

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 20, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #129: \$15,000 SEASONAL POOL INSPECTOR FOR THE ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT (AHD)

This memorandum is in response to Council Gaines' request for additional information on this 18-week seasonal position, which he proposed to delete from the FY 2007 budget. Councilman Gaines suggested that the Department "designate seasonal inspection duties to an existing Health Department employee."

The Department requested this seasonal position to relieve some of the increasing workload on the existing environmental health specialists, who are especially busy during the summer months. The Environmental Health Division regulates more than 1,100 establishments in the City. The workload for environmental health staff is increasing as more restaurants and other permitted establishments open in the City. The summer workload is greater than at any other time of the year. In addition to the opening of approximately 120 outdoor seasonal pools, there are increasing numbers of fairs and festivals with food vendors during the time period from May through mid-September, in addition to 45 sites for the USDA summer food program.

Rather than hire an additional environmental health specialist (\$60,000+ including benefits for a 12 month position), the Department proposes to hire an 18-week seasonal employee at a cost of \$15,000 to assist with swimming pool inspections. Seasonal employees receive no benefits. In January 2006, City Council approved increasing the annual license fees for pools, spas and health clubs to make them more comparable to surrounding jurisdictions. This action will increase revenues by approximately \$20,000, which will more than offset the cost of the seasonal pool inspector.

The Department indicates that if this seasonal position is not funded, existing staff will have to reduce inspection frequencies at restaurants and swimming pools and curtail public outreach initiatives during the busy summer months. This reduction in services may impact the Health Department's ability to meet state standards for restaurant inspection frequencies.