

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 24, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 27 : ELECTIONS COSTS INCLUDING PRESIDENTIAL, SENATORIAL, CONGRESSIONAL, MAYORAL, CITY COUNCIL, AND SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

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This memo is in response to the following highlighted questions from Councilwoman Hughes concerning funding requirements for future elections:

**Does the \$1.128 million budget in the FY 2011 Proposed Budget include the funds the Office previously indicated would be necessary to conduct a City Council election in November 2012?**

No. The Proposed FY 2011 Budget for the Office of Voter Registration and Elections does not include funding that will be necessary to conduct a City Council election in November 2012 because the cost of this election will be included in the FY 2013 budget that covers the period from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. The Proposed FY 2011 Budget includes funding for a general election in November 2010 and a primary election that could be held in June 2011.

**What would be the cost to conduct Presidential, U.S. Senatorial, Congressional, Mayoral, City Council, and School Board elections in November 2012?**

The annual budget for Voter Registration and Elections includes funding for a general election that is held in the Fall and a primary election in June. Staff has not projected expenditures for the 2012 Presidential Election, and the budget needs for this election could be impacted by changes in State/Federal legislation and redistricting, but generally the Department requires a budget increase of approximately 15 percent for the Presidential Election. This funding provides for additional staffing for voter registration and absentee voting, additional election officers, increased postage for mailing ballots, and a City-wide mailing to voters. The FY 2009 Approved Budget shows the impact of Presidential races on Voter Registration and Elections funding. A summary of expenditures is shown on the chart below shows the increased costs associated with Presidential races compared to other years.

Office of Voter Registration and Elections Funding						
	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Approved	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Approved	FY 2010 Actual to date	FY 2011 Proposed
General Fund Expenditures	\$1,121,029	\$1,275,383	\$1,377,827	\$1,070,439	\$800,821	\$1,128,902

In recent years, absentee voting for the Presidential Election has increased significantly and this has added to the Department's costs. In light of increased absentee voting, staff believes that at least one absentee voting location should be added for the November 2012 Election.

**How much would the Office need from the CIP to purchase additional voting machines to run the November 2012 elections (if any such funds were needed)?**

The Proposed CIP Budget includes \$270,000 in FY 2013 to purchase additional voting equipment to minimize voter delays, and identifies \$19,000 in additional operating costs associated with this new equipment. Currently, we would be required to purchase digital scan voting equipment to supplement the City's existing voting equipment because State law prohibits the purchase of additional electronic voting machines. It is possible that this law could change and/or that other State/Federal laws could be introduced that will impact this decision prior to FY 2013. The City may also have the option of renting digital scan voting equipment for the Presidential Election at a cost of approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000.

**Summary**

Every four years, additional funding is required for the Presidential Election because of the increased size and scope of this election, but staff does not believe that the addition of the Mayoral, City Council and School Board elections in November 2012 will have a significant impact on the operating budget. However, in order to accommodate the large presidential election turnout and to take into account the added local elections, it will be necessary to purchase or rent additional voting equipment for this election to minimize voter delays due to increased activity during Presidential Election years.