

**ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 – 6:30 TO 8:00 P.M.**

**\*VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM\***

**MINUTES**

**Budget Advisory Committee Members Present:** Nancy Drane; Ryan Reyna; Bridget Shea Westfall; Jenica Patterson; Lillian Vagnoni; Christina Hildebidle; Bill Pfister; Selena el Hajii

**ACPS Staff Liaison Present:** Robert Easley, Budget Director

**School Board Liaison Present:** Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi , Board Member (attending on behalf of Kelly Carmichael Booz)

**Also in Attendance:** Susan Neilson, Board Clerk and Sianni Cabello, observer interested in potentially joining BAC

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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. There were no public attendees.

**Public Comment**

- Received public comment via email – read at own leisure; community member sent email to division and school board and BAC – asking to consider our recommendations to prioritize on climate issues as relates to budget considerations.

**New BAC Leadership for 2023-24**

- Nominations and approvals
  - Ryan Reyna (Chair), Bill Pfister (Vice Chair), Jenica Patterson (Secretary)
  - Motion was made and seconded with unanimous approval of the slate of officers for 2023-2024

**Old Business**

- Budget Community Forum Meeting for ACPS
  - Recommendation to division – support BAC and outreach/promotion to expand membership
  - On website budget page and work with PTAC to make sure it gets into the PTA newsletters through ParentSquare/etc.
  - Event will be webinar with ability to take questions: Monday October 16<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm – in person (ACHS) and virtual;
  - BAC helped create FAQs, and Robert created a public survey about what people wanted to hear – Robert led and had 70 responses

## New Business

- Take on a new scope of work to make committee yearlong focus in consultation with school board partners (with Michelle Rief, Kelly Booz)
  - Included a set of recommendations for communications could continue; focused on opportunities for BAC have greater involvement with school board, and school board to work with the city around the investment and strategies moving forward – conversations on going; BFAC-BAC collaboration – more common vision for future of city
  - Two areas for scope of work
    - Rules of engagement for budget process – budget calendar – when community has opportunity to offer feedback; decision making authority etc.; BAC could see how other jurisdictions engage work with city/county and division and general process for community engagement and resolution; Boards role in budget formulation and how that works in other jurisdictions – do other jurisdictions use add/delete process? Boards ability to change budget after priorities are set?
    - Partnership with BFAAC (City Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee); better understand revenue sharing opportunities (ex. collective bargaining, inflation issues) – define and understand what happens in other parts of VA – can inform joint conversations to work together; how can coalesce disparate conversations on an individual basis to across division; This could be a tenuous situation (both bodies would agree to stay out of each other's way – if revenue share agreement (ex. 47-53 sharing) eliminates any discussion for city to transfer funds to schools.
- *Q from Bridget about governing body of school: School board is governing body of school staff, Superintendent is CEO; in VA school districts don't have tax authority, funding comes from city/county; superintendent/staff – go through process of formulating budget; fed gov funds – title one etc., can be specific funding to schools; ACPS to start highlighting and looking into federal grant opportunities to identify opportunities outside more typical federal government funds; as well other industry grant opportunities; Family Foundation grants and sign up for alerts for grants.gov*  
*\*\*\*Interest in further exploration for funding for the district (fed grants, industry grants, family foundation, etc.)*
- Ryan wants to have few follow up conversations at next meeting before voting officially on scope

## Recruitment

- Our bylaws allow us up to 17 members
- Our updated bylaws designated that Board members nominate a representative each and also designated a spot for PTAC
- Leveraging board members to offer recommendations
- Individual community engagement across the city
- Process = Submit an application, conversation with Ryan and participate as an observer before Board approval
- **\*\*Leverage PTAC to get flyer out to PTAs and translate into multiple languages**

- Oct. 5 – board is voting to adopt budget priorities; school board budget calendar was approved last school board meeting; ACPS budget staff finding key community inputs that could be used to highlight 10-12

### **Staff Report**

- Community budget forum – ACHS Rotunda Room; 6:30-8:00pm
  - Intros, 40 min – presentation, 30min Q&A
  - Budget forum survey with 70 responses – based on responses, 3 main topics
    - Teacher staffing decisions
    - How ACPS spends its funds
    - ACPS teacher salaries compared to surrounding jurisdiction.
    - Student enrollment
  - FAQs – BAC could help ACPS bolster the information to feed them what are those FAQs
  - Need to bring more awareness of survey to community; make a comms person to make the idea more exciting and bring in ACHS students (gov) to help advocate
  - Community members can submit events through Alexandria Gazette and times to get it on their calendar
  - Focus here on true engagement; division staff to hear from community; have ACPS staff there to help answer questions directly; not only space for answering questions but chance for ACPS to listen to the community;
  - ACPS budget staff to come to PTA meetings to answer specific questions?
  - Recommend to bring social media to the event
- Start Budget preparation for FY25 next week; information sent out to departments and schools to start preparing and look at their budget for next fiscal year; looking to keep a flat budget for non-enrollment projections (office supplies, travel, etc.); salaries/benefits are large part of budget

### **School Board Report (Elnoubi)**

- Board Ad Hoc committee to look at how we can better engage with advisory committees; next month will have chairs of all current advisory committees come to meet the Board Ad Hoc committee

### **Final Comments**

- Reminder – list of all upcoming meetings have been provided for this school year;
  - participation element – set by state; limited opportunity to do electronic participation or virtual meetings; one opportunity in fall and in spring; no December meeting; individual members can participate electronically but needs quorum in person (each member has opportunity for 2 meetings per calendar year can participate virtually); quorum is 5 or majority of registered members; if come in person and then join virtually – it will count against 2 mtgs
- There was a question about the BAC@acps email – connected to a Google email; Ryan and Nancy have a system now to check those messages.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.