

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 10, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #25: CHARACTERIZATION OF VACANCT POSITIONS BY DEPARTMENT AS OF FEBRUARY, 23 2009

This memo is in response to a request from Mayor Euille that the City Council be provided a characterization of the vacant positions within the City work force. Attached to this memo is the City-wide monthly vacancy report for February 2009. As part of the Manager's soft hiring freeze, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) monitors vacancies City-wide through a monthly reporting system with departments. Each month OMB gathers from City departments their list of vacant full and part-time positions. Each department's report is then added to the City-wide vacancy report. The City-wide vacancy report is used to track the number of vacant positions throughout the City and the estimated cost of these positions. Within the City-wide vacancy report, there are three vacancy categories:

- Not Requested to be Filled: includes positions that departments are not requesting to fill and are holding open.
- Requests Pending with the City Manager's Office (CMO): these are positions that are under consideration by the Manager to advertise and recruit.
- New Requests Approved for Advertising/Recruiting but Still Vacant: these positions have been approved to advertise/recruit by the Manager but are still in the hiring process and are technically vacant.

As of February, 23 2009, there are 243 vacant positions City-wide. These 243 vacancies equate to approximately 9.5% of the total authorized City workforce. The table below shows City-wide vacancies from November 2008 to February 2009 by the three categories described above. The total number of vacant positions has increased by 26 positions over this four month period.

	November 2008	December 2008	January 2009	February 2009
	Total Positions*	Total Positions	Total Positions	Total Positions
Not Requested to be Filled	138	146	169	168
Requests Pending with CMO to Advertise/Recruit	14	19	18	24
Subtotal	152	165	187	192
New Requests Approved for Advertising/Recruiting but Still Vacant	65	61	53	51
Grand Total Vacant Positions	217	226	240	243

* Total positions includes full and part-time positions.

A handout showing the total number of vacant positions by department and the total annual cost of these vacancies is provided as Attachment 1. The attachment also shows the number of vacant positions per vacancy category and the corresponding annual cost of the vacancies within each category by department. At the bottom of the handout, the grand totals are tallied. The handout is helpful for showing which departments have a high number of vacancies, those with lower numbers and departments with no vacancies.

The attached City-wide vacancy report for February 2009 (Attachment 2) provides a list of individual vacancies by department. If a department reports that they have no vacancies, the phrase *No Vacancies At This Time* will appear in their section. For departments that report vacancies several pieces of information are provided about the vacant position. In the first two columns, the position title and the program or activity that position is assigned to are listed. The total annual cost of the vacant position is also provided. Actual budget savings in any fiscal year depends on when the position became vacant and when it is filled during that fiscal year. The total cost includes the costs for salaries and benefits.¹ The vacancy report also indicates which of the three vacancy categories the position and its cost are currently assigned to. The total number of vacant positions within each vacancy category and the total cost for each category is tallied on the last page of the report.

¹ Please note that for each position, OMB calculates the salary by using the position's grade at the C step. The C step is used to provide the average cost of the salary, however, some positions may actually be filled above or below this step. The calculation of benefits for each position is an estimate that can vary by position. In general, the following assumptions are used to calculate benefits:

- General Schedule full-time employee benefits are approximately 37% of salary.
- Sworn Police and Fire employee benefits are approximately 45 % of salary.
- Sworn Sheriff and EMT employee benefits are approximately 41% of salary.
- General Schedule part-time employee benefits for those working half-time or more are approximately 26% of salary.
- General Schedule part-time employee benefits for those working less than half time are approximately 20% of salary.

The City Manager has proposed that 74 vacant positions be eliminated in FY 2010. In the attached City-wide vacancy report positions that are shaded and bolded are those which have been proposed to be eliminated. Please note that the report only includes 68 of the 74 proposed eliminations. The remaining six positions have not yet become vacant, although they are expected to become vacant in FY 2010, so departments have not included them in their monthly vacancy reports.

The FY 2010 Proposed Budget assumes \$5.92 million in vacancy savings. This means that nearly half of the annual savings attributed to the current vacant positions will be used to manage the proposed vacancy savings amount. Additionally, \$1 million dollars of vacancy savings will be used in FY 2009, as outlined in Budget Memo #3. Vacancy savings remains a valuable savings tool, but it requires that a certain number of vacant positions be held open. While the elimination of all the current vacancies would result in significant savings, it would essentially be a one-time savings. Continuing to hold positions open gives us with a mechanism to respond to any further deterioration to our fiscal situation, while also providing us with the option to fill positions that are essential to City operations.

In FY 2010, we will continue with the soft hiring freeze implemented in FY 2009. The soft hiring freeze will allow City staff to continue to regulate the number of new hires and further increases to the personnel budget. It will remain the discretion of departments whether or not to request to advertise and recruit for a vacant position. If departments feel it is necessary to fill a vacant position, they initiate the hiring process by first submitting a request to advertise and recruit to OMB. Each request to advertise and recruit to fill a vacant position will still be reviewed by OMB and then forwarded to the City Manager for his consideration. For the foreseeable future, positions in the public safety or social services lines of business will be filled in order to maintain the public safety and welfare of Alexandria's residents. Additionally, positions that generate revenue, assist in economic development, or are funded by grants will also be approved. Before approval to advertise and recruit for a vacant position is given, every effort will first be made to determine if one of the employees on the Reduction in Force (RIF) is qualified to fill this position.

With nearly 9.5% of the City work force vacant and 121 positions proposed for elimination in FY 2010, pressure on current employees to cover the jobs and duties these vacancies and eliminations leave behind will increase. Understanding this, departments have already begun to identify the programs and activities that are essential to their mission and should be considered priorities by staff. On the other hand, programs and activities that do not fall into this category will likely be given less attention by staff. Descriptions of departments' individual position reductions are included in their section of the budget. Further details from departments on their plans for FY 2010 are being provided at their budget work sessions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: City-wide Vacancy Totals by Department for February 2009

Attachment 2: City-wide Vacancy Report for February 2009

City-wide Vacancy Total by Department*
February 23, 2009

Department	FY 2009 Approved FTE**	Total Number of Vacant Positions	Number of Vacant Full- Time Positions	Number of Vacant Part- Time Positions	Total Annual Cost of Vacancies Not Filled	No Action as of Feb 23	Pending Requests as of Feb 23	New Positions/ Requests Granted But Still Vacant	No Action as of Feb 23	Pending Requests as of Feb 23	New Positions/ Requests Granted But Still Vacant
Circuit Court	13	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Citizens Assistance	6.8	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
City Attorney	15	1	1	0	\$249,710	1	0	0	\$249,710	\$0	\$0
City Clerk	4	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
City Manager's Office	11	1	1	0	\$77,784	1	0	0	\$77,784	\$0	\$0
Clerk of Court	23	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Code	84	14	14	0	\$915,003	14	0	0	\$915,003	\$0	\$0
Commonwealth's Attorney	29.4	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Communications Office	11	1	1	0	\$74,085	1	0	0	\$74,085	\$0	\$0
Court Services Unit	10.2	1	0	1	\$39,238	1	0	0	\$39,238	\$0	\$0
Finance	96.3	12	9	3	\$647,044	9	1	2	\$470,532	\$41,946	\$134,566
Fire	247	15	15	0	\$1,215,223	10	0	5	\$761,881	\$0	\$453,342
General Services	73	3	3	0	\$219,794	3	0	0	\$219,794	\$0	\$0
Health	18.2	3	0	3	\$138,925	2	0	1	\$109,992	\$0	\$28,933
Historic Alexandria	29.4	1	0	1	\$20,189	1	0	0	\$20,189	\$0	\$0
Housing	18.5	3	2	1	\$162,033	2	1	0	\$87,947	\$74,085	\$0
Human Resources	24.6	4	3	1	\$222,621	4	0	0	\$222,621	\$0	\$0
Human Rights	6	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Human Services	242.9	22	21	1	\$1,345,370	14	1	7	\$799,918	\$77,784	\$351,454
ITS	48.5	7	7	0	\$533,514	6	1	0	\$469,512	\$64,002	\$0
Internal Audit	2	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Library	81.9	19	0	19	\$357,781	16	3	0	\$278,448	\$79,334	\$0
MHM RSA	347.9	52	32	20	\$2,600,775	30	1	21	\$1,516,095	\$58,055	\$885,518
OMB	11	1	1	0	\$81,675	1	0	0	\$81,675	\$0	\$0
Office on Women	20.9	1	1	0	\$77,784	0	1	0	\$0	\$77,784	\$0
Planning & Zoning	53.5	2	2	0	\$163,351	2	0	0	\$163,351	\$0	\$0
Police	466.1	15	11	4	\$674,188	2	7	6	\$80,237	\$346,336	\$247,615
Real Estate	16	1	1	0	\$67,199	1	0	0	\$67,199	\$0	\$0
Recreation	200.8	45	28	17	\$2,123,624	36	5	4	\$1,609,006	\$247,377	\$267,241
Registrar	6.6	0	0	0	\$0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sheriff	219	6	6	0	\$527,646	3	0	3	\$233,115	\$0	\$220,445
TES	213	13	13	0	\$863,476	8	3	2	\$500,380	\$174,015	\$189,081
	2650.5	243	172	71	\$13,398,034	168	24	51	\$9,047,715	\$1,240,720	\$2,778,193

* The vacancy report does not include City Council and Law Library.

**FTE: 1.00 FTE represents a position working full-time at 80 hours per pay period. FTE's that are less than 1.00 represent positions that are less than full-time hours.