

**ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JUNE 15, 2022 – 6:30 TO 8:00 P.M.**

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

Present: Budget Advisory Committee Members Nancy Drane [Chair], Selena el Hajji, Sukumar Rao, Ryan Reyna, and Bridget Shea Westfall; ACPS staff members Robert Easley, Director, Budget & Fiscal Compliance; and School Board Member Kelly Carmichael Booz

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Drane at 6:30 p.m.

There were no public attendees, thus no public comment was received.

The meeting started with a staff report from Mr. Easley.

Mr. Easley shared that the budget was adopted by the School Board on June 2. Due to a revision to the Virginia State budget, ACPS lost about \$500,000 – but staff expects to recover that shortfall with increased sales tax revenue coming in. ACPS could absorb it if needed; staff will continue to monitor. Staff are cognizant that as they prepare for the FY24 budget, there will be a new City Manager, new City Council, new School Board, and new Superintendent. This will require even greater communication and planning. Federal ESSER funding continues to be utilized by ACPS. The ACPS grants team is preparing more up-to-date financial reporting to share with the Board. A survey will also be sent out to the community regarding ESSER funding.

Mr. Easley thanked BAC for submitting its end-of-year report. Even in draft form, the report was being sent to members of the budget team to make sure they were aware of it and were contemplating the recommendations. There was overwhelming support for the type of recommendations we provided. Examples from other jurisdictions were key to highlight what could be done. This wasn't theoretical or a new idea, but there were real examples from other Districts to show them what they were capable of. ACPS budget staff is creating a list of "can do, already doing, maybe could do" recommendations, and a timeline for implementation. BAC's report was very timely with the focus on communications and the revamp of the ACPS website.

Ms. Booz suggested that she will ask to pull the BAC report from the consent agenda at the next Board meeting in order to be able to highlight the report publicly and to her colleagues.

There was some additional discussion about the communication-related recommendations. Despite the lack of participation in ESSER-related public hearings, community members have shown interest in the ESSER funds and how they are being utilized. This echoes some of the comments in the BAC memo that public hearings aren't the only way to get engagement. It was also noted that PTAC did comprehensive budget comments; BAC should maximize opportunities to partner with PTAC on budget-related communications. It was suggested that the ACPS budget team develop a one-page document with a QR code that could be prominently displayed at libraries and other public locations and with community organizations. BAC members expressed an interest in helping with outreach as needed.

Ms. Booz then provided a report on Board activities. The Board recently received a draft FY24 budget calendar. The Board will vote and adopt a final calendar in September 2022. Ms. Booz has suggested some revisions, as she found the compressed timeline challenging during the FY23 budget process. Ideally the City Manager could move his budget presentation back, although this has been considered in the past without success. One challenging decision is around when to sequence public hearings. In Ms. Booz's view, having a public hearing on the early side provides the Board with benefit of public views early enough in the process. On the other hand, if the public had more information available before it made public comments, it would be better informed.

Ms. Drane reminded BAC members that BAC does not typically sit during the summer months, and would rather reconvene in September 2022.

With that, the meeting was adjourned.