

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 29, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #42: FREQUENTLY USED SERVICE HOURS FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY AND THE TREASURY DIVISION

This budget memo responds to Councilman Krupicka's request for information regarding the most frequently used days and times that residents come to City Hall to pay taxes and fines.

Most residents who come to City Hall to conduct City business visit during the hours of 11:30am and 2:30pm (lunch-time). However, we have a steady stream of taxpayers throughout the day on Monday through Friday. We have not found a significant difference in the number of visitors during any particular day of the week.

Statistical data shows that, on average, personal property tax staff handle approximately 310 transactions a day, Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. This includes customers served at the personal property counter and by telephone. This figure increases significantly to approximately 530 transactions per day during the City's decal/tax payment season and following delinquent tax and other mass mailings. On average, personal property staff handle approximately 50 transactions per week each Saturday morning. This is 1/6th the service level for a typical 9-hour weekday.

The Treasury Division handles approximately 351 transactions per day during off peak periods. During peak periods they handle approximately 980 transactions per day. These transactions include processing all City tax payments, City permits, tickets and fines, City agency daily deposits and parking permits. On Saturdays, the Treasury Division handles on average about 60 transactions. This low level of transactions maybe the reasons why no other Virginia local government Treasury Office has regular Saturday hours.

The Finance Department does not recommend closing the Personal Property Tax Office or the Treasury Division during the work week. All other City operations are open to the public during these hours many of their transactions need to be processed through the Treasury Division many of these transactions are related to interactions with other city departments where some sort of payment is required. Moreover, citizens have come to expect customer service and the availability of City services during the work week.

Over the past year, the Finance Department has introduced online personal property registration and encourages the use of the City's Web Site to pay tax payments, register vehicles and obtain tax information. With the recent implementation of online registration and eCheck payment, vehicle owners who previously needed to visit City Hall on Saturday, are now able to complete the registration process or pay taxes from their home, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.