



Accomplishments & Events

Finance and Administration

Fiscal Year 1996 Budget. City Council in May approved a \$300.1 million budget for FY 1996, which began July 1, 1995. The budget consists of a local tax-supported General Fund Budget of \$241.4 million and a Special Revenue Fund, which includes federal and State grants and non-local monies, of \$58.7 million. The General Fund Budget includes \$74.2 million for the Alexandria City Public Schools, an increase of \$5.1 million, or 7.4%, over FY 1995. Funding for the Schools represents more than 30% of the General Fund Budget and includes approximately \$2.6 million in first-year funding for the School's six-year, \$15.8 million Technology Plan. The budget also provides \$4.7 million for early childhood education programs, such as Head Start, the City's child care fee subsidy program, and \$717,000 to continue the Children's Fund, which assists child care providers to improve the quality of preschool programs.

Capital Improvement Program. As part of the FY 1996 Budget, City Council approved a six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of \$94.1 million in public improvements for FY 1996-2001. The CIP provides \$16.2 million for capital projects in FY 1996, including \$13.7 million to complete site acquisition and construction of the City's new, state-of-the-art, Central Library on Duke Street. City Council also approved \$325,000 in FY 1996 and \$200,000 per year for the next five years to improve the City's seven neighborhood recreation centers. By limiting the CIP to high priority projects such as these, City Council will reduce the City's debt per capita, already the lowest in Northern Virginia, from \$450 at the end FY 1995 to \$382 at the end of FY 1996.

Real Estate Tax Base. After a three-year decline, the overall assessed value of real property in the City increased in 1995 by one-quarter of 1%. The assessed value of the average single-family home increased by 1.6%, from \$227,602 in 1994 to \$231,266 in 1995. The overall value of the City's commercial real estate tax base continued to fall in 1995, decreasing by \$84.3 million, or 1.8%.

Taxes and Fees. As part of the FY 1996 budget, the tax on cigarettes was increased by five cents to 25 cents (per pack of 20). Two user fees that no longer met the goal of recovering the City's direct cost were also increased. The sewer line maintenance charge was increased from ten cents to 20 cents per 1,000 gallons of water used, and the annual fee for single-family residential trash collection and disposal was increased from \$140 to \$158. Despite the \$18 increase, the City's trash collection charge remains one of the lowest in Northern Virginia.

Mainframe Computer Replacement. The City continued its 30-month project to replace a 10-year-old mainframe with smaller computers. By the end of FY 1996, the City will have moved all mainframe systems, except the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), to small computers. CJIS and the

payroll and personnel systems will run on Arlington County's mainframe computer temporarily under an agreement approved by City Council in January. New CJIS software will be developed in FY 1996. The agreement with Arlington County will enable the City to shift nearly all of its information systems to local computer networks by the end of 1996, saving approximately \$2.4 million in capital costs and more than \$230,000 in annual operating costs.

Diversity Training. The Human Relations and Personnel Services Departments developed a "Diversity at Work" seminar to train all City employees on issues related to diversity and prejudice. The training will take place during FY 1996.