



August 2, 2016

### **Pension Benefit Review - Step in the Right Direction**

At our July 26th meeting, the Board took a step towards reviewing pension costs - including a review of the changes made to the states retirement plan and the pre social security supplement (the so called second pension). No surrounding jurisdiction offers a pension or pre social security benefit as rich as Fairfax County.

### **Police Oversight - We Need to Take the Time to Get it Right**

I believe in transparency at all levels of government and transparency and accountability in our police department. However, I remain concerned that the Board of Supervisors is rushing to implement both an Independent Auditor and Citizens' Review Panel for the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) without either the details of the entities or any reasonable estimate of the costs of either programs.

### **Pokémon in the Park**

On Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, from 12 to 5 pm, I am joining with the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD), Burke Lake Park, and the Springfield District Council to bring you "Pokémon in the Park". Fairfax County residents may come enjoy the beautiful scenery and playground and learn tips to help play the game safely from the FCPD. [Click here](#) or scroll down for more information.

### **Zika Virus Informational Town Hall**

On August 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm, Fairfax County Health Department and my office will be hosting a Zika Virus Informational Town Hall Meeting at the West Springfield Government Center. Yesterday, the CDC issued an unprecedented travel advisory for pregnant women, their partners, or those expecting to get pregnant against travel to part of Miami, FL because Zika is being spread by mosquitos.

### **Burke Lake Park Sewer Line Project**

The Burke Lake Park sewer line project will be starting on August 8<sup>th</sup> through March 2017. Residents can expect occasional construction traffic entering and exiting the site from the main park entrances. More information below.

### **Pension Benefit Review - Step in the Right Direction**

At our July 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, I asked the Board of Supervisors to approve a study of our pension cost - including a review of the changes made to the Commonwealth's retirement plan and the pre-social security supplement (the so called "second pension"). Fairfax County is the only jurisdiction with a benefit like this which is essentially a County payment of social security benefits (with a guaranteed inflation increase - unlike real social security) for those that retire before social security retirement age. I had made a similar motion to add language to the budget guidance in April, but withdrew it with the promise that it would be reviewed before the end of summer. At the July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, some members of the Board argued and I agreed that we should discuss the scope of the study before hiring a consultant. The motion was amended and passed to read that the Board will discuss the tasking of a consultant at an upcoming Personnel Committee Meeting before October 2016. I believe this is a step in the right direction, but we have a long way to go.

Over the last few years, I have relayed my concerns to the Board, schools, and the public about the Pre-Social Security Benefits for both FCPS and general Fairfax County employees. No surrounding jurisdiction offers a pre social security benefit like Fairfax County. Our citizens are typically astonished by the fact that it is offered. Many believe it is unfair that they have to work to and past social security age so county workers can retire with full benefits (including a county-funded social security payment) at age 55. The benefit comes at a significant cost - about 5% for each labor dollar. This cost competes with funds for salary increases and other general fund expenditures and is of little value in attracting new employees. I believe that eliminating this practice for new employees could save Fairfax County significant funds in the future. Although we would not see the savings immediately, the long term benefits of eliminating this second pension in a workforce environment that is rapidly changing would be significant and not have any impact on our current employees. Pensions and pre-social security benefits have become even more expensive as people are living and working longer. Supervisor Cook noted that with the increase in life expectancy rates, we are paying pensions for longer than employees served the county. In addition, as the rate Fairfax County is adding new employees slows, we are getting closer to a point where we will be paying more for pensions of people no longer employed than for employees employed by the County. Fairfax County's fringe benefit rate (cost of benefits) varies from 55% to 76% of the payroll dollar and pensions are the largest component. The social security supplement is in excess of 5% alone. Local jurisdictions across the country have had well publicized issues with the sustainability and affordability of their pension plans.

In 2010, I asked for a review of pensions and the Board of Supervisors agreed and undertook a study that concluded that we could not change away from a defined

benefit plan because state law required us to provide a pension equal to or greater than the VRS (Virginia Code 51.1-800). Fast forward 6 years and the state requirements have now changed as VRS has converted to a hybrid plan. Additionally, many other local governments across the country are rethinking their approach to pension benefits. Now that the state has changed, I believe it is time we again look at our plan and consider a change to a more hybrid plan much like the state and other jurisdictions have done.

The review I asked for in 2010 was requested based on several concerns, including the diminished appeal of pensions in recruiting today's workforce and sustainability of the benefits we are offering. These concerns are even more pronounced today. There is a new generation of employees that look at benefits/pensions much differently than they did years ago when entering the work force. A new workforce where the actual salary offered, not the promise of long term benefits, is a driving factor when making employment decisions. Trends also show today's workforce are looking for benefits that are portable.

Please let me know your thoughts and I will keep you posted on the issue.

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### **Police Oversight - We Need to Take the Time to Get it Right**

I believe, and always have, in transparency at all levels of government and transparency and accountability in our police department. Most of the police officers I have spoken with also welcome oversight. That said, I remain concerned that the Board of Supervisors is rushing to implement both an Independent Auditor and Citizens' Review Panel for the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) without either the specifics of the programs or any reasonable estimate of the costs of either programs.

Over the past month, I have done my due diligence and have asked County staff numerous questions pertaining to the implementation of both forms of oversight. I have met with members of the Fairfax County Police Ad Hoc Commission's Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight to ask them questions directly. I have read the George Mason University study and listened to citizen's testimonies. I am personally not convinced that FCPD has such a large oversight problem that we must implement both an independent auditor and a citizens' review panel immediately. There is only one citizens review panel in Virginia - in Virginia Beach and it has not met since August of 2015. In 2015, FCPD did not have a single in-custody death, cruiser related crash, officer-involved shooting, or other critical incident. How would the auditor and panel spend their time and our tax dollars if we have a repeat of 2015 with no critical incidents?

I am especially uncomfortable voting on these two oversight methods without knowing the cost, both in terms of real dollars and the time it will take officers off the streets and command staff away from addressing the very real problems we are facing in the County. No one has been able to give **any** estimate of either of these costs. Since 2009, the authorized force level of our police department has dropped by 60 officers while the population of Fairfax County has increased by approximately 80,000 people.

Fairfax County is facing number of public safety issues, including the national heroin and prescription drug crisis, urbanization, human trafficking, and the threat of domestic terrorism. Would the cost of implementing one or both of these oversight methods cut into our ability to hire another police officer, human trafficking detective, or narcotics detective? It's hard to tell when there is no cost estimate.

While I fully support oversight, the devil is in the details and the cost - especially given the upcoming \$75+ million dollar shortfall in our budget. Several members of the Board seem intent on pushing all of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee into implementation by the end of the year despite the lack of details or potential cost. I think we need to take the time to get it right, both in terms of the details and the expenditure of our tax dollars. Our priority should be to keep Fairfax County the safest jurisdiction of its size in the nation. We have our police department to thank for that. We need to invest in it wisely - oversight and public confidence are components of that, but funds and officers' time are not endless and investments in the police department should be fully understood before being made.

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### **Pokémon in the Park**

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ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup>, JOIN FAIRFAX SUPERVISOR  
**PAT HERRY & FAIRFAX POLICE**

**POKÉMON**  
★ IN THE PARK ★

**FRI. AUG. 5<sup>TH</sup>, 12-5 PM**  
**AT BURKE LAKE PARK**  
7315 OX ROAD, FAIRFAX STATION

YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN SUPERVISORS PAT HERRY AND KATHY SMITH, FCPD, SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL, AND OTHER SPECIAL GUESTS FOR POKÉMON IN THE PARK

THIS IS A FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT FOR ALL AGES. ENTRY TO BURKE LAKE PARK IS FREE FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY.

THE PARK WILL BE PACKED WITH POKÉMON LURES ALL DAY FROM 12 - 5 PM. COME BATTLE IT OUT AT THE PARK'S POKÉGYMS.

ONE FREE CAROUSEL OR TRAIN RIDE PER CHILD, PROVIDED BY SUPERVISOR HERRY'S OFFICE.

POKÉMON GO SAFETY TIPS PRESENTED BY THE FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT.

FREE ICE CREAM WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL.

WATER LOCATIONS, LIKE BURKE LAKE, HAVE MORE WATER-BASED POKÉMON!

Free Train Rides

FAIRFAX COUNTY Park Authority  
CITY OF FAIRFAX  
1742  
VIRGINIA  
POLICE

EVENT SPONSORED BY SUPERVISOR PAT HERRY. NOT SPONSORED, ENDORSED, OR AFFILIATED WITH THE BRANDS OF POKÉMON OR THE POKÉMON COMPANY. BATTERED GUY OR MARIAS

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**Zika Virus Informational Town Hall**

On August 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm, Fairfax County Health Department and my office will be hosting a Zika Virus Informational Town Hall Meeting at the West Springfield Government Center at 6140 Rolling Road in Springfield. At this meeting, residents can learn more about Zika virus and how to prevent infection and transmission. Health Department staff will also discuss the agency's mosquito and human surveillance efforts and possible interventions should a locally acquired case of Zika be identified. You may also pick up Mosquito Dunks to curb mosquitos from breeding in stagnant water.

In February, the World Health Organization declared Zika virus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern due to outbreaks occurring throughout Central and South America, Mexico, the Caribbean and parts of the Pacific. Just this week we are learning the details about domestically transmitted cases in Florida. Although the virus produces symptoms in only one in five people, it is linked to severe birth defects in babies whose mothers were infected with Zika during pregnancy. There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat Zika.

To date, 33 cases of Zika virus infection have been confirmed in Virginia residents, all related to international travel. No known case of mosquito-to-human transmission has yet occurred in Virginia, although at the time of print there are 14 cases of apparent mosquito-to-human transmission in Florida and yesterday the CDC issued an unprecedented travel advisory for pregnant women, their partners or those expecting to get pregnant against travel to part of Miami because Zika is being spread by mosquitos. The CDC release can be viewed at

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/intheus/florida-update.html>

As part of its Zika response plan, the Fairfax County Health Department will be aggressively monitoring for Zika within the *Aedes* species of mosquitoes through trapping and testing; coordinating with health care providers to conduct human surveillance, testing and case management; providing free Zika protection kits to pregnant women; conducting targeted outreach and mosquito control efforts wherever local transmission of the virus is confirmed; and launching a broad public awareness campaign to highlight actions residents can take to minimize the spread of all mosquito-borne illnesses.

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### **Burke Lake Park Sewer Line Project**

The Fairfax County Park Authority will soon begin construction of approximately 7,000 linear feet of sewer line throughout [Burke Lake Park](#). This project was the subject of several public meetings held over the last year. This sewer line will connect with the proposed clubhouse and allow for future connections to existing park facilities.

Construction is expected to start on August 8, 2016 and continue through March 2017. Residents can expect occasional construction traffic entering and exiting the site from the main park entrances. Trail users can expect short duration, temporary trail closures and/or detours where necessary. The volleyball courts will be closed after Labor Day to accommodate the sewer construction with restoration of the courts to follow.

For more information, please contact the Project Manager, Eric Inman at [Eric.Inman@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Eric.Inman@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call 703-324-8698.