

City of Alexandria, Virginia
BUDGET AND FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BFAAC)

Monthly Meeting

December 2, 2025 (Rescheduled from November 18, 2025)

Via Zoom

Summary Minutes

Committee Members Present: John Ruthinoski (Chair), Randall Williams (Vice Chair), Nancy Drane (Secretary), Sonya Day, Erica Kaster, Mindy Lyle, Lauren O'Brien, Lester Simpson, Mark Tonsetic, Jake Truex

Excused/Absent: None

Staff Present: Morgan Routt, Director of the City of Alexandria Office of Management and Budget; Meghan McGrane, Budget Management Analyst

Guest: Dr. Emerald Christopher, City of Alexandria Chief Race and Social Equity Officer

1. **Call to Order: Vice Chair Ruthinoski** called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the October 2025 Meeting: Williams** made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21 meeting, seconded by **Lyle**. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
3. **Introductions of New BFAAC Members**
 - a. Lester Simpson, Councilmember Greene's representative
 - b. Sonya Day, Citizen representative
 - c. Jake Truex, Chamber of Commerce representative
4. **Presentation on City of Alexandria Budget Equity Tool - Dr. Emerald Christopher, City of Alexandria's Chief Race and Social Equity Officer**
 - a. Dr. Christopher was invited to review the City's Budget Equity Tool (BET).
 - b. By way of background, the Office of Race and Social Equity was established in 2020 as part of the City Manager's office; Dr. Christopher was appointed the Chief Race and Social Equity Officer in 2024.
 - c. Key duties are to provide research and guidance to the City Manager as he develops his budget recommendations to the Council.
 - d. The BET (which was most recently updated last year) is a set of five questions that departments complete annually during the budget process to assess how their resource allocation decisions affect BIPOC, low-income, and other communities that have experienced historic and current inequities. Currently, the office

prioritizes analysis of budget supplements (new programs or increased costs) or reductions (eliminated programs or service reductions) due to capacity. In FY26 the office did 200 separate analyses.

- e. Each department has an Equity Officer/Core Team member who leads the assessment and scoring work. The typical timeline is October through January, when reports/recommendations are shared with the City Manager as he finalizes his budget proposal. Occasionally the office has been asked by the City Manager to weigh in during the add/delete process as well.
- f. Dr. Christopher meets regularly with other chief equity officers in our neighboring jurisdictions.

5. City Council Budget Retreat Follow-ups

- a. BFAAC members who attended the City Council budget retreat summarized feedback received on BFAAC's work plan, including:
 - i. Generally, City Council seemed very receptive to BFAAC's budget guidance and work plan.
 - ii. For Memo #4 – Council suggested including a description of existing budget assessment tools and any recommended tweaks or ways to use the tools differently, especially environmental/climate tools.
 - iii. For Memo #4 – Council suggested that in our series of considerations, we include recommendations on how to assess the costs of not budgeting for something or deferring a project due to budget constraints (e.g., deferred maintenance can lead to higher costs in the future, impact of buildings not being in good enjoyment/use).
 - iv. For Memo #6 – Council asked that we consult with the City Attorney before finalizing any memo to flag legal issues or impediments that might restrict the City's ability to adjust timing or follow practices of other jurisdictions.
 - v. For Memo #6 – Council asked that we consider how our analysis intersects with the idea of biennial budgeting.
 - vi. Generally – Council expressed interest in some focus on public education and communication related to the budget, and perhaps opportunities to align City and ACPS materials and messaging.
 - vii. Finally, there was a suggestion that BFAAC could play a role in helping City Council move forward after the recent economic summit, to be determined later at the direction of Council.
- b. **Ruthinoski** will draft a memo to the City Council summarizing what we heard and confirming the contents of our work plan

6. OMB Overview of FY27 Budget Instructions & Questions

- a. City staff then provided an update on the FY27 budget development process. This included a summary of budget guidance provided to ACPS (1.5% operating increase) and City Departments (limit base budget growth to non-discretionary increases and find 1% in efficiency savings) and general guidance that supplemental funding requests (a/k/a increases) be self-funded.
- b. The presentation also included a discussion of considerations and data that inform budget changes for certain types of areas such as fee adjustments, service reductions, and supplemental spending.
- c. Finally, staff reviewed other funding considerations such as financial sustainability and management; the proposal's impact on City and Community; adherence to the City's strategic plan, Council priorities, and community needs; relevant State/Federal mandates, debt obligations, or contractual agreements; and equity and climate tool analysis.
- d. Ultimately, each City department's analysis of these considerations is incorporated into the City Manager's budget proposal presentation and the City budget book.

7. Updates and Reports

- a. Staff reminded BFAAC members that the Office of Communications & Community Engagement will join its December 16 meeting. BFAAC members suggested that the presentation cover:
 - i. an overview of budget-related communications;
 - ii. thoughts on how BFAAC can play a role or be of support;
 - iii. reactions to BFAAC's education series activities; and
 - iv. review of coordination with ACPS and the School Board re: budget-related communications.
- b. Staff also shared that Council approved its budget guidance in mid-November 2025 and that the FY27 Budget Calendar is now set and on the Council website.
- c. Staff also reminded BFAAC that a representative is needed for the Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee. **Williams** made a motion, seconded by **Ruthinoski**, that **Tonsetic** represent BFAAC on this committee. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
- d. **Williams** shared that he has applied to represent BFAAC on the IT Committee.

8. **Adjournment:** A motion was made by **Williams** and seconded by **Drane** to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 P.M.

Upcoming Meeting(s) / Important Dates:

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Status</i>
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, Dec 16, 2025 – 7:00pm	City Hall, Sister Cities Room 1101	<i>Noticed</i>
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, Jan 20, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	<i>Noticed</i>
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, Feb 17, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	<i>Noticed</i>
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, Mar 17, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	<i>Noticed</i>
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, Apr 14, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	<i>Noticed</i>
BFAAC Regular Meeting	Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 6:30pm	Lee Center, Conference Rm #4	<i>Noticed</i>

Note: Calendar items in ***bold and italic*** have changed or been added since the previous month's agenda.