

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 31, 2009
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 56: FEE-FUNDED MARKET MASTER POSITION

This budget memorandum is in response to Councilman Krupicka's inquiry regarding the ability to fund the Market Master position with fees collected from the vendors that rent stall space at the Farmer's Market held at Market Square.

The Farmer's Market held on Market Square has been in operation since 1753 and is believed to be one of the oldest continually operating farmer's markets in the country. The market is open every Saturday morning from 5:30 am to 11:00 am rain or shine all year around.

There are currently 95 permanent vendors and another 183 vendors on the waiting list. The number of temporary (weekly) vendors varies from week to week. Permanent vendors are charged \$15 per month for stall space at the Market and temporary vendors are charged \$5 per week. These rates were last adjusted in the spring of 1990 from \$10 to \$15.

Staff collects an average of \$10,000-\$12,000 per year in stall rental fees from the vendors. These funds are deposited weekly into the City's General Fund. No rent is collected during the months of January and February primarily due to the weather. The table below shows a comparison of fees charged by other farmer's markets in the City.

Alexandria Farmer's Market Fee Comparison

Name	Fees	Fees Collected
The Farmer's Market	\$15/mon (perm); \$5/week (temp)	\$12,000/yr
West End Farmer's Market	\$6.25/week for a full season; \$10/week not a full season	\$4,800/yr
King Street Gardens	\$10/week	\$300/yr
Del Ray Farmer's Market	\$5/week	\$2,000/yr

The Department of General Services is in charge of managing the Market and designates a staff person to serve as Market Master. The Market Master is in charge of assigning vendor stalls, collecting fees, assisting vendors and visitors and enforcing the City's regulations. The duties of the Market Master generally take up to 10 hours per week to perform.

In FY 2007, in the context of the budget process, General Services converted a part-time custodian position to a part-time Maintenance Renovation Inspection Specialist (M.R.I.S.) position, which, in addition to other duties, would assume the duties of the Market Master. This resulted in overtime savings of over \$22,000 compared to the previous year. In FY 2008, in the context of the budget process, this position was converted back to a part-time custodian position and transferred to the Library. As a result, an existing seasonal employee currently employed by the department, in addition to the positions other duties, assumed the duties of the Market Master this year. However, the 10 hours per week required to perform the duties of the Market Master are not separately funded this year (FY 2009) and must be absorbed by the department. Therefore, in FY 2010, General Services requested to restore the funding required for the seasonal employee to serve as the Market Master at a cost of \$25,836.

Based on the current cost to perform the duties of the Market Master (\$25,836), the fees currently collected from the vendors at the Farmer's Market annually (\$12,000) are insufficient to fully fund the position and make the Farmer's Market operation cost neutral. However, if the fees are increased from \$15 to \$30 a month and to \$10 a week for temporary vendors, these fees would fully fund the total cost of the position.