



Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Message to the Residents of Arlington County

When we adopted the FY 2016 budget in April we adopted a budget that reflects Arlington's progressive values, is fiscally responsible, fully funds the School Board's request for the 8th consecutive year, maintains programs for our neighbors who are struggling, and provides more resources for economic development in an increasingly competitive region, all while maintaining the current tax rate for residents and businesses.

We appreciate the time so many Arlingtonians took to share their thoughts with the Board. Hearing the priorities of the community was extremely important to us as we finalized the budget.

Highlights of the FY 2016 Adopted Budget include:

Arlington Public Schools – Arlington's schools are among the top in the nation, and we know our schools contribute to our community's overall success. We fully funded the School Board's request for an additional \$6.2M, adding \$19.4M in total additional on-going funding for FY 2016 and increasing APS's percentage of locally generated revenue to 46.5%.

Economic Development – Economic development is extremely important to Arlington, and as such we provided an additional \$900,000 for the department this year as well as \$400,000 in one-time funding to support tourism and TandemNSI, a public-private partnership designed to attract new entrepreneurs. In addition, the Board provided the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) with \$100,000 annually to assist in its place-making and economic development activities.

Public Safety and Court Services - We are committed to smart, efficient and strategic public safety and Court services which is why we fully funded our police, fire, and emergency management departments, added 5 positions in the Sheriff's office, provided additional funding for Drug Court, provided \$100,000 to the Circuit Court to cover an unfunded record-keeping mandate and provided a much needed salary supplement for the Public Defender's office to ensure that they can attract and retain high quality employees. We also added funding to support an animal control officer at the Animal Welfare League.

Social Safety Net - Arlingtonians are dedicated to providing for those most in need, and this budget maintains our safety net, continues funding for affordable housing programs at the FY 2015 level, fully funds the costs for the new Homeless Services Center, and enhances mental health services at the Detention Center.

Other Public Service Highlights:

- The Board unanimously approved \$200,000 to employ a new **internal auditor** in the County Board office as well as fortify the existing audit functions.
- We fully funded **multi-modal transportation** efforts throughout the County, including Metro and our bike/ped programs.
- We remain dedicated to creating a **healthy sustainable environment** for all Arlingtonians and fully funded the AIRE program.
- All members of the Board are unwavering in our commitment to **revitalize Columbia Pike and Crystal City**, and we will continue phasing in transit improvements in these

areas. New funding is provided for enhanced ART bus service in the evenings and on the weekends.

- We will not continue arts programming in Artisphere and no additional money will be allocated for Artisphere operations in FY 2016. We are working with the landlord on whether possibilities exist to use the space differently through June 2016 since the County is contractually obligated to provide utility funding for 12 months after giving notice of our intention to stop operations. **Arts and cultural offerings** remain a priority for all Board members; we've added a modest amount of funding to the Arts Grant program, and are awaiting additional information on new programs under consideration by the new Director of Cultural Affairs in collaboration with the Arts Commission.

This year's Adopted Budget keeps the values and policies of Arlington intact. The County Board is dedicated to keeping Arlington a wonderful place for all to live, work, play and learn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Hynes".

Mary Hynes
Chair, Arlington County Board