

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 30, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #46: PROPOSED ADD-BACK OF COURT LIAISON OFFICER TO POLICE BUDGET

The Police Department's proposed expenditure reductions for FY 2010 include the elimination of the Court Liaison Officer position. It is planned that the officer in this position will be shifted to the Patrol Unit. The Court Liaison Officer position is responsible for:

- Collecting and distributing mail, paperwork (e.g. warrants, commitment orders), and other information between the Police Department, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and the Courts.
- Following up on staff requests such as securing copies of missing police reports, facilitating evidence delivery, run criminal histories, etc.
- Coordinating court appearance dates for police officers whose appearance in Court must be coordinated with their Shift work in the Police Department and days off.

This position offers significant assistance to the Commonwealth's Attorney Office and the Courts and alleviates responsibilities that would otherwise be performed by other police officers, sometimes on overtime. The Commonwealth's Attorney believes the elimination of this position will result in the following drawbacks:

- Decrease in efficiency, communication, and working relationship between the Police Department and prosecutors;
- Increase in dismissed traffic and criminal cases;
- Decrease in forfeiture of seized vehicles;
- Increase in defendants wrongly admitted to bail; and
- Increase in overtime costs due to officers summoned to testify on their day off.

As a result, the Commonwealth's Attorney is requesting and I am recommending that this position be added back to the FY 2010 budget. The savings from transferring the court liaison officer to Patrol and eliminating a new hire is \$69,478. I am also proposing an

increase in Handicapped and HOV violations (for both parking and in unauthorized use of HOV lanes) beyond what is currently proposed in the FY 2010 budget to offset this cost. Budget Memo #37 estimated that up to \$155,025 in additional revenue could be generated if these fines were increased as follows:

Police Fine Proposals				
	Current Fine	Proposed FY10 Budget	Amended Budget	Estimated Increased Revenue Amt.*
Handicapped Parking	\$200	\$300	\$500	\$60,400
HOV Parking	\$50	\$100	\$200	\$74,000
HOV Moving	\$50 for first offense; increasing to \$100, \$250, \$500 for subsequent offenses in 3 years	\$50 for first offense; increasing to \$100, \$250, \$500 for subsequent offenses in 3 years	\$125 for first offense; increasing to \$250, \$500, \$1,000 for subsequent offenses in 3 years	\$20,625
Total				\$155,025

*This represents the difference between the Proposed FY10 Budget and Amended Budget. This amount would constitute a "delete" as it would provide additional revenue when compared to the City Manager's Proposed budget.

As an additional source of funding to cover the cost of restoring this position, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office has agreed to selectively amend charging codes on cases prosecuted in General District Court, so that selected cases are charged under state statutes rather than local ordinances. These amendments will be made in order to reduce the monthly reimbursement for services to the Public Defender's Office from the City, and to shift this reimbursement obligation to the State. It is estimated that this savings will be between \$5,000 and \$7,500 per month, which is currently paid to the General District Court by the City for Public Defender representation.