

Budget Advisory Committee Meeting

February 28, 2024

MINUTES

Budget Advisory Committee Members Present: Ryan Reyna; Bridget Shea Westfall; Bill Pfister; Abdulahi Abdalla; Alex Scioscia; Jenica Patterson; Christina Hildebidle

ACPS Staff Liaison Present: none

School Board Liaison Present: Kelly Carmichael Booz, Board Member (virtual)

BFAAC Liaison: Nancy Drane (virtual)

6:34pm call to order. There were no public attendees.

8:10pm close

Public Comment

- No public comment

Approval of Prior Minutes

School Board Report (Kelly):

- City manager proposed budget – school size, matched original ask for operating and combined funds; tonight assembling for the first of two joint budget work sessions with Council; Board unanimously voted to go above \$20M GM and \$45M to Cora Kelly.
- Board voted to add a few positions, support “lost step” increases, and provide a market rate adjustment for staff – about \$10.5M higher than Superintendent’s budget
- Challenging because City revenue is down, property values up, and election year; tough to ask for more taxes
- City manager budget – increase step for some city employees
- Spread is 11M – may be up to 3 cent increase on real estate taxes
- Kelly states she needs our advocacy and help
- Case studies of what the loss step would look like
- If those teachers are Alexandria tax payers
- What/whether/how can do advocacy here

Chair Report (Ryan)

- The way manager presented budget, presented that the city has done well over the last 10 years and pretty much everything asked for and provided everything the superintendent asked for; Overall revenue growth is 3%; ACPS is largest increase out of any of the budget at 4%; need commercial tax to go up or will need to push for direct increase in real estate taxes; additional investment in other areas that are not school related; manager was asked by Council Member Gaskins if they were to increase real estate tax to meet school board budget and he was going to get an exact number but around \$140/240 more per household
- Step increases for other city employees but no idea of how much or how many employees; positive presentation on the fiscal ; commercial is low (vacant office space is the main issue, about 12%) ; making investments in other youth program (alex youth etc) which is not directly in ACPS budget but going to broader investment to support youth in AC;
- Providing step increase and MRA (market rate adjustment) with non-collective bargaining city employees

New Business

- What do we want to do collectively?
 - Ryan been speaking with PTAC, doing a level of advocacy; pushing charts and data to come up with common language to get many people to show up to the March 11 city council budget hearing at 530pm ; March 16th at 930am
 - Option 1: We can show up and testify
 - Option 2: submit a formal letter and gets tallied with every other comments (mainly been from librarians asking for increase pay)
 - Option 3: showing up to campaign kickoff events and forums to ask their approach on school system and increase in pay.
 - Option 4: Alexandria times editor
 - Best option is showing up and being in person;
 - ACTION: three common talking points; saying generally the same thing; Ryan will start on the talking points
 - Pursue option 1,2,4
 - Talking points, Draft of letter to editor, reach out to PTAC to see if there are other groups across city to connect with
- Business Item #2
 - Member Simpson – school board member that led of how school board uses its committees; have set of recommendations based on committee chairs; two main points:
 1. Make a public recommendation document/spreadsheet; put into a single spreadsheet and indicate there was action, progress, delay, etc;
 2. would like meet with every committee to have opportunity to have them come talk to school board (sidebar; work session)

Old Business

- Scope of Work
 - Do research and talk to other committees on revenue sharing; 9 jurisdictions
 - Potential worksheet to center research

- Sign up sheet – pre-listed BAC and BFAAC; best path forward – just for BAC to do the research and have joint meeting the BFAAC to share what we found; incredibly busy and mapped out what they are doing; not an issue risen to forefront;
 - Timeline – over next two months (now to April); each person signs up for one school division – and do research between now and April meeting; bring findings in April meeting; take that to may joint meeting the BFAAC and general assessment of what we found/learned
- Nancy recommends that we reach out to DominiC and Michelle on who are the right people to speak with in the jurisdictions

No Staff Report (Robert absent)