

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 18, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #105: T&ES SOLID WASTE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS #2

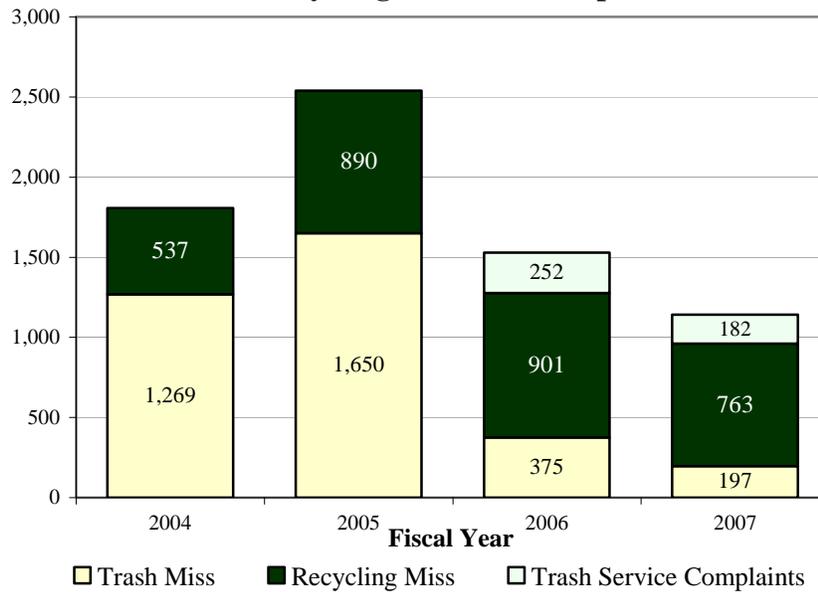
The following information is provided in response to questions raised by Mayor Euille at the March 18, 2008 budget work session, and Councilman Krupicka's e-mail question.

1. What are the reasons for the decline in service complaints for refuse and recycling according to your chart shown during the budget work session? (Mayor Euille)

In FY 2004, the solid waste division hired a consultant to evaluate the residential collection services, and it was determined that service could be improved by consolidating residential collection routes. This recommendation was implemented in late FY 2005. Also, recycling collection was contracted out. After implementing these measures, the efficiency of residential refuse collection was improved as well as the supervision and management of crews. Also, new drivers and collectors becoming more familiar with city streets and alley collection points aided in reducing service level complaints.

Originally, trash service complaints were recorded with the trash misses in FY 2004 and FY 2005. In FY 2006, customer service complaints were tracked individually as well as trash and recycling miss information. The chart displays the decline of trash service complaints over FY 2006, and FY 2007.

Trash/Recycling Misses & Complaints



2. Describe the calculation and drivers of the residential refuse collection fee. (Mayor Euille)

The City's long standing residential refuse collection fee policy is set to recover annually the full cost of providing residential refuse collection service. The fee is proposed to increase in FY 2009 by \$17, from \$264 in FY 2008 to \$281. The fee calculation is presented in the following table from page 18-24 of the FY 2009 proposed budget.

Residential Refuse Collection Fee	FY 2008 Approved	FY 2009 Proposed
Personnel Costs	\$1,410,978	\$1,654,283
Disposal Costs at the WTE Plant	\$2,161,230	\$2,102,194
Vehicles, Supplies & Materials	\$618,376	\$527,479
Residential Recycling Contract	\$367,054	\$571,949
Total Expenditures	\$4,557,638	\$4,855,905
Residences Served	17,273	17,273
Residential Refuse Fee	\$264	\$281

The major drivers of the fee are:

- **Personnel costs** – Salaries and benefits for refuse collection staff. These were expanded in the FY 2009 budget to include a portion of the cost of management and administrative positions related to residential refuse collection.
- **Disposal costs** – The cost of disposing of City-collected refuse at the waste-to-energy plant, which in FY 2009 assumes a lower tip fee of \$76.54 per ton as compared to \$78.69 in FY 2008.
- **Vehicles, supplies, and materials** – Fuel, maintenance, and depreciation costs for the refuse trucks; the cost of purchasing replacement trash cans; and other costs associated with uniforms and equipment.
- **Residential recycling** – The net cost for residential recycling after deducting revenues received by the City from the sale of recyclables.

3. Update on commercial recycling and when we expect we will get every business on board? (Councilman Krupicka)

To date, 600 of the more than 2,000 commercial and multifamily properties (including condominiums) are currently in compliance. Staffing constraints limit the city's ability to have all buildings in full compliance this fiscal year. In keeping with the Council's Goals (2 and 6), adding a new multifamily and commercial recycling coordinator (as proposed in Councilman Krupicka's add/delete list of items over \$50,000) will aid in providing these properties with the service that is needed to get them in compliance.

Managing the Commercial Recycling Program serving more than 2,000 commercial properties within the City, requires involvement in the following tasks:

- Permitting Private Haulers to conduct business in the City, including performing inspections of more than 400 vehicles;
- Recycling Rate Reporting oversight and enforcement;
- Enforcing permit rules and regulations and working with the Code Enforcement Division to issue citations to private haulers or business owners who have not submitted Recycling Implementation Plans;
- Managing the Recycling Implementation Plan form process and online data management tool;
- Providing hands-on technical training and assistance to commercial properties owners;
- Inspecting and certifying recycling programs to become members of the *Business Recycling Partnership*;

- Oversight and management of the *Business Recycling Partnership* Advisory Committee made up of solid waste providers and business owners from various sectors (i.e., apartments, Home Owners Associations, Condominiums, restaurants, service stations, office buildings, hotels, nonprofits, federal agencies, etc.); and
- Developing programs to encourage more commercial recycling including training workshops, toolkits, and general public media outreach and education.

Currently, the Solid Waste Planner, in addition to other duties and responsibilities is responsible for managing the program. With the possible addition of a new Commercial and Multifamily Recycling Coordinator, it is possible to have all businesses on board with plans submitted by the end of FY 2009. The Council could decide to use the solid waste hauler fee increase in the budget of \$90,000 to fund the commercial and multifamily coordinator position, or the following are additional fees that could be raised to help fund the position:

- **Private hydrant repairs and service** – The City repairs an average of 143 private fire hydrants annually at a fee of \$140. Private contractors charge approximately \$550 for the same work. T&ES recommends increasing the fee to \$400. This would generate an additional \$37,180 in revenue above those contained in the proposed budget.
- **Excavation permits** – The City issued 712 permits for excavation in the public right-of-way in 2007 at a fee of \$50 each. The FY 2009 proposed budget includes an increase to \$75. T&ES recommends further increasing the fee to \$100. This would generate an additional \$17,800 in revenue above those contained in the proposed budget.
- **Right-of-way permits** – The City issued 1,404 permits for temporarily blocking street lanes or sidewalks in the public right-of-way in 2007 at a fee of \$10 each. The FY 2009 proposed budget includes an increase to \$25. T&ES recommends further increasing the fee to \$30. This would generate an additional \$7,020 in revenue above those contained in the proposed budget.
- **Oversize/overweight vehicle permits** – The City issued 352 permits to operate oversize or overweight vehicles in 2007 at a fee of \$10 each. This fee was not increased in the FY 2009 proposed budget. T&ES recommends increasing the fee to \$30. This would generate an additional \$7,040 in revenue above those contained in the proposed budget.