

**ARLINGTON COUNTY FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION  
REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD**

**FY 2015 PROPOSED BUDGET**

BUDGET AREA:	Public Safety
FAAC REVIEWERS:	Doug Drewry and Michael Shea
DATE OF FAAC ACTION:	March 4, 2014

**FAAC Opinion**

All four Public Safety departments are taking action to identify efficiencies and work within budget constraints to meet a rising and evolving demand for services. FAAC commends these actions, including the initiative to streamline IT functions across all four Public Safety departments by establishing an IT manager position within the Police Department.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**FAAC Opinion**

Due to Arlington County population growth, several projected performance measurements for the Police Department are getting worse. The projected number of calls for service, arrests, and DUIs are rising. Response time for felonies is projected to lengthen.

Just as is the case with other County units, the Police Department has had to restrain its spending over the past several years. Community demand for more and better services is increasing, areas such as Clarendon have increased bar crowds, grant funding sources are drying up, tactics for response to violent threats are evolving, potentially costly new technologies will affect police work, and weaponry costs are rising faster than the general inflation rate.

FAAC commends the work by the Police Department on striving for improved service delivery within budget limits. The Police Department will need to continue to identify cost saving measures, including regional collaboration with other jurisdictions. The County Board will need to ensure that its budget priorities provide for public safety as the population rises and new problems emerge. It remains essential that programs and new initiatives be carefully evaluated and that budget decisions are grounded in performance measures when they are relevant.

<b>FAAC Recommendation #1</b>			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board approve the recommendations for the Police Department contained in the County Manager’s proposed budget.			
Vote:	Yes: 10	No: 0	Abstain: 1
Comment:			

<b>FAAC Recommendation #2</b>			
If one-time money becomes available, the FAAC recommends that the County Board consider funding the Gang Activity Task Force, allowing Arlington to participate in this regional activity.			
Vote:	Yes: 5	No: 5	Abstain: 1
Comment:	Due to the closeness of this vote, FAAC intends to revisit the issue later in the budget process when Mid-Year/3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. funds are reviewed.		

<b>FAAC Recommendation #3</b>			
If one-time money becomes available, the FAAC recommends that the County Board consider requesting that the County Manager have the Police Department conduct a third-party assessment of its staffing levels, in the context of rising population.			
Vote:	Yes: 8	No: 2	Abstain: 1
Comment:			

**Future Considerations**

FAAC suggests that the County Board, looking forward, considers asking the County Manager to assess the adequacy of the Police Department budget for armory training and supplies in light of the evolving tactics on how to best address different incidents. Another area of concern that merits close watch is the pressure arising from the lively bar scene around Clarendon. In addition, emerging new technologies such as body cameras will influence police work in the next several years. FAAC suggests that the County Board ensure that forward-looking thinking and community discussions enable Arlington County to adopt the right technologies with sufficient budgetary resources available and well-designed policies in place.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**FAAC Opinion**

FAAC commends the various ways in which the Fire Department continues to work on service delivery efficiency and addressing strains from past year budget cuts, including launching a pilot program and exploring the potential for regional collaboration on logistics.

<b>FAAC Recommendation #4</b>			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board approve the recommendations for the Fire Department contained in the County Manager’s proposed budget.			
Vote:	Yes: 10	No: 0	Abstain: 1
Comment:			

<b>FAAC Recommendation #5</b>			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board request preliminary performance data from the Fire Department's Physician Assistant pilot program and comparable programs in other jurisdictions in advance of the next budget cycle so that the best options for next steps can be included in the FY 2016 proposed budget.			
Vote:	Yes: 11	No: 0	Abstain: 0
Comment:			

**Future Considerations**

Economic development in the County will affect demand for Fire Department services in different locations, and the FAAC urges the County Board to continue to use performance measures to make decisions on FTEs and standards for staffing.

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**FAAC Opinion**

The Sheriff's Office continues to operate the detention facility effectively and safely, with inmate services in mental health and education. Current staffing levels are causing a reliance on overtime costs and detention facility lockdowns that weaken morale and potentially undermine security. FAAC commends the Sheriff's Office for continuing to work on cost-saving strategies.

<b>FAAC Recommendation #6</b>			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board approve the recommendations for the Sheriff's Office made in the County Manager's budget.			
Vote:	Yes: 11	No: 0	Abstain: 0
Comment:			

**Future Considerations**

The FAAC suggests that the County Board, in future budget years, request that the County Manager develop a strategy to reduce the number of detention facility lockdowns and use of overtime pay, including a consideration of increasing the number of sworn deputy positions.

**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OEM)**

<b>FAAC Recommendation #6</b>			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board approve the recommendations for the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) made in the County Manager's budget.			
Vote:	Yes: 11	No: 0	Abstain: 0
Comment:			

**Future Considerations**

The FAAC suggests that the County Board request that the County Manager consider reporting more performance measures in the proposed budget that directly relate to OEM and its role as a coordinating unit within the Public Safety departments.