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

Monthly Meeting
October 20, 2026
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center, Room #4
1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Summary Minutes

Committee Members Present: John Ruthinoski, Mayor Gaskins Designee (Chair); Randall Williams, Vice Mayor Bagley Designee (Vice Chair); Emily Bryan, Chamber of Commerce Designee; Erica Kaster, Citizen-at-Large; James Saul, Councilmember Chapman Designee
Absent: Nancy Drane, School Board Designee (Secretary); Mark Tonsetic, Citizen-at-Large (Virtual); Jake Truex, Chamber of Commerce Designee
Staff Present: Morgan Routt, Director of the City of Alexandria Office of Management and Budget; Meghan McGrane, Budget Management Analyst
Guest: No public attendees observed the meeting

1. **Call to Order: Chair Ruthinoski** called the meeting to order at 6:49 P.M.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the September 15, 2026 Meeting

Bryan made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2026 meeting, seconded by **Williams**. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote of those present.

3. Elections for BFAAC Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary

Bryan made a motion to nominate John Ruthinoski as Chair; Randall Williams as Co-Chair; and Nancy Drane as Secretary, seconded by **Saul**. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote of those present.

4. BFAAC Work Plan Memo Development

Saul said that Councilmember Chapman is interested in including fee cost recovery analysis in the FY27 BFAAC workplan. **Ruthinoski** said that Mayor Gaskins concurs with the recommended workplan. **Williams** said he will pursue feedback from Vice Mayor Bagley.

The Committee discussed asking Council to identify three categories of fees to analyze in depth.

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- Rout suggested analyzing permit fees, which are aggregated separately from the general fund and don't affect taxes.
- McGrane posited that an analysis of how to improve user experience of fee-based activities—therefore driving more use—could be beneficial to Council.
- **Kaster** said that it would be helpful to understand how Council wants to use information that BFAAC could produce about fees—e.g., to identify new opportunities to collect fees, identify ways to improve fee payment/compliance, or increase users of fee-based services. It is important to understand Council's objectives.
- **Ruthinoski** suggested comparing fee processes with other jurisdictions.
- **Bryan** suggested that it might be useful for BFAAC to study fees over the course of two years rather than one—first studying other jurisdictions' processes and then applying lessons learned and best practices to specific fee topics Council cares most about.
- Rout noted that BFAAC will present at the end of the upcoming Council retreat on November 7 and suggested that BFAAC prepare to provide them options concerning which fee topics to focus on. **Williams** suggested preparing a backup list, as well.
- Rout urged meeting participants that Council to keep suggested fee topics sufficiently narrow to keep the work plan manageable, especially considering that there could also be substantial work for BFAAC to concurrently do on collective bargaining and budget decision-making tools/processes during the FY27 work plan execution period. **Ruthinoski** suggested asking Council to clearly identify the priority order in which BFAAC should address these topics, and to convey specific priorities within the broader topic of navigating collective bargaining.

BFAAC members then discussed and agreed on the following proposal:

- Analyzing other jurisdictions' fee schedules and processes, as well as actual fee amounts
- BFAAC will ask Council to direct BFAAC with respect to which fees to focus on—but BFAAC is also prepared to choose its own foci if Council prefers.
- BFAAC will ask Council to be clear about what it hopes to result from the exercise.

Ruthinoski conveyed that he is unsure whether Council read the memo that BFAAC submitted to it in June concerning budget decision-making tools and suggested appending it to the FY27 Work Plan memo.

5. Recommendation for the FY28 Budget Guidance Memo

Saul said that he would like to see the FY28 Budget Guidance Memo shortened to two pages, using more direct language.

Kaster suggested consolidating points in the draft memo that concern public communications and transparency.

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Bryan suggested consolidating Capital Investment Plan content into a single bullet.

Kaster suggested recommending that Council, in partnership with City staff and ACPS members who want to see their school-related legislative priorities advance in Richmond, more proactively collaborate with their counterparts in neighboring jurisdictions and with VA General Assembly members that represent those districts.

Williams noted the importance of including direct advice to Council to focus on educating the public, especially about school-related budget decisions. **Bryan** suggesting recommending that Council request regular updates on ACPS budget processes implementation. **Ruthinoski** shared his observation that most people proactively seek budget information only as it relates to an issue they care about. **Bryan** posited that using a "hook" is therefore important in public education efforts. **Kaster** suggested that BFAAC should encourage Council to encourage the City staff to pursue opportunities to present educational materials to the public when they are a captive audience—e.g., when they are already engaged in activities online or in person that the City controls.

Ruthinoski confirmed that he had been adjusting the memo during the above conversation, and **Kaster** agreed to take a stab at further refining it and trimming it to two pages. All members agreed to share responsibility for contributing, as needed, edits to the final draft.

6. **Updates and Reports**

    a. **Alternative BFAAC Meeting Start Times**.

    Ruthinoski confirmed that the next BFAAC meeting will start at 7pm so as to help members avoid pre-6:30 traffic and arrive on time to meetings. If this works well, BFAAC will continue meeting at 7pm instead of 6:30pm, limiting meetings to 1.5 hours.

    McGrane noted that the April meeting will, however, occur April 13 at 6:30pm.

    b. **Stormwater Utility & Flood Mitigation Advisory Group.**

    No report this week

    c. **Commission on Technology**

    Williams reported that the most recent meeting including a liverly discussion focused on developing recommendations for law enforcement partners regarding

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Flock cameras. A list is still in process of finalization and will be delivered to the Police Chief's Chief of Staff.

Williams also reported that a Community Outreach event on cybersecurity titled "What Everybody Needs to Know about AI" is scheduled for the ensuing Friday at 12-1pm.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by **Ruthinoski** and seconded by **Bryan** to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was then adjourned at 833 p.m.

Upcoming Meeting(s) / Important Dates:

Event	***Date/Time***	***Location***	***Status***
City Council Budget Retreat	Saturday, November 7, 2026 – 9:00am	Del Pepper Community Resource Center	*Noticed*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, November 17, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Noticed*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, December 15, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Noticed*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, January 19, 2027 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Noticed*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, February 16, 2027 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Noticed*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, March 16, 2027 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Noticed*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, April 13, 2027 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Confirm Date ?*
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, May 18, 2027 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	*Noticed*

Note: Calendar items in ***bold and italic*** have changed or been added since the previous month's agenda.