the budget. **Ruthinoski** reviewed other elements of the draft guidance – and agreed that the last point on civic engagement has some important parallels to the Work Plan that we can amplify during the presentation.

5. Updates and Reports:

- a. City staff provided a brief preview of the Budget Retreat on November 1 and flagged the finalization of the FY27 Budget Calendar (with April 21 meeting moved to April 14 as a result).

- b. There was also a reminder that BFAAC meetings will move to Lee Center, Conference Room #4 during the City Hall relocation.
- 6. **Adjournment:** A motion was made by **Williams** and seconded by **O'Brien** to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

DRAFT