

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 6, 2026

Question:

What is the status of mental health legislation at the General Assembly related to temporary detention orders and transportation? How could we expect the budget to change if it is passed?

Response:

The General Assembly has passed House Bill (HB) 681 and is awaiting the Governor's action. The bill amends several sections of the Code of Virginia and would allow "retired law enforcement officers" to retain custody of persons under an Emergency Custody Order (ECO) and to transport persons subject to a Temporary Detention Order (TDO) to mental health facilities. These tasks are currently only authorized by certified law enforcement officers and certain authorized alternative transportation providers. "Retired law enforcement officers" would not be permitted to take persons into custody without an ECO. This power would remain solely with current law enforcement officers. The use of "retired law enforcement officers" in this role would free up Alexandria Police Officers to complete other duties such as patrol work, criminal investigations, and community engagement.

The bill defines "retired law enforcement officers" as persons who served as law enforcement officers within the Commonwealth (or another state) or auxiliary officers, who retired or resigned in good standing within the last 10 years. Details on how these "retired law enforcement officers" would be certified and trained has not yet been determined. It is anticipated that the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) will promulgate rules and regulations for local agencies to follow should they wish to hire personnel to fill these roles.

The Legislation does not have a budgetary effect unless the City chooses to implement the option to hire retired police officers. The implementation will need clarification and direction from DCJS.

Potential Cost Savings

- Reduce overtime for sworn officers handling long TDO transports (currently either paying double-time or time-and-a-half for officers), which allows officers to focus on their core duties.
- Reduce the need to hire back officers to maintain the staffing on patrol.

New or Shifted Costs

- Hiring or contracting retired officers – shift high-cost sworn officers to potentially lower-cost trained retirees.