

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 22, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 117: BEFORE CARE SERVICE FOR SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS

This memorandum is written as an expansion to Budget Memo #70 which discussed summer program Before Care at Cora Kelly Recreation Center by opening an hour earlier, at 8:00 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m. This memo discusses the application of a similar Before Care service at all City recreation centers that offer summer programs. Specifically, information is provided on associated costs, and potential for a fee to offset the additional costs.

In FY 2008, RPCA offered Before Care service at Cora Kelly Recreation Center from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., and at Mt. Vernon and William Ramsay Recreation Centers from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. The average weekly registration for the program at Cora Kelly was 20 participants and the fee was \$6 per day. The program at Mt. Vernon Recreation Center averaged 15-20 registrants per week and had a fee of \$6 per day. Ramsay Recreation Center averaged 40 registrants per week and also had a fee of \$6 per day. The Department estimates interest to remain at the same level at the sites already offered. Patrick Henry, Charles Barrett, Nannie J. Lee, and Charles Houston Recreation Centers have not offered a Before Care program in the past.

Currently, summer recreation programs are offered at seven neighborhood recreation centers. These programs begin at 9:00 a.m. The staffing requirement of a Before Care service for summer recreation programs includes a Recreation Leader II and a Recreation Leader III. The total hourly cost of these two positions is \$31.50 per hour per recreation center. A Before Care program offered at 8 a.m. would cost \$8,820 for the seven centers over the 8 week summer program period. If the Before Care program started at 7 a.m., the City costs would increase to \$17,640.

If the City offers an enhanced recreation service such as Before Care, staff believes that the program should be designed to fully recover costs. As an example, if a \$5 per day fee were charged, there would need to be at least seven youth registered for Before Care at each recreation center to fully cover the additional costs of an 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. program. For a 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. program with an \$8 per day fee, the average weekly registration at each center for full cost recovery would need to be eight youth. Based on prior demand, it is likely that the City will be able to support these minimum registration levels and fully recover costs. Staff believes these two fee levels (\$5 per day for 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.; \$8 per day for 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.) would be appropriate and would be sufficient to recover program costs.

Actual demand for Before Care service at all the neighborhood recreation centers is unknown at this time. Although it is likely that a Before Care program at each of the City's recreation centers could recover costs, there is a small risk involved. In order to avoid implementing a service that does not succeed in recovering costs, RPCA would require advanced registration for Before Care. This would mean demand for service at each recreation center would need to be measured to determine whether a 7 a.m. or 8 a.m. start time would be more appropriate. If sufficient demand for service does not exist at a center, the City would revisit the plan to offer the service at that location and instead look at the potential for reinvesting the funds elsewhere to better maximize revenue generation. At this point, staff recommends providing funding to provide 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. Before Care service at all seven neighborhood recreation centers (\$17,640) under the assumption that these costs could be fully recovered through the fee proposed.