

CIP Public Hearing Comments
November 14, 2022 Special Called School Board Meeting

Good evening. My name is Michael Planey and I am the president of the Alexandria City Titans Hockey Club and one of the coaches as well.

Ice Hockey as a sport has existed in various forms at TC Williams and Alexandria City high school over the past 25 years. Currently, the club is organized and managed by the player families and volunteers such as myself. We are a co-educational program including both boys and girls on our varsity and junior varsity rosters as appropriate. We also seek to improve the inclusion of minority or underrepresented groups in hockey on our roster. We receive no funding from Alexandria City High School nor from the School Board directly.

I am here tonight to ask you to take a holistic look at the growth of non-varsity sports clubs and other important student extracurricular activities that are unfunded by the high school and the school board.

The growth in student population and student extracurricular interest has grown dramatically in the more than 20 years that I have lived in Alexandria. Funding for those student activities has not grown commensurately. This leaves many worthwhile student endeavors unfunded, and reliant on outside fundraising and family financial contributions. This also means that we are limiting the number of students who can participate and excludes both students whose families do not have the financial means and students who hold down other substantial responsibilities such as jobs, family care or academic tutoring in the evening and after school hours.

In the case of our hockey club, the average annual expense to run our club is approximately \$12,000 per year on a limited basis. The cost to participate in our club is approximately \$650 per player, excluding individual player equipment. These fees vary each season as our costs are divided by the number of players on our roster. Our club does not have enough funding to pay for preseason or in season practices. We also cannot rely upon inexpensive resources in the City of Alexandria as there is no public ice rink within the city boundaries. This means we are forced to pay as much as \$700 per game for ice rink rental with additional costs for officials and outside athletic medical trainers.

We would like to continuously grow the program to fully include a seventh and eighth grade middle school component that would feed into our junior varsity and varsity club. At the moment such a program is outside our ability to manage and fund.

It is time for the school board to create a study on the current and future needs for expanding student activities at the middle school and high school level. I urge you tonight to begin that process and study what capital improvements are necessary and what funding is required on a yearly basis to open these extracurriculars to the widest number of students possible.

Thank you.