



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of February 20, 2010**

DATE: February 2, 2010

SUBJECT: Authorize the advertisement of a public hearing for an increase to special event fee charges for sworn staff from \$50 to \$60 an hour. These fees are charges to groups and individuals holding events within Arlington County that require the assistance of County staff.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Advertise for a March 25, 2010, public hearing for setting an increase to special event fees from \$50 to \$60 an hour per sworn staffer.

ISSUES: Should the County increase the special event fee from \$50 to \$60 an hour per sworn staff officer?

SUMMARY: The special event fee was implemented in FY 2000 as a way to recover personnel costs associated with planning and staffing special events throughout the County. While the number of special events held within the County and the cost to support these events have increased significantly, the special event fee has never been increased. Additionally, a \$4,000 waiver was introduced in FY 2004 which further offsets the amount of personnel costs that are recovered by the fee. Therefore, a fee increase is requested in order to keep up with rising demand and personnel costs. **This fee revenue increase is not included in the County Manager's FY 2011 Proposed Budget but is being advertized to allow the County Board flexibility with revenue options for the adopted FY 2011 budget.**

BACKGROUND: Arlington County is known for its focus on neighborhood events such as Neighborhood Day, Taste of Arlington, and Planet Arlington. In recent years, Arlington County has become a sought after destination for regional and national events including the Marine Corps Marathon, the Army Ten-Miler, and numerous cycling events. These events contribute to Arlington's economy and high quality of life. However, these events require a large amount of County staff time to ensure the safety of participants and to minimize impacts on the community.

In FY 2000, a special event fee was implemented with the goal of helping departments recover personnel costs associated with staffing special events. The fee rate of \$50 per hour per sworn

County Manager: BMD/mjs

County Attorney: AM/SAM

Staff: Mark Belanger and Nicole Billman, Police Department

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staffer was designed to recover the full costs of personnel charges associated with staffing special events. Over the last ten years, personnel costs have increased, but the special event fee has never been increased. At the same time, the demand for special events in Arlington has increased dramatically. From FY 2007 to FY 2009, the number of large-scale events has more than doubled and the expenses to staff these events have increased by more than \$100,000.

Arlington's special event fees are considerably lower than neighboring jurisdictions and other service providers which range from \$50 per hour per staffer plus a 10% administrative fee to \$74 per hour per staffer. In addition, a \$4,000 waiver was added in FY 2004 to reduce event costs for local non-profit organizations that meet specific criteria. The implementation of the waiver has enabled more and smaller groups to hold events within the County, but this further reduces the amount of County staff personnel costs that are recovered by the special event fee.

DISCUSSION: Should the County increase fees for special events? The fee increase will help the County recover the full cost of staffing special events which has grown significantly (see Attachment I - Special Event Demand, Costs and Reimbursement). Additionally, a recent fee comparison shows that Arlington County's special event fee is considerably lower than neighboring jurisdictions and service providers (see Attachment I- Special Event Fee Comparison).

It is possible that increasing special events fees may discourage some individuals and groups from holding events in Arlington. However, it is important to note that the \$4,000 waiver is not affected by the fee increase so smaller groups can continue to receive the waiver if they meet the necessary criteria. Additionally, County staff are exploring ways to reduce the overall costs of holding special events by utilizing non-sworn staff such as Public Service Aides (at a cost of \$35 per hour) and even volunteers when appropriate. These actions should help make special events affordable to interested groups while maintaining the safety of participants and the community.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Police Department estimates that the special events fee increase would generate approximately \$60,000 which could be used to offset personnel costs in the staffing of special events. This fee revenue is not included in the County Manager's FY 2011 Proposed Budget.

Attachment I

Special Event Demand, Costs and Reimbursement

FY	Large Scale Events	Waivers Given	ACPD Expenses	Fees Waived**	ACPD Payments Received*	Reimbursement w/o Waiver**	Remaining Unrecovered Costs
2007	18	9	345,894	43,229	295,581	338,811	7,083
2008	38	32	566,232	127,919	241,842	369,761	196,471
2009	39	5	475,052	13,035	313,847	326,883	148,169

* Amount may include reimbursements from events held in prior fiscal years.

** The Police Department is not reimbursed for 4th of July celebrations (\$45,000 - \$55,000 per year) or the County Fair (previously \$20,000 per year, but anticipated to decline considerably in future years).

Special Event Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction/Service Provider	Hourly Rate	Billing Notes
Alexandria City	Actual Officer Cost	Actual cost averages \$55 per hour
Arlington County	\$50	Up to \$4,000 waiver for certain groups
Fairfax County	\$70	
Pentagon Police Department	\$67	
Park Police	\$74	
State Police	\$50 +	Plus vehicle cost and a 10% admin. fee