

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 8, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #86: FY 2009 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING REGARDING THE NEEDS OF ALEXANDRIA'S SENIOR CITIZENS AND CREATING A LIVABLE COMMUNITY FOR ALL (REVISED)

This memorandum is a follow-up to the Caring Community Work Session on April 7, 2008. It revises information that was previously presented in Budget Memo #64.

The Alexandria Commission on Aging proposes that the City fund a comprehensive Needs Assessment and a Strategic Planning process to identify the unmet needs of existing seniors and to develop a city-wide plan to meet the needs of those residents who will be "aging in place" in the City.

Currently the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations has commissioned a community-wide needs assessment to look at Alexandria human service needs from zero to 100+ years of age. This report will be very broad, so it may not fully meet the needs as outlined by the Commission on Aging. Nevertheless it is a starting point and may only need minor augmentation by staff, or an outside resource.

To address the augmentation of the needs assessment and/or the creation of a long term strategic planning process and city-wide plan there are a few options:

Budget Memo #64 suggested two options:

- 1) One would be able to undertake this endeavor in a home-grown manner or at a grass roots level, by hiring former city employees and/or others who are self employed in the aging field to perform tasks such as researching issues, drafting reports, taking minutes at committee meetings, etc. This was the approach used by Arlington, where multiple departments throughout the County devoted an extensive amount of staff time which was used to complement the consultants' work. The out-of-pocket costs for their consultants were approximately \$10,000; the substantial cost for staff time was not calculated.

2) A second alternative would be to employ a consultant in an academic setting (preferably one familiar with Northern Virginia) with experience in public administration/policy and who has the expertise in needs assessments, strategic planning and implementation and has access to resources and databases to support such an endeavor. This scope of work would include conducting a needs assessment using a multi-modality method (phone, mail, the Internet). That individual would utilize the time and talent of graduate and doctoral students who receive course credit for the work, which would keep the costs down. The estimated cost for this approach is approximately \$50,000.

3) A third alternative not discussed in Budget Memo #64 is to use an “open market” company whose whole business is research. Such companies recommend conducting telephone surveys to obtain data on which the City would formulate its policy, planning and program development efforts for the aging. Because the needs of seniors who are under age 75 are significantly different from those over age 75, this company recommends telephone surveys with a sample size of 1,000 households where there are seniors. Their estimated costs for conducting such a telephone survey are \$125/person or a total of \$125,000.

Therefore, cost options could range from \$10,000 to \$125,000 depending on available resources.