



March 30, 2017

To: MCA Board Members
From: MCA Budget & Taxation Committee
Re: FY 2018 Advertised Fairfax County Budget

Fairfax County has proposed a budget for Fiscal Year 2018 for the County and the Public Schools that is balanced, increases revenue and disbursements about 2.2% over 2017, allocates the additional money in much the same way as this year, and does not increase the real estate tax rate. Homeowners will still see some changes in their property tax bills in 2018 because, using County-wide averages, assessments of houses will increase by 0.68% and real estate taxes will increase by \$41.

Overall, the McLean Citizens Association (MCA) thinks that the Budget, particularly in funding priorities without increasing the real estate tax rate, is commendable. But for the sake of increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness, MCA reiterates views which we have expressed before.

The Fairfax County Public Schools receive 53% of the County's funds but are still about \$48 million short of meeting the School Board's 2018 budget proposal. MCA urges the School Board, as they work to balance their 2018 budget, to prioritize

- salary increases for classroom teachers to address teacher hiring and retention concerns,
- avoidance of class size increases at McLean and other schools that already have significantly larger classes than school system averages by grade level, and
- allocation of sufficient teacher positions to each middle and high school to enable principals to cap all science lab classes at 24 students, to reduce the risk of lab accidents.

The County and FCPS pension plans are than more generous than neighboring county and public school pension plans. And last year alone, they paid their pension plans \$531 million and had unfunded debt to the plans of almost \$5 billion, with both amounts growing each year. McLean Citizens Association urges the Board of Supervisors and School Board to reduce the cost of their pension plans for new and non-vested employees, including the elimination of the Pre-Social Security Supplement, to a level similar to the cost of the Virginia Retirement System hybrid pension plan, for implementation by the beginning of Fiscal Year 2019.