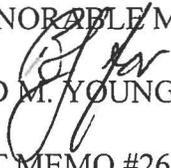


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 5, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #26: ASSESSMENT STAFFING IN ALEXANDRIA VS. ARLINGTON

This memorandum is written in response to City Council's request to provide an analysis of the staffing levels in the Assessor's Office in Alexandria in comparison to Arlington.

The Proposed FY 2013 Budget eliminates funding for a vacant Real Estate Appraisal Supervisor position in the Department of Real Estate Assessments (DREA). This reduction is being used for a new position to expand the City's Internal Audit scope to include performance management and organizational accountability. While the position was eliminated in the DREA, the Department was provided with a proposed \$75,000 in additional contractual funds for FY 2013 to undertake an initiative to identify new revenue raising opportunities within the city's tax base.

In terms of a comparison of staffing levels between the City of Alexandria and Arlington County, the industry's standard units of measure are typically the total number of real estate parcels compared to the total number of assessment staff; total real estate parcels per appraisal staff member; and the number of commercial parcels per appraiser. Alexandria has 44,873 total parcels of real estate; 2,645 commercial parcels; 14 total staff members; and 10 appraisal staff members. Arlington has 63,775 total parcels; 2,529 commercial parcels; 29 total staff members; and 24 appraisal staff.

Based on these measurements, Alexandria is responsible for 3,127 parcels per staff member while Arlington is responsible for 2,199 per staff member. In terms of parcels per appraisal staff member, Alexandria is responsible for 4,378, and Arlington is responsible for 2,657. The number of commercial parcels per appraiser is 265 in Alexandria and 105 in Arlington.

It should be noted that while there are comparative differences in assessment staffing levels, Alexandria's DREA has been identifying the creation of new efficiencies to save staff hours. For instance, the department has just completed a new web-based program for the annual filing of income and expense forms by commercial property owners. This

new program will save countless hours by the elimination of time consuming mailings and manual data entry of thousands of detailed forms. This advanced cloud based program is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth and in the region.

In addition, changes to the assessment review and appeal calendar will resolve property owner challenges much faster and more efficiently. This past year the administrative Request for Review of assessment forms were also moved to a web-based program - again reducing the need for manual entry of data. There are also other areas where the DREA has identified potential new efficiencies. With the Proposed \$75,000 in new funds for the DREA in FY2013 it is anticipated that even more opportunities for cost savings, efficiencies, and new revenues will be recognized.

STAFF: Laura Triggs, Acting Chief Financial Officer
 Morgan Routt, Acting Budget Director
 Kendel Taylor, Assistant Budget Director