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To the Citizens of Fairfax County:

I am pleased to present to you the Fiscal Year 2011 Adopted Budget Plan. Despite these challenging economic times, our Board adopted a balanced budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1st that despite \$91.3 million in reductions over last year, maintains critical services, is sensitive to the taxpayer, and protects the quality of life we value in Fairfax County. This budget package is the culmination of an unprecedented level of community engagement.

At this time last year, our country continued to reel from the effects of the worst economic breakdown in most our lifetimes. Residential property values have continued to decline – this year, by approximately 6%. Commercial property values dropped over 18%. While the numbers are declining, we are still challenged with foreclosures.

In addition, as we began the budget process we anticipated reductions from the State as they attempted to close their \$4.2 billion budget shortfall. We continue to be challenged with increasing demands on County services from families and individuals turning to us for help with obtaining food stamps, utility assistance, rent and housing assistance, and finding employment. These dynamics all combined to challenge us to again close a projected shortfall – this time of \$257.2 million.

As we worked through our process for development and adoption of the FY 2011 Budget, I was reminded of an old story called **“Stone Soup.”** According to one variation of the story:

Tired, hungry soldiers came upon a little village. When they inquired about food, the villagers were reluctant to share their food stores, worried that their limited supply would become depleted.

And so, the soldiers set down their gear in the village square and produced a large pot. They filled the pot with water and a large stone, then set it over a fire. A few curious villagers walked over and asked what the soldiers were making. The captain explained that they were making something called stone soup, which tasted wonderful, but probably needed just a few more ingredients. He offered to share the soup with the villagers once it was finished.

One of the villagers returned and offered to supplement the soup with a few potatoes, which he diced and put into the simmering water. Another villager produced a bunch of carrots and another offered to share a few onions from her garden. These small but tasty contributions continued throughout the day.

Eventually the soup pot was full of a hearty, delicious soup. That evening, the entire village joined the soldiers in a satisfying feast of Stone Soup.

As in the story of Stone Soup, the process of closing our \$257.2 million shortfall has been one of impressive community engagement, creativity, and collaboration among County staff and our non-profit partners. Community Dialogues were held throughout the County during the fall and early winter. Throughout late February, March and early April, more than 20 Town Meetings and Forums were hosted to receive feedback on the Advertised Budget. Brown Bag lunches and Employee Budget Briefings and

Dialogues were organized by County Executive Tony Griffin and by our Unions and Employee organization. And lastly, hundreds of speakers attended three days – over 20 hours – of public hearings.

The FY 2011 plan adopted by the Board is based on a Real Estate Tax Rate of \$1.09, an increase of 5 cents. It includes a ½ cent increase in the Stormwater Service District Levy to continue addressing stormwater environmental improvements. Together, both of these rates result in a net reduction for the average homeowner's bill of \$26.93.

The Budget includes a Vehicle Registration fee of \$33.00 per vehicle for most vehicles. Most other localities in Virginia utilize this fee to provide local services. Additionally, the Sewer Service charge increases by \$0.77/1,000 gallons, from \$4.50 to \$5.27. Coupled with the Stormwater Service District Levy, this fee increase addresses aging sewer infrastructure and helps us comply with State and Federal Clean Water and environmental mandates. Our rates continue to be among the lowest in the region.

The FY 2011 General Fund (Schools & General County Combined) Budget of \$3.3 billion is a 2.7% reduction from the previous year. County salaries included no pay increases for the second year in a row.

With this budget, Fairfax County continues the investment needed to protect and enhance our primary community asset – our schools. The Fairfax County Public Schools continue to be over 53% of the County's General Fund Budget. Coupled with a positive formula change (of \$61 million) in the Local Composite Index (LCI), which is the State funding to localities, our \$1.6 billion Transfer to the Schools fully funds the School Board's requested budget and leaves them with a \$45 million balance for future Virginia Retirement System (VRS) requirements.

The FY 2011 budget is full of reorganizational changes and efficiencies that help reduce the cost of providing services, and in many, perhaps most cases, improves the delivery of those services and programs. Some of the major areas of reorganization are: Community and Recreation Services and Department of Systems Management for Human Services; Senior Services; Department of Family Services internal reorganization; Community Services Board (CSB) internal reorganization; Systems of Care; Code Enforcement; and Clerk to the Board and Planning Commission.

The Board's ongoing commitment to fund critical human services and public safety programs is evident in the FY 2011 Adopted Budget. We continue to fund our outstanding library system. When the Board made adjustments to the Advertised Budget for FY 2011, we were able to restore some of the proposed reductions to the Library System's budget, although some reduction in hours was necessary.

One of the Board's priorities is ensuring that we have livable, affordable, and caring communities and by adopting the Housing Blueprint, the Board has developed a plan to meet this objective. This budget fully funds the Priority 1 requirements of the Housing Blueprint.

Like the villagers' contributions in the story of Stone Soup, a generous level of public engagement enriched our process and has resulted in a better product. When we adopt our budget, we are investing in the priorities of our community. I am glad to have had the community at the table with us during these months and this balanced and fiscally prudent budget represents the hard work and dedication of our County staff and Board of Supervisors working on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova