

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 7, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMORANDUM # 40 : RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF CIVIL DISTURBANCE UNIT

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This memorandum is to request \$75,000 in funding for on-going costs associated with the re-establishment of a Police Department's Civil Disturbance Unit that meets readiness standards.

The Police Department has maintained a civil disturbance unit since the early 1990's. The Police Department recently conducted an assessment of the City's civil disturbance readiness and determined that an active civil disturbance team is essential to respond to civil disorder, planned, or unplanned events. Currently, the Department does not maintain a team that meets readiness standards.

Currently, these types of events are handled by on-duty patrol officers, who have limited training and no equipment to safely deal with protests and civil disturbance. In addition, police service to the rest of the City is compromised when on-duty personnel are assigned to these types of incidents, which can last for an extended amount of time.

The Northern Virginia Chiefs and Sheriff's maintain a mutual aid memorandum of understanding (MOU) which relies on support from each other in all types of events. Currently, the Police Department is unable to fulfill its mutual aid obligation when a fully trained civil disturbance team is requested. The City's proximity to Washington, DC, host to many demonstrations and civil disturbances significantly increases the likelihood that the Police Department will be called on in a mutual aid scenario.

Once trained and deployed, this unit will be able to supplement and respond to events currently handled by on-duty patrol personnel. Examples of these events include:

- Abortion demonstrations
- Protests by labor groups or community activists
- Protests at residences or workplaces of political persons
- Protests at residences or workplaces belonging to persons identified by hate groups

The Police Department plans to absorb initial implementation costs of \$120,000 for this unit with one-time savings from its FY 2011 Approved budget, but is requesting \$75,000 in additional funds for FY 2012 and subsequent fiscal years. Of this amount, \$40,000 will provide for quarterly training of the Civil Disturbance Unit (45 members) and \$35,000 will provide overtime funds to respond to actual events or pay off-duty officers to fill in for CDU members during events.

The Police Department does not anticipate the FY 2011 savings to recur and therefore cannot absorb the on-going costs in subsequent years without making as yet unidentified programmatic reductions. If City Council does not provide additional funding for this request, the Police Department will reprioritize its existing activities and propose an internal lower priority source for funding this activity in June.