

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 23, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 119 : REDUCTION IN RECREATION SERVICES
VACANCY SAVINGS FOR FY 2010

This memorandum is written in response to the City Council discussion at the April 20 add-delete work session regarding an add of \$200,000 to the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities budget. This memo describes the intended use of the \$200,000 and the impact this funding has on service levels.

The \$200,000 is intended to be a partial restoration of a budget reduction described on page 17-30 of the FY 2010 Proposed Budget. Specifically, this budget reduction is a \$600,131 increase to the recreation services vacancy factor which, after the increase totals \$1.3 million department wide. The impact of such a budget reduction on RPCA is that the department is forced to hold vacant a much larger number of positions than they would otherwise (currently the department has 24.1 FTE positions being held vacant that total \$1.5 million in salary and benefits). This \$200,000 add would provide the funding necessary to fill some of those positions.

The specific positions identified by RPCA as the highest priority vacancies are the assistant directors at both Patrick Henry and Charles Barrett Recreation Centers. The annual cost of these two positions totals about \$140,000. The remaining \$60,000 of this add would fund two much needed custodial/maintenance positions that would comprise RPCA's new roving custodial crew (provides services at multiple neighborhood recreation centers).

The primary role of the assistant center directors at both Patrick Henry and Charles Barrett is to provide programming support for the after-school programs during the school year and for the drop-in summer recreation programs during the summer months. These positions are very important because they allow better overall supervision and oversight at centers with growing registration rates. The current registration for the after-school program at Patrick Henry has increased to 143 youth (from 130 last year), with Charles Barrett climbing to 98 registrants (from 80 last year). Registration at Patrick Henry has been capped and the waiting list averages about 30 youth. The average program staff to participant ratio at both these centers is currently around 20 to 1. By having the assistant director positions filled, there are options available on days when staff members call in sick or when daily attendance is heavier than normal. It is not an uncommon occurrence for daily ratios to creep up to 30 to 1. At these levels, the chance of safety or behavioral problems becoming real issues starts to become more and more probable. In addition to general program oversight, these positions are also heavily involved in developing the

creative activities in which the youth participate, and assist the center directors in overall facility management.

The roving custodial crew will be involved in a new practice for RPCA. In the past, each recreation center had its own in-house custodial staff. The Department plans to move towards a system where custodial crews cover multiple facilities as a way to realize greater efficiency. This system should allow RPCA to offer full custodial support at its facilities with fewer overall staff. Accordingly, two custodial positions were eliminated from the RPCA budget in FY 2009 in anticipation of this new procedure. Without this budget add, overall cleanliness and facility quality is likely to suffer in FY 2010.