



REPORT

May 8, 2004 Public Forum & Additional Public Comments on

2004-2005 Budget and Four-Year Financial Plan, City of Buffalo and Other Covered Entities

**A report submitted May 12, 2004
to the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority by:**



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& Additional Public Comments
2004-2005 Budget and Four-Year Financial Plan for
City of Buffalo and Other Covered Entities**

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I. Introduction

This report by the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth (Institute), a public service program of the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, is submitted at the request of the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority (BFSA) as part of its review of the 2004-2005 budget and four-year financial plan of the City of Buffalo and other entities under review by the Authority. The report is an annotated summary of all public comments on the financial plan and budget, including those delivered at a May 8, 2004 public forum sponsored by the BFSA and convened by the Institute, and those written and online comments received by the Institute as of midnight on May 8, the deadline for submitting public comments.

Included in the report is an overview of the major themes of public input on the plan, as well as a listing of each submission that identifies the speaker and summarizes his or her comments in a series of bulleted points. Included addenda consist of copies of all handouts at the May 8 public forum as well as forum presentations delivered at the start of each of the three forum sessions. A video recording of the public forum and copies of all written testimony have also been delivered to the BFSA as a verbatim record of public commentary on the financial plan.

II. Background

Pursuant to the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority Act (Act), signed into law in July 2003, the BFSFA is required to review the City of Buffalo's four-year financial plan, revisions to the plan and related annual budgets to ensure balanced major operating fund operations and to assist the city in closing projected budget gaps.

As part of this review process, the legislation mandates that the BFSFA solicit public comment on the plans and budgets through a community or educational entity, which then must submit to the BFSFA a report on such public commentary. Specifically, Section 3857 of the BFSFA legislation¹ states:

“...prior to the approval or disapproval of the financial plan of the city by the Authority, the Authority shall request community, educational or other entity or entities to seek public input and comment relating to the city's and/or any covered organization's financial plan. Such community, educational or other entity or entities shall report to the authority on such public input and comment ten days after the city has submitted the financial plan to the authority...”

On September 6, 2003 the Institute held a public forum on the initial four-year financial plan of the City of Buffalo, and then submitted a summary report on public comments to the BFSFA for use in its deliberations on the plan. A revised financial plan was approved by the Authority on October 21, 2003.

Also according to the New York State legislation, the Authority is required to regularly review revenue estimates, annual budgets and revisions to the financial plan. On May 1, 2004, the city submitted to the Authority its revised four-year financial plan and 2004-2005 budget, including the following individual budgets which make up the city's spending plan: the city government budget, and budgets for the City of Buffalo Public Schools, Joint Schools Construction Board, Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, Buffalo Sewer Authority, Buffalo Water Board and Buffalo Municipal Water Finance Authority. In compliance with the state legislation, the BFSFA commissioned the Institute to facilitate a process for soliciting public comments on these financial documents.

¹ NYS Pub. Auth. § 3857 (2004).

III. Arrangements for Soliciting Public Input

Preparations for the solicitation of public comments focused upon making it as easy as possible for citizens and groups to submit to the Authority comments on the budget and four-year financial plan. The Institute sought to ensure that the documents were widely accessible for review, and to design an efficient, convenient and fair process for submitting public comments.

To that end, the Institute convened a public forum on **May 8, 2004** to collect public input on the budget and financial plan. The forum was held in the auditorium of the **Erie Community College City Campus (121 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY) from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** In addition to the public forum, citizens were able to submit comments through the following alternate means:

- Mail or personally deliver to Institute (Beck Hall, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214).
- Fax to the Institute (716-829-3776)
- Submit online (via the forum website, www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu) or via e-mail (bfsa-forum@buffalo.edu).
- Submit written comments at the public forum (online at a computer terminal outside the ECC auditorium, drop off written comments, or fill out a “Comments Form” (**Addendum A**) available at the forum.

At the request of the BFSA, the Institute publicized details of the public comment process and the May 8 forum as follows. A press release (**Addendum B**) was sent out to all news media outlets in Erie County on April 26, about two weeks before the forum, while a news advisory (**Addendum C**) with further details was distributed on May 5. In all, these efforts resulted in two articles in *The Buffalo News*, coverage by the news radio stations WBFO and WNED and inclusion in WGRZ-Channel 2’s online community calendar.

Also, digital copies of the budget and financial plan were posted on the official website of the BFSA (www.bfsa.state.ny.us). Hard copies of the documents were available at the main branch of the public library (1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo), while digital copies were available for review at the forum.

An informational website (www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu) created by the Institute provided information on the May 8 forum, allowing the public to submit comments through an online form, as well as view instructions for the alternate methods of offering comments. The website provided access to a digital copy of the budget and financial plan via the official website of the BFSA.



IV. May 8 Public Forum

a. Process

To facilitate public participation at the forum, the process for submitting verbal commentary was designed to be accessible, efficient, fair and clearly communicated. In addition to the forum details released to the news media and posted on the forum website, an “Information Sheet,” (**Addendum D**) outlining specific instructions for speaking at the forum or submitting other written or online comments was distributed at the forum. Several Institute staff members were present to answer questions and assist the public in submitting comments.

The daylong forum agenda was divided into three sessions:

9 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

City of Buffalo

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

City of Buffalo Public Schools/ Joint Schools Construction Board

4:10 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Other Covered Entities

*(Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/ Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency/
Buffalo Water Board/ Buffalo Municipal Water Finance Authority/ Buffalo Sewer Authority)*

The order of speakers was determined by random selection of registration cards (**Addendum E**) from an official raffle bin for each of the three sessions. Citizens could register to speak for more than one session, but were not to be called upon to speak at an additional session until all other registered speakers for that session had the chance to voice their comments a first time. Due to time limitations, this process may not have guaranteed all citizens a chance to speak. Attendance at the May 8 forum, however, was very low and all those wishing to speak were given a chance to present their views to the panel, and all were allowed to exceed the four-minute time limitation because of the extra time available. The lottery process was still employed, and the registration cards of those wishing to speak were placed in an official raffle bin on the stage and selected randomly for each of the three sessions. The names of those selected were posted on a screen visible to the entire audience.

Public comments delivered at the forum were carefully recorded by notetakers and a three-person panel, chaired by John B. Sheffer, II, Executive Director of the Institute. Joining him on the panel were William R. Greiner, faculty member and former president of the University at Buffalo, and Danis J. Gehl, Director of the University at Buffalo’s University Community Initiative. BFSA Executive Director Dorothy A. Johnson and Chief Counsel Darryl McPherson also attended the forum to listen to public comments. BFSA board members, including Chairman Thomas E. Baker, Anthony Masiello, Robert G. Wilmers, Joel Giambra and Richard Tobe, also were present for all or portions of the daylong forum. A videotape of the forum was submitted to the Authority along with this report as a verbatim record of public comments.

To provide participants with additional information about the city's financial plan and budget and potential impacts upon constituents, 20-25 minute presentations by the City of Buffalo (**Addendum F**), Buffalo Public Schools and the Joint Schools Construction Board (**Addendum G**), and other covered entities (**Addendum H**) preceded each of the three sessions. Introducing the first session, City of Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello and Finance Commissioner James B. Milroy addressed the city's budget picture for 2004-2005, including pension and health care costs and a proposed transfer of city parks to Erie County. For the second session Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Marion Canedo reviewed the school district's 2004-2005 budget and financial plan for fiscal years 2004-2005 through 2007-2008. The presentation also addressed unavoidable costs increases and the impacts of reduced spending on the school district. Following Canedo, Roy Rogers, Chief Operating Officer of Buffalo Public Schools, reviewed the structure of the Joint Schools Construction Board, which oversees a two-phase capital project totaling more than \$400 million. Before the final session Sharon West, Executive Director of the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, and Timothy Wanamaker, Executive Director of the city's Office of Strategic Planning (overseeing the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency), addressed their organizations' respective budgets, anticipated revenues and deficit-closing measures for the upcoming fiscal year. Milroy of the City of Buffalo reviewed the budget outlook for the Buffalo Water Board and Buffalo Municipal Water Finance Authority.

Throughout the forum, participants were reminded that regardless of whether they spoke at the forum, they could submit comments through any alternate method. The public was asked to limit all comments to the topic of the four-year financial plan and budget and to limit written or online comments to eight pages. Comments must have been received by the Institute no later than **midnight, on Saturday May 8**. All required fields must have been completed on online forms and e-mails, and name and address included in other written comments. No anonymous comments were accepted.

b. Participation

In total, **33** submittals to the BFA are covered in this report – an extraordinarily low number in light of the visibility and importance of the issues involved in the city's 2004-05 budget and four year fiscal plan. Approximately **17** citizens attended the forum, **nine** of which verbally voiced their opinions on the budget and financial plan to the panel. Specifically, **six** citizens spoke at the first session and **three** at the second. Additionally **five** offered written comments (either by mail or hand delivery to the Institute or at the forum) and **19** delivered their comments online (either via e-mail or an online comments form).

It should be noted that all citizens and organizations indicating the desire to speak at the forum were given the opportunity to do so and neither time constraints nor the adopted process excluded any speaker.

V. Public Comments on the City of Buffalo's Four-Year Financial Plan and 2004-2005 Budget

The following summary of all public comments received by the Institute in reference to the 2004-2005 budget and four-year financial plan of the City of Buffalo and other entities under the Authority's review is presented in two parts:

- (1) A narrative summary of the primary themes emerging from the public comments, and
- (2) A chronological summary of the specific points made in each submittal, whether derived from oral comments at the May 8 public forum or from online or written comments.

In total, the chronological listing includes all 33 submittals, some of which are duplicative of oral and written comments. Although attendance at the public forum was low, the collection of comments represents diverse perspectives and several common themes.

It is important to understand that the following summaries are designed to portray a fair and accurate synopsis of what was actually said or written in the public comments. It is not an attempt to provide a full and balanced analysis of any given issue or proposal.

a. Primary Themes Emerging from Public Comments

As previously indicated, only 33 citizens took the opportunity to submit comments at the May 8 forum or through alternate means. This is in contrast to 129 submittals for the first BFSA forum convened on September 6, 2003. It is more difficult, therefore, to identify patterns or themes which emerge from the smaller base of comments. The following represents a summary of the primary threads that ran through the individual submittals.

Quality of Life and Relationship to Economy. Similar to the forum in September, several citizens spoke to the need for maintaining and improving the quality of life in the City of Buffalo and the importance of such issues for the city's economy. They asserted that, in order to thrive in the future – to keep existing residents and businesses here and to attract new ones – the city must invest in quality of life services such as parks, senior centers, cultural services, recreations centers, libraries and education. These amenities create strong neighborhoods that offer attractive areas to develop small businesses, which more than one citizen called the key to our economy in the future.

One resident reviewed the proposed Tree Master Plan which is now incorporated in the city's comprehensive plan. It was suggested that implementation of the tree plan not only would have a beneficial impact on the beauty and aesthetics of the city environment, but would also have useful fiscal implications by limiting the city's exposure to liability and enhancing the city property tax base. Concern was expressed about maintaining a focus on city reforestation and the Tree Master Plan if the city parks are transferred to Erie County, particularly trees on city streets and other areas not transferred to the county if no parks or forestry positions are left in the city.

In general, it was expressed that the key to a strong city is quality neighborhoods that are livable and vital. Several residents indicated concern about the proposal to transfer city parks to the county and one citizen offered a lease arrangement as a preferable alternative rather than an outright transfer. Also, one citizen expressed concern about the City of Buffalo's proposal to contract with nonprofits to administer senior centers, which could reduce the quality and accessibility of important city services.

Education. The theme of the importance of quality education was a fairly consistent thread throughout many of the comments offered. In essence, it was asserted that improving schools will help build the population base of the city, reduce dropout rates, assist minority and disadvantaged residents, improve quality of life, and aid in business development in the city. This will be important to remove barriers to employment and success later in life. Statistics were cited that demonstrate the current dilemmas in, for example, teen pregnancy rates, crime, drop out rates and small business development. It was suggested that a sharing of one percent of county sales tax with the city specifically earmarked for school aid could substantially assist with education needs in the city.

Concern was also expressed that the current model required by the BFSa does not fit with the timetable for state aid determinations and borrowing decisions. It was suggested that the BFSa allow a "nuanced approach" for the city schools budget process that would authorize the Board of Education to adopt a final budget that includes borrowing only after state aid decisions have been made.

It was further suggested that the BFSa should provide regular, specific information to members of the Board of Education on the status of the BFSa, its mission, responsibilities, and the current fiscal picture as it applies to education. This is particularly important in light of the recent election of several new school board members.

Opposition to Proposed Elimination of Adoption Services at City Animal Shelter.

Over one-third of the citizens submitting comments focused on the proposal in the city budget to eliminate adoption services at the City Animal Shelter. The opinion was consistently expressed that the change would be counterproductive from both a fiscal and humane perspective. It was also asserted by several citizens that the proposal will significantly increase the number of stray dogs throughout the city. It was also observed that elimination of the adoption program violates the city charter and that the resulting level of service could violate state law governing standards of care for animals. Many of those commenting also suggested that volunteer services would be available to assist the shelter and adoption program if the budget proposal is discarded.

Union Concerns. A union representative offered the opinion that the city's public employee unions are being left out of the decision-making process of the BFSa and the city itself. It was suggested that a series of cost-cutting proposals have been submitted to the Authority and city, yet have not been given serious consideration. It was asserted that there are alternatives to layoffs, outsourcing and wage freezes that would be effective in saving the city millions of dollars. It was also suggested that unions are eager to be cooperative in steps that could achieve significant savings in health care and insurance costs, but that such steps should be considered in the context of collective bargaining and not independently.

Some other residents expressed concern about retiree pensions and health insurance coverage. The thought was expressed by several residents that there is an attempt to balance the city's budget on the backs of those who are least able to carry the burden: children, retirees and senior citizens, blue collar workers, minorities and disadvantaged residents. It also was suggested that the proposed wage freeze, coupled with an increase in user fees and taxes, imposes a disproportionate burden on city employees who are forced to live in the city.

Finally, it was called especially punitive to enact a wage freeze on workers at the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority. These workers are federally-funded, and as such the money saved through the freeze will not go into the city's budget, but rather will be entered into surplus at the BMHA. Therefore, a freeze on this particular sector of workers will not save the city one dollar.

It should be noted, however, that one resident specifically supported the wage freeze for city employees. It was asserted that the government is out of proportion with the decreasing population and that the public sector needs to be run more like a business.

City Revenues. Several residents suggested that additional revenues and innovative approaches must be identified, rather than only looking for cost-cutting solutions to the city's fiscal dilemma. Recommendations included: sharing of the extra one percent sales tax; participating with other cities in a healthcare consortium; reduction of Common Council member salaries to pre-raise levels; city-based lotteries and gaming; active pursuit of past-due water and garbage bills; greater attention to heritage tourism; reform of the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority; elimination of unfunded state and federal mandates; termination of unrealistic union contracts; development of small business to increase the tax base; and reduction of the BFSA budget.

Process Concerns. Several residents were critical of the processes employed by the BFSA and/or the city itself. It was asserted that the meeting and processes of the Authority should be more transparent and improved publicity should be given to forums such as the May 8 event. It was suggested that the level of citizen input and participation in the BFSA process is very inadequate.

Similar concerns were expressed regarding the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority and the manner in which business is conducted and decisions are made. It was also suggested that the city is not realistically assessing the potential of volunteers. As an illustration, some residents asserted that more volunteers could be used in the process of adoption services for the Animal Shelter. Others maintained that it is incorrect to assume that increased volunteers can substitute for city workers in places like senior centers.

b. Specific Comments (in chronological order)

1. Oral Comments at Public Forum

Session 1: City of Buffalo

Elizabeth Berry, President, Save Our Libraries, #1

- Services that contribute to quality of life and are not extras; they are essentials
- We must maintain and invest in quality of life services such as parks, recreation centers, senior centers, education and libraries for the city to thrive over the long-term
- At least one union in the city is still waiting for a contract at a time when education should be a priority; if we can't pay city workers, why are we giving money to nonprofits?
- Investment in big business isn't the answer; successful cities listen and take care of residents – corporate welfare has not worked for Buffalo and never will
- We can revitalize the city by providing a good quality of life to citizens, including children; quality of life is the bottom line and needs to be the focus of revitalization efforts

John Klukowski, Sr., Save Our Libraries, #2

- Also vice chair of South Buffalo Chamber of Commerce and a businessman
- Key to the city are neighborhoods that are strong, livable, and viable
- Libraries, schools, cultural assets are all needed for strong neighborhoods
- More neighborhood businesses – small businesses – are needed; these must be key component of the region's economic growth and development
- We throw money at big business and sports teams to spur economic growth, but that's not working, and we can no longer rely on heavy industry
- Empty storefronts don't generate tax revenue for the city, so fill them
- Don't let the county take away the city's assets
- Closing our neighborhood libraries will force people out of the city

David Colligan, Buffalo Green Fund, #3 [See also Written Submissions]

- Involved in the creation a tree master plan for Buffalo that has been adopted and incorporated in the city's comprehensive plan
- The tree master plan calls for reforestation over a 10-year period and the maintenance of hazard trees which create liability, so maintaining these hazard trees will save city money over long-term
- Trees increase property values from 10 to 20 percent, thereby enhancing the tax base and generating revenue for the city without tax increases
- The tree plan requires just a small forestry staff, with the contracting out of work through competitive bidding; implementation costs decrease in out years
- Support the transfer of parks to the county, but concerned that the tree master plan won't be implemented

- Trees along streets aren't part of parks; these still need to be maintained but it is uncertain if they will be after parks are transferred to the county and the city workers who took care of them are eliminated
- Two-thirds of the Erie County Legislature is suburban, so we must guarantee that services in Buffalo will be maintained
- Reforestation must be part of the guarantee, as its part of the adopted plan and it will minimize city liability while enhancing city tax base and bond ratings

Valerie Niederhoffer, #4 [See also Written Submissions]

- Buffalo is a very user-friendly place, with accessible officials
- Buffalo should be negotiating with Niagara Mohawk to reduce bills for the city
- Outside forces have contributed to the city's fiscal problems
- Staff for the BFSa, Mayor's advisers all get "nice salaries"
- Join with other cities on a healthcare consortium
- Reduce Common Council salaries to pre-raise levels
- Who will distribute disabled tags?

Jack O'Leary, #5

- Retired firefighter
- On city disability pension and worried about the city, its citizens and myself since my pension and health care have been threatened
- These are threatening times and it doesn't look like the fire department will get help from the state; the working man is "getting screwed"
- Please save our city, its citizens and its retirees
- BFSa needs to take the bull by the horns and do what's right, even if this includes going to court to right wrongs; don't take funds from retirees or firefighters who are not paid out of proportion to the risk their jobs entail

Joe DiCenzo, #6

- Resident of Lackawanna, here because as goes Buffalo so goes Lackawanna next
- Seek legislation for cities of a certain size to have their own lotteries and gaming
- Take campaign funds from elected officials and divert them to the city by having the political fund-raisers undertake a campaign to "Save the City of Buffalo"
- Disappointed in the number of people at the forum; not many elected officials in attendance either

Session 2: Buffalo Public Schools/Joint School Construction Board

William Travis, President, AFSCME Council 35 & AFSCME Local 264, #1

- President of AFSCME Council 35, an umbrella for three unions (Building Inspectors, White Collar, and Blue Collar – including some in the school district) with a total workforce of over 2,000
- AFSCME has a history of cooperating with the city on issues such as health insurance, water managing systems and sewers, which together have saved the city millions and millions over the years
- Submitted a plan to the city and BFSa last August with no response yet

- We are part of the solution to city's fiscal problem, but can't help if left out of the decision making
- Most of our members are city residents; we believe there are alternatives other than layoffs, outsourcing and mergers; our invitation to discuss these alternatives stands
- Collective bargaining negotiations can help the city achieve savings in health and medical
- Disagrees with the wage freeze, particularly as applied to employees at the BMHA where the savings won't be returned to city coffers since BMHA workers are paid through federal funds; here the freeze was punitive and it significantly hurts families
- Wants to sit down with city and BFSA and work out a solution together

Arthur Eve, Former Deputy Speaker, New York State Assembly, #2

- Brought a series of articles that have appeared over time about the Buffalo schools situation and the "one percent solution" including, "Enrichment just a memory as schools struggle to survive," "Buffalo schools brace for impact of layoffs," and "Downturn in economy goes easier on college educated workers"
- Sponsor of the legislation that allowed the county to keep the one percent of the sales tax; it was clear between Mayor Griffin and County Executive Rutkowski that once the situation was settled the one percent would be shared
- If the BFSA does anything else, they should help the school system to produce quality students, reduce the dropout rates, and improve testing
- Need to improve schools to bring people in from the suburbs
- Education is key to getting minorities into business development
- Mandatory Regents diplomas hurt children who want to enter into trades and just need a local diploma
- Federal policy also hurts local education policy, especially No Child Left Behind Act
- Kindergarten is key, including full day with reasonable class sizes
- Highest teen pregnancy rate in the state for 36 years; 62 percent of new HIV/AIDS cases in Buffalo are black women; this ties into education – "You're killing us" with lack of resources and education in the schools
- Get a piece of the one cent sales tax and get it into the schools; hire more teachers and reduce class sizes with that money from the one percent
- \$90 million would have come into the schools and \$100 million into the city if a portion of the one percent sales tax was shared after the bonds were paid off that the one percent was enacted to cover
- Of the 21 young people murdered this year in Buffalo, 20 were black – the common thread was lack of education in both those being murdered and those doing the murdering; more cops are not going to stop crime – we need to stop the feeder system, which is poor education
- Suburbs took the reduction in county property tax and raised their school taxes but Buffalo couldn't, and our urban districts finish at the bottom of the region's school districts
- Disappointed that more BFSA members aren't here today; that shows that they don't think public education is a major issue
- Helped organize the Citizens Advisory Council on Education, which meets weekly at Langston Hughes Center with a goal of developing a plan to improve the quality of education; working to develop one such council for every school

Donald Van Every, At-Large Member, Board of Education, #3

- Here to ask forum panel to recommend that the BFSA allow “nuanced approach” for city school budget process that would allow the Board of Education to adopt final budget that includes borrowing only after state aid decisions have been made
- The Board of Education is completely opposed to adopting a spending plan that includes borrowing before state aid decisions have been made, as it may be detrimental to the amount of state aid that is doled out to Buffalo
- The current model required by the BFSA just doesn’t fit with the timetable for state aid determinations and the borrowing decisions that should follow

Session Three: Other Covered (City) Agencies

No speakers for Session Three

2. Online and Written Comments

Anonymous, 4/22/04

- Fully support pay raise freeze for city employees
- Unions have Buffalo, as well as the region, in a “stranglehold” that is killing the region
- Our local officials refuse to run the government like a business and treat the tax rate like a blank check
- Studies show that government is out of proportion with our shrinking population as well as our needs
- While layoffs make more sense, resistance limits this option

Beverly Montalvo, 5/3/04

- Support the proposed budget
- The wage freeze, however, coupled with the increase in user fees and taxes, imposes a disproportionate burden on city employees who are forced to reside in the city
- Without pay raises, how can city employees keep up with increases in water fees and property taxes, which have already increased significantly not too long ago
- In consideration of this burden on city employees, the residency requirement should be reconsidered and city employees should no longer be forced to reside here

Timothy Andrichuk, 5/4/04

- Homeowner in Buffalo
- The fees I pay for water and garbage pickup are unreasonably high for the amount of water I use and garbage I generate
- City should go after those with past due bills – turn off their water and stop picking up their garbage
- Stop increasing rates for paying customers such as myself who use minimal service

Tracy Doldan, 5/5/04

- Horrified about the plan for the Buffalo Animal Shelter
- The plan has not been well thought-out

- It's ridiculous to stop adoptions and euthanize animals after five days; this is not the solution
- The city's plan will significantly increase the number of strays running throughout the city
- There are so many animal advocates in the city who are more than willing to help the city address this issue

Lorraine Armatys, 5/5/04

- Extremely upset by the Mayor's proposal to eliminate adoption services at the City Animal Shelter
- The shelter already operates with a skeleton crew and volunteers assist with the care of animals and adoption services
- These services generate revenue for the city
- Without these services, revenue will be lost and the cost associated with euthanasia will increase
- Asking the Common Council, in voting on the proposed budget, to act as a voice for those who can't speak and help the staff and volunteers at the shelter find homes for those animals that are adoptable and whose only crime was being born in Buffalo

Kerry Neaf, Volunteer, City Animal Shelter, 5/5/04

- As a long-time volunteer at the City Animal Shelter, I can tell you that the shelter's small group of staff and volunteers have done an exceptional job with the resources they have; the atrocities Donn Esmonde writes about are untrue
- The \$150,000 that would be saved by ending the adoption program could be trimmed without killing anything by taking away city employee cell phones and take-home cars
- The SPCA, with its own limited capacity, is not a viable alternative to the city's problem
- Eliminating the adoption program will increase the number of strays, which could skyrocket even more if State Assembly Bill 10169, which requires dog owners to carry liability insurance on their dogs, becomes law
- Eliminating adoptions will also decrease licensing fees, a source of revenue to the city, while at the same time increasing the costs associated with euthanasia which run about \$10 per animal
- Don't eliminate the shelter at a time when adoptions are on the rise and the shelter has gained the support of several local animal rescue organizations

Clara M. Miller, Shelter Helpers, 5/5/04

- The proposed cut to the City Animal Shelter makes no sense financially, legally, morally or ethically
- The proposed budget assumes shelter revenues will remain the same when in fact they will decrease with the loss of adoption fees, vaccination fees and licensing fees
- The proposed budget also assumes animal control costs will remain constant when in fact they will increase due to costs associated with carcass disposal and the number of stray animals
- All volunteer labor at the shelter will further be lost; these persons not only work without any pay and benefits but have been vital to raising funds and supplies for the shelter

- Eliminating the adoption program also violates the city charter
- Program cuts will produce conditions that are cruel and inhumane, in violation of animal neglect and cruelty laws

Rose M. LaJudice, Volunteer, City of Buffalo Animal Shelter, 5/6/04

- Volunteer at the City Animal Shelter for two years, along with a group of about 24 active volunteers
- The adoption program generates money for the city through adoption and dog license fees
- Without any alternative in place by July 1, the number of strays will skyrocket, increasing the public danger of dog bites
- Adoptions at the shelter have increased since the shelter began posting pictures of adoptable pets on www.petfinder.com, at no cost to the city
- Go to this website; take a look at the faces this budget will give a death sentence to

Laura Lautner, Canine Capers Dog Daycare, 5/6/04

- Please vote no to the layoff of employees at the Buffalo Animal Shelter
- The shelter is urgently needed and the adoption program must continue
- Please don't euthanize hundreds of dogs in an attempt to balance the budget

Pamela M. Rose, 5/6/04

- Appalled at Mayor's proposal to cut adoption program at the Buffalo Animal Shelter
- The Mayor seems to be under the mistaken assumption that funds generated from the program's operation will continue to flow into city coffers after the program is terminated
- The Mayor also fails to account for the costs such a radical step will generate which will far outweigh any benefit
- The program's elimination will also result in the loss of volunteers who are helping to generate dollars for the shelter
- A policy calling for automatic euthanasia is unacceptable; all forms of life must be respected and our leaders need to set an example
- I and many other volunteers stand ready to assist the city find a creative and humane solution to the problem

Joie Celano, 5/6/04

- Horrified by the proposal to cut the budget for the City Animal Shelter
- Because the city hasn't been able to manage its finances, all animals will be killed after five days
- I'm ashamed to say I live here; Where are the ethics and morals?

Dawn Weinbaum, 5/6/04

- Upset by the proposed budget for the Animal Shelter and the policy calling for automatic euthanasia after five days
- Five days isn't long enough for a pet owner to relocate a pet that gets loose and ends up at the shelter
- Both dogs I adopted from the SPCA, one of which is a visitation dog that is taken to nursing homes, had been there for more than five days

Theresa Zielinski, 5/6/04

- Disgusted with the proposed budget for the City Animal Shelter
- Animals should not have to suffer because of the city's poor fiscal management
- Where is the value in life in a policy calling for automatic killing after five days?
- I'm holding the BFAA accountable for making a decision that is both ethically and morally sound; if you don't, you should be charged with animal neglect and cruelty

Craig Lipp, 5/7/04

- Strongly opposes the closing of the animal shelter
- The shelter is a valuable resource
- There must be some other cut that can be made so that the shelter can be kept open

Richard D. Kern, 5/7/04

- Although there are approximately 25,000 housing vacancies in Buffalo, BMHA has a \$59 million budget next year to house approximately 3,500 households, at taxpayer expense
- Appears to be a silent consensus that an obviously obsolete agency, long known for its corruptions and unaccountability, won't be publicly discussed or reformed
- BMHA leverages concentrated and deepening poverty into patronage jobs and developer profits, following a pattern of "remodel-then-demolish"
- BMHA operations are virtually devoid of any opportunity for citizen participation or input
- A metropolitan housing authority would go a long way towards dispersing poverty throughout the region; there's no mechanism for even discussing this progressive option that's being pursued in other regions
- BHMA continues to thwart opportunities to sell the politically controlled and racially discriminatory Marine Drive Apartments, even though the sale offers an opportunity to maintain affordable, lakeside housing while generating tax revenue for the city

Valerie Niederhoffer, 5/8/04 [See also Oral Comments, Session 1, Speaker #4]

- Volunteers cannot run senior centers without help from city employees
- The Mayor should share advisors with the County Executive to save money
- When is the city going to fine people for littering and not shoveling?
- Rumor has it that the Botanical Gardens will get rid of its volunteers and hire paid workers instead
- The Mayor should lead Buffalo's seniors on trips to Canada to get reduced price drugs

Christine Olen, 5/8/04

- Employee of Dog Days of Buffalo
- As an employee of a dog daycare and training facility, and a dog owner, urging additional consideration of the cancellation of the adoption program at the Buffalo Animal Shelter
- The primary concern is the fate of the animal shelter dogs
- The trickle down effect on the pet care industry should also be examined, as 50 percent of the dogs at Dog Days are rescue dogs

- There will also be a burden on other vet clinics and other communities' shelters that already have limited space
- The most promising option is to increase the number of dog licenses the city issues, which will in turn raise revenue that can be used for the shelter's adoption program (over 50,000 city dogs are estimated to be unlicensed)
- The SPCA can help to set up "designated licensing areas" to generate revenue, possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars
- A rise in licensing fees can also generate additional revenue
- Many owners don't register their dogs due to restrictions insurance companies place on coverage for owners of pit bulls, rottweilers, etc.; the city and SPCA should push them to ease these restrictions
- More strays on the street can lead to biting incidents, or dogs being picked off the street to participate in dog fighting, which seems to be a growing problem
- Imagine being an animal control officer faced with constantly having to euthanize happy, healthy animals because there is no adoption program for them

Florence Johnson, At-Large Member, Buffalo Board of Education, 5/8/04

- Please provide a service for all Board of Education members – especially new members – on the status of the BFSAs, its mission, its responsibilities and the Board of Education's spending plan
- When the Board of Education does this for new members, it is viewed as self-serving
- The sooner you can provide this service, the better

Hillary Burke, 5/8/04

- While money needs to be saved, plans for future improvements that will bring more revenue into the city are the key
- Buffalo should provide money in the city budget to create future revenue, and should use a small amount of the budget to clean up the river park near the Michigan Street bridge
- Heritage tourism based on our historic ambiance is a growing industry, and tourism is the second largest industry in the nation; if Buffalo hopes to survive it must preserve and grow our assets in this area, change perceptions, and promote Buffalo as the wonderful city that it is
- Those we attract will see our quality of life and want to come back again, and maybe even move here
- Heritage tourism is far more unique and deeper than cultural tourism
- Offer my company, The REAL Buffalo, to help promote Buffalo affordably
- Since those charged with promoting the city and developing business here have been failures, they should be replaced
- Instead of laying off teachers, police, and firefighters, lay off bosses/leaders/people who do not do their job or who weren't hired based on their expertise; with the BFSAs in place, do we need a mayor?
- Take the money it costs to demolish a house and give it to low income families who are interested in rehabilitating these homes; don't tear down beautiful, long lasting homes in the city to build new in the suburbs

David J. Colligan, Reforest Buffalo, 5/8/04 [See also Oral Comments, Session 1, Speaker #3]

- Transfer of city forester position to county with the parks department could be a financial disaster for Buffalo
- A 2001 citywide tree survey identified over 3,000 priority one and two hazard tree removals and over 12,000 priority one and two hazard prunings which are addressed in the Tree Master Plan adopted by the city planning board
- Eliminating the city forester position could lead to skyrocketing contracting costs for tree work done on an emergency or “as needed” basis
- More costly is the liability associated with hazard trees; one case of bodily injury could be worth more than the city’s entire annual tree budget
- Retaining a forestry professional has financial benefits; it has leveraged almost \$500,000 in grants and private donations for tree plantings and another \$500,000 in in-kind services over the past five years
- Trees also enhance neighborhood beauty which adds to the city tax base

Carol Tutzauer, 5/8/04

- Oppose cuts to the Buffalo Animal Shelter for two reasons: (1) *essential* services won’t be provided and (2) proposed reductions will have a detrimental financial impact overall
- Best practices require one animal control officer per 18,000 residents; Buffalo should have 16 but only has 6 meaning current staffing levels are already seriously underfunded
- Best practices also recommend spending of at least \$4 per capita; the proposed budget is wholly inadequate by this standard, particularly since most of budget goes for vermin control rather than animal control
- Proposed staffing levels also violate the city charter which requires a director and at least one animal control officer, licensed veterinary technician, clerical employee and kennel attendant; moreover, the city charter also requires Buffalo to operate an adoption program which includes spaying and neutering services
- Eliminating adoptions will eliminate the revenue generated through the program, including licensing fees which provide the city with an ongoing revenue stream
- Increases in revenue generated by the shelter are possible if operational changes are made such as allowing vaccines to be purchased directly and administered in-house
- Revenues would also increase with increasing compliance with dog licensing requirements; approximately 10,000 out of 50,000-60,000 dogs in Buffalo are licensed
- Program costs could be decreased if the city funded its spay/neuter program, as required by the city charter; these programs return \$3-\$5 within 5 years for every \$1 spent now
- An increase in the number of strays, which will breed indiscriminately and increase exponentially in population, will not only increase pressure on shelter capacity but increase bite cases and calls, disease outbreaks, garbage problems, etc.

Richard Fontana, Lovejoy District Representative, Buffalo Common Council, 5/8/04

- Concerned about the parks department section of the budget, or lack thereof
- Will propose merger through a lease arrangement rather than a give away of city assets
- The lease will include language protecting union rights, so hopefully their support will follow
- Although many county legislators are asking the Council to not support the plan at this time, I'm hoping consensus can be reached with proper airing of the issues in committee
- Let's work together to solve the financial issues facing us all

W. Morgan Smith, 5/8/04

- Buffalo's fundamental problems are largely external, and it's impractical and enormously destructive to force the city to find internal solutions to all of these problems
- Additional sources of revenue are needed; progressive taxation at federal level, as well as an end to unfunded state and federal mandates must be part of the solution in raising additional revenues and curbing increasing expenditures
- City can do its part by terminating unrealistic union deals, tying jobs and salaries to ability and performance and improving management practices, but no amount of cuts in services such as parks will get us where we need to be
- Citizens can do their part by becoming more self-sufficient and providing services such as neighborhood cleanups and maintenance of public areas
- Urge BFSA to give equal or greater weight to proposing, advocating for, and securing additional revenues for Buffalo – other than loans and property taxes – as it cuts the budget

David Gardner, 5/8/04

- Furious you had a public meeting that no one knew about; that's why nobody came; firefighters, unions and city residents are dying to give you input
- Please reschedule this event
- BFSA's behind closed door "planning meetings" should be ended immediately; even if don't want public participation at least let people attend
- BFSA appears to have a hidden, union busting plan
- Why not go after political favoritism that plagues the city
- The little amount of citizen input that goes into BFSA decisions is just horrendous

VI. Post-Forum Process

This report, in addition to verbatim copies of public comments (videotape of public forum and hard copies of online and written comments), will be delivered to the BFSA at their board meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2004. At this time, Institute Executive Director John B. Sheffer, II, also will orally present the report and its findings to the BFSA.

Similar to the budget and financial plan and details regarding the public forum, wide distribution of and accessibility to this report is useful. To that end, with the consent of the BFSA, the Institute will post the report on the BFSA website (www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu). Also, it is our understanding that the City of Buffalo will air the entire forum on the city's government access channel (Channel 21 in the City of Buffalo) several times during the next month. The public forum website, including access to this report, and a link to the official BFSA website and actual budget and financial plan, will be available for the foreseeable future.

VII. ADDENDA

- A. Comments Form**
- B. News Release, April 26, 2004**
- C. News Advisory, May 5, 2004**
- D. Information Sheet**
- E. Registration Card**
- F. City of Buffalo Presentation**
- G. Buffalo Public Schools/JSCB
Presentation**
- H. Other Covered Entities' Presentations**
- I. One copy of the videotape of the
forum and all written and online
comments will be submitted to the
BFSA**

ADDENDUM A

ADDENDUM B

Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority

News Release

For Release: Immediate
(April 26, 2004)

Contact: Rachel M. Teaman (716-829-3777 or rmansour@buffalo.edu)
Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth
(This contact is for purposes of this release and the May 8 public forum only)

BFSA ANNOUNCES MAY 8 PUBLIC FORUM ON CITY OF BUFFALO AND COVERED AGENCIES' FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET

UB Institute will Convene Session at ECC-City Campus

Buffalo, NY – The Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority (BFSA) announced today it will convene a public forum to solicit comments on the four-year financial plan and 2004-2005 budget of the City of Buffalo and other city agencies under review by the Authority.

Consideration of public comments is part of the Authority's intensive evaluation of city financial documents. The review process will take place between the release of the 2004-2005 budget and four-year financial plan on May 3 and the deadline for a report by the Institute 10 days later, as required by state legislation.

The forum will be held on **Saturday May 8, 2004** at the **Erie Community College City Campus (121 Ellicott Street, Buffalo)** from **9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** The Authority has commissioned the University at Buffalo's Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth to run the forum and assist the public in submitting comments on the financial documents to the Authority.

The Institute will convene the public forum as well as collect comments through alternative methods (see below). Based on all submitted comments the Institute will prepare a summary report for the Authority for use in its deliberations on the financial plan and budget. The forum also will be videotaped and submitted to the Authority as a verbatim record.

The Institute held a similar public forum on the City of Buffalo and covered agencies' initial four-year financial plan on September 6, 2003 and submitted a summary report to the BFSA.

BFSA chair Thomas Baker said the city will make its budget and four-year financial plan accessible to the public upon their release. In addition to steps taken by the city to make the financial documents available to the public, the BFSA website (www.bfsa.state.ny.us) will link to the financial documents as well as provide specific information on the May 8 forum.

Unlike similar financial authorities in Nassau County or the City of Troy, the BFSA is required by legislation to convene a public forum as part of its review processes.

“The public’s perspective on the financial plan and budget is a valuable part of the process,” Baker said. “We look forward to including the Institute’s report in our deliberations.”

Executive Director of the Institute, John B. Sheffer, II, said preparations for the forum, similar to the September 6 forum, are focused upon making it as easy as possible for citizens and groups to make their views known to the BFSA.

“Citizens have several options for submitting comments for inclusion in our summary report to the BFSA, including verbally at the forum, online and through mail or hand delivery,” Sheffer said. The Institute has created a website (www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu) where the public can access information on the May 8 forum and submit comments on the financial documents.

“Although the state has allowed for a very short period of time for this entire process, the BFSA has asked us to make citizen participation in the process convenient and accessible,” he continued.

Sheffer will chair the forum and, along with two other panelists, listen to the public comments and assist in summarizing them in the report to the BFSA. The forum will be divided into three parts:

9 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

City of Buffalo

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

City of Buffalo Public Schools/Joint Schools Construction Board

4:10 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Other Covered Entities (Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/ Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency/ Buffalo Water Board/ Buffalo Municipal Water Finance Authority/ Buffalo Sewer Authority)

Each session will commence with brief presentations by the city and related agencies, and then citizens will be given the opportunity to comment. Each speaker will be given four minutes to present their views. Citizens may register to speak for more than one session, if time allows. As the opportunity to speak at the forum is not guaranteed, additional methods for submitting comments on the four-year financial plan and 2004-2005 budget are available:

- Online (www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu)
- E-mail (bfsa-forum@buffalo.edu)

- Mail or personally deliver comments to the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth (Beck Hall, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214)
- Hand deliver comments to Institute staff at the public forum (Comment forms also will be provided at the forum)
- Fill out an online comments form at a computer terminal stationed outside the ECC auditorium on the day of the public forum

Comments submitted at the forum or through other methods must be limited to the topic of the financial plan and budget and must be submitted to the Institute no later than **midnight on Saturday, May 8**. Written comments should be no longer than 8 pages.

The ECC auditorium is handicap accessible and citizens with special needs may contact the Institute at 829-3777 to discuss potential accommodations for such needs.

Institute Executive Director John Sheffer said all submitted comments will be carefully reviewed and accurately summarized for the BFSA. It is important to understand that the forum will focus solely on the four-year financial plan and 2004-2005 budget and not the BFSA itself or other issues, he added.

“The BFSA is clearly committed to include this forum as an essential part of its review of the financial plan and budget,” Sheffer said. “The Institute will do all it can, within the tight timeline prescribed by the state, to get the BFSA a useful report that fairly portrays the diverse perspectives of the public.”

ADDENDUM C

Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority

NEWS ADVISORY

For Release: Immediate – May 5, 2004

Contact: Rachel M. Teaman (716-829-3777 or rmansour@buffalo.edu)
Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth
(This contact is only for purposes of this release and the May 8 public forum)

FURTHER DETAILS ON MAY 8 FORUM

The UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth today released further details on this Saturday's public forum on the 2004-2005 budget and four-year financial plan of the City of Buffalo and other entities under the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority's review.

As earlier announced, the Institute has been asked by the BFGSA to convene a public forum on **Saturday, May 8** at the **Erie Community College City Campus (121 Ellicott Street, Buffalo)** from **9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** The BFGSA is required by state legislation to seek public comment in its review of the budget and financial plan. The Institute will facilitate the forum, record and summarize all public comments for inclusion in a May 12 summary report to the BFGSA.

Executive Director of the Institute, John B. Sheffer, II, said preparations for the forum have focused upon designing a convenient and fair process for citizens and groups to make their views known to the BFGSA.

The order of speakers will be chosen through a random lottery for each of the forum's three sessions (see detailed agenda below). Speakers will have four minutes to present their views to a three-person panel, comprised of Sheffer, UB faculty member and former president William R. Greiner, and Danis Gehl, Director of UB's University Community Initiative. In addition to the panel, BFGSA Executive Director Dorothy A. Johnson and Chief Counsel Darryl McPherson will be present to listen to comments.

Although citizens may register for more than one session, they will not be called upon to speak in an additional session until all other registered speakers for that session have had the chance to speak a first time. The opportunity to speak at Saturday's forum is not guaranteed, but Sheffer said additional methods are available for submitting comments for inclusion in the Institute's summary report.

"A person may also submit their views online through the forum website or e-mail. Written submissions delivered through mail, hand delivery or fax to the Institute also will be accepted," he said.

The forum will be agenda is as follows:

8:30 a.m.

Doors open

9 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

City of Buffalo

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

City of Buffalo Public Schools/ Joint Schools Construction Board

4:10 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

*Other Covered Entities (Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/
Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency/ Buffalo Water Board/ Buffalo
Municipal Water Finance Authority/ Buffalo Sewer Authority)*

Each of the three sessions will commence with a **20-25 minute presentation** on that portion of the budget and financial plan by representatives of the relevant entities.

In order to be included in the Institute's summary to the Authority comments must be actually received by the Institute by **midnight, Saturday, May 8**. Comments should be limited to the topic of the budget and four-year financial plan submitted May 1 by the City of Buffalo. The budget and plan are available for review online, at the official BFSAs website (www.bfsa.state.ny.us), while hard copies are available for purchase from the City of Buffalo.

Public comments delivered at the forum will be carefully recorded by the three-person panel and separate notetakers. The forum also will be videotaped for a verbatim record.

Subsequent to Saturday's forum and the deadline for submittal of written comments, the Institute will summarize the full picture of public comments in a report to the BFSAs. Sheffer said the report will be formally submitted to the authority at its May 12 meeting.

Arrangements released last week by BFSAs chair Thomas Baker were reconfirmed, with further details as follows:

Date/Time: Saturday, May 8, 2004

9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

(doors open at 8:30 a.m.)

Place: Erie Community College – City Campus

Main Auditorium

121 Ellicott Street, Buffalo

(handicap accessible through south door to ECC from Swan Street)

Topic: 2004-2005 Budget, Four-Year Financial Plan

City of Buffalo and Other Covered Entities

(Documents available at the official website of the BFSAs (www.bfsa.state.ny.us))

and via the forum website (www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu)

Panelists: John B. Sheffer, II, forum chair

William R. Greiner

Danis Gehl

BFSAs: Dorothy A Johnson

Darryl McPherson

Order of Speakers: Chosen by lottery for each of the three topic areas
(registration cards will be chosen at random from a lottery box)

Time Limit: 4 minutes

Alternative Methods for Submittal

- (a) Online (www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu) or e-mail (bfsa-forum@buffalo.edu)
- (b) Mail or hand deliver to Institute (Beck Hall, 3435 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214). Please slide hand delivered comments through Institute mail slot.
- (c) Personal Delivery at forum (submit to Information Desk)
- (d) Online at forum (computer available for this purpose)

(All comments must include name and address, as no anonymous comments will be accepted. Citizens are asked to limit written comments to eight pages.)

Information On Forum: Website: www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu
Email: bfsa-forum@buffalo.edu
Phone: (716) 829-3777

ADDENDUM D



**Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth
University at Buffalo • State University of New York**

MAY 8 PUBLIC FORUM

2004-2005 Budget and Four-Year Financial Plan
City of Buffalo and Covered Entities

INFORMATION SHEET

The Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority has commissioned the University at Buffalo's Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth to assist the public in submitting to the Authority their comments on the **2004-2005 budget and four-year financial plan** of the City of Buffalo and other entities under review by the Authority.

The Institute will convene a public forum today, **May 8, 2004**, to listen to citizen comments on the financial documents and their implications for the City of Buffalo. In addition to commenting at today's public forum, citizens have been able to submit feedback on the budget and financial plan through the forum website and e-mail, or by mail, fax or hand delivery to the Institute. You may still submit comments through any of these alternate formats (see below for detailed instructions). All comments must be received by the Institute no later than **midnight, Saturday, May 8**.

Public comments delivered at the forum will be carefully recorded by a three-person panel and separate notetakers. In addition to the panel, BFSA Executive Director Dorothy A. Johnson and Chief Counsel Darryl McPherson will be present to listen to comments. The forum will be videotaped for a verbatim record. The Institute will then summarize all comments submitted at the public forum and through alternate methods in a final report, which will also provide an analysis of major themes of public comments on the budget and financial plan. The Institute will present the report on May 12 to the BFSA for use in its deliberations. The report will be available for public viewing via the official BFSA website, www.bfsa.state.ny.us, as well as the forum website, www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu

PUBLIC FORUM AGENDA:

8:30 a.m.

Doors Open

9 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

City of Buffalo

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

City of Buffalo Public Schools/Joint Schools Construction Board

4:10 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Other Covered Entities

(Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority/Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency/

Buffalo Water Board/Buffalo Municipal Water Finance Authority/Buffalo Sewer Authority)

Panelists:

John B. Sheffer, II – Executive Director, Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth

William R. Greiner – University at Buffalo faculty and former president

Danis Gehl – Director, University Community Initiative, University at Buffalo

Each session will commence with a presentation by representatives of the relevant entity, as listed above.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS ON THE 2004-2005 BUDGET AND FOUR-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

SPEAK AT PUBLIC FORUM

1. Fill out registration card (available at Information Desk) clearly and completely. All attendees of the public forum are asked to fill out the card, regardless of whether you wish to speak. Please enter all required fields, as **no anonymous comments will be accepted**. Return card to Institute staff stationed at auditorium doorways.
2. The order of speakers will be determined by randomly selecting registration cards from an official raffle bin for each of the three sections of the forum. You may register for more than one session, but will not be called upon to speak at an additional session until all other registered speakers for that session have had the chance to voice their comments a first time. Note that the opportunity to speak at today's forum is not guaranteed. Additional methods for submitting comments are available (see below).
3. Speakers will be listed in order, five at a time, on a screen in the stage area of the auditorium. Each speaker will have **four minutes to present comments** to the panel from the stage podium. The next two upcoming speakers are asked to approach the stage and sit in the chairs behind the podium until it is their turn to speak. A timekeeper at a table in front of the podium will indicate when speakers have 1 minute left ("1 Minute Left") and when their time is up ("Stop").

OTHER METHODS FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS

- All comments must actually be received, whether by mail, hand delivery or online, by the Institute no later than **midnight, Saturday, May 8**.
- Please limit any written comments to **eight pages**.
- **No anonymous comments will be accepted**. All required fields must be completed on online forms and e-mails, and name and address must be included in other written comments.

1. Fill out a "Comments Form" (available at the Information Desk) and submit at the forum to any Institute staff or volunteer.
2. Personally deliver other written comments at public forum (submit to Information Desk).
3. Submit comments online at computer outside the ECC auditorium.
4. Mail or personally deliver to Institute (Beck Hall, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214). Please slide hand delivered comments through the Institute's mail slot.
5. Fax comments to the Institute (716-829-3776)
6. Submit comments online (forum website, www.bfsa-forum.buffalo.edu), e-mail (bfsa-forum@buffalo.edu).

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS IMPORTANT FORUM.
YOUR COMMENTS ARE A VALUABLE PART OF THE BFSA'S REVIEW PROCESS.**

ADDENDUM E

BUFFALO FISCAL STABILITY AUTHORITY

Public Forum

May 8, 2004

Please print clearly

REQUIRED

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

OPTIONAL

Organization: _____

Title: _____

SPEAKING AT THE FORUM - 4 MINUTE Time Allowance

Please see the "Information Sheet" for instructions on speaking at the forum or submitting comments through alternate methods.

At which session(s) do you wish to speak?

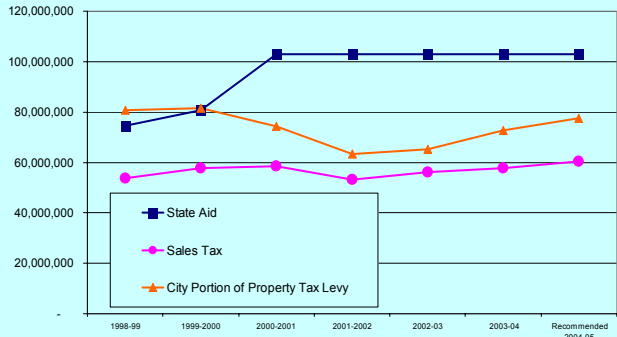
9 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.
City of Buffalo

1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Buffalo Public Schools
Joint Schools Construction Board

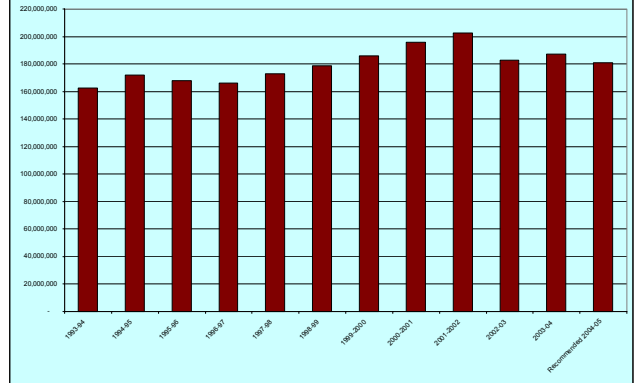
4:10 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Other Covered Entities

ADDENDUM F

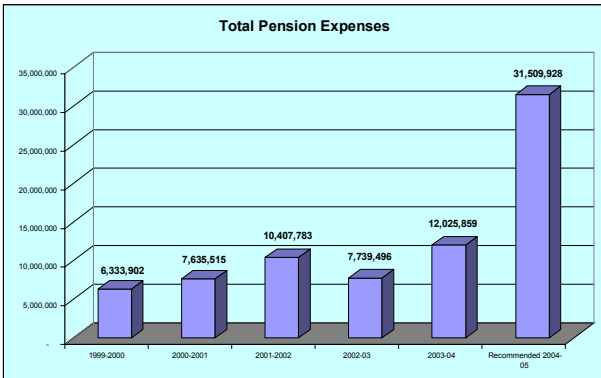
Major Sources of Revenue



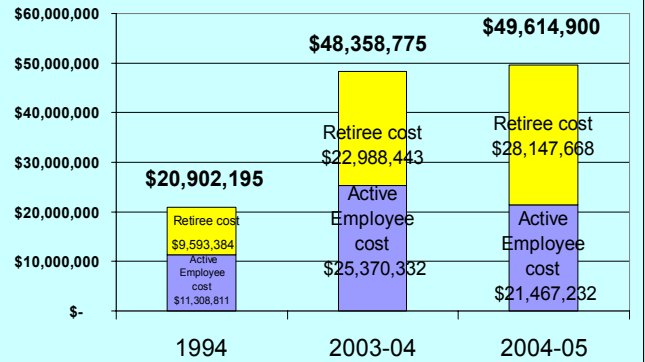
Total Departmental Appropriations

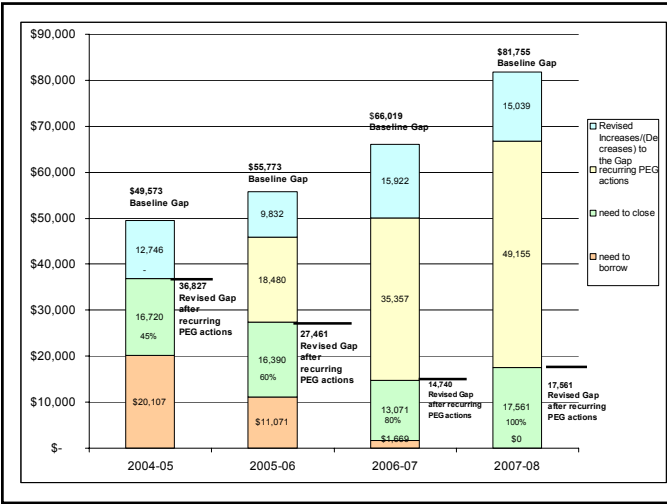


Total Pension Expenses



Health Care Costs





ADDENDUM G

BUFFALO CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOUR YEAR GENERAL FUND
FINANCIAL PLAN
2004-2005 TO 2007-2008



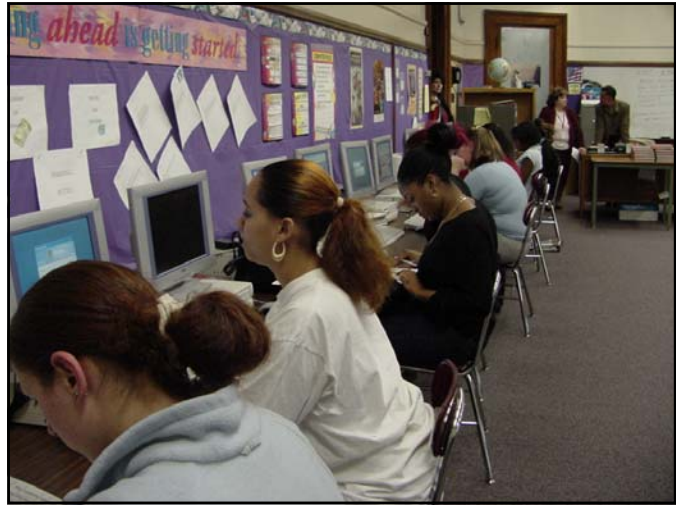
"Putting children and families first to ensure high academic achievement for all."

**The Buffalo City School District
has a balanced spending plan for the
2004-2005 school year by...**

- Managing our spending plan responsibly
- Fully implementing the recommendations of the Council of Great City Schools
- Restructuring our operation



- Achievement results are improving every year
- More students are staying in school and graduating
- Having significant success in narrowing the achievement gap



SUMMARY OF MULTIYEAR PROJECTIONS
(in millions)

	Spending Plan	Projections		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUE	462.2	457.9	457.9	457.9
TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENDITURE	479.9	489.3	502.8	516.9
GAP	<u>\$(17.7)</u>	<u>\$(31.4)</u>	<u>\$(44.9)</u>	<u>\$(58.9)</u>

The Buffalo City School District is responsible for providing an education to:

Over 41,000 Public School Students

- ~ 9,000 students with disabilities
- ~ 3,000 students learning in 50 different languages

...and responsible for providing ancillary services to:

- ~ 7,600 Private School Students
- ~ 3,200 Charter School Students
- ~ 716 Agency Student Placements
- ~ 193 Residential/Incarcerated Student Placements
- ~ 223 Foster Care Placements

REDUCTION OF THE 2004 – 2008 FINANCIAL GAP

(in millions)

	<u>2005-06</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>
GAP	\$ (31.4)	\$ (44.9)	\$ (58.9)

BCSD MAY ACCOMPLISH:

- Close facilities (includes staff, utilities, engineers, etc.)
- Staff Attrition
- Management of Benefits and Contract Negotiations
- Elimination of some sports, non-mandated music, art
- Elimination of some non-mandated related staff (i.e. Administrators, Guidance, Attendance, Kindergarten, Teacher Aides, Library) Improve Efficiencies

REDUCTION OF THE 2004 – 2005 GAP

(in millions)

Projected Revenues	\$ 462.2
Projected Expenditures	<u>479.8</u>

INITIAL GAP

(17.7)

Additional State Aid	<u>17.7</u>
----------------------	-------------

ADJUSTED GAP

0.0

UNAVOIDABLE COST INCREASES

- Charter Schools
- Utilities
- Retirement contributions
- Health insurance
- Termination pay due to increase in retirements for 2004
- Services previously provided by the City:
 - Garbage Removal
 - Civil Service Clerk
 - Attorney



BASE REVENUE - MULTIYEAR PROJECTIONS

(Includes Special Projects)

	Spending Plan	Projections		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
STATE	339.5	339.5	339.5	339.5
CITY	68.7	68.7	68.7	68.7
COUNTY	30.9	30.9	30.9	30.9
OTHER	12.9	15.0	15.0	15.0
- Reimbursements				
- Tuition				
- Medicaid				
- Indirect Cost				
- Miscellaneous				
FUND BALANCE	9.3	3.0	3.0	3.0
STABILIZATION FUND	.08	.08	.08	.08
FOOD SERVICE	20.9	21.0	21.2	21.3
CATEGORICAL GRANTS	57.8	57.8	57.8	57.8
OTHER GRANTS	94.6	94.6	94.6	94.6
TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUE	\$ 635.5	\$ 631.3	\$ 631.5	\$ 631.6

IMPACT OF REDUCTIONS

(Includes Grant Funded Positions)

Administrators	- 4.75
Teachers	- 136.96
- Classroom	
- Attendance	
- Guidance Counselors	
Clerical	- 10
Teacher Aides	- 56.50
Trades	- 5.80
Building Engineers	- 6.0
Laborers	- 21.0
School Closings	- Additional sites to close - Leases to be terminated

BUFFALO CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECTED 2004-05 GENERAL FUND SPENDING PLAN GAP

(in millions)

*Projected Spending Plan
Gap of \$17.7 million is
anticipated to be reduced
by additional revenue*



REDUCING THE GAP

(2005-06 to 2007-08)

- State Flex Aid
- Campaign for Fiscal Equity
- County Sales Tax
- School Closings
- Attrition
- Technology Improvements
- Class Size Management



SUMMARY

- Fiscally Responsible Dependent School District
- Increasing Student Academic Achievement
- Successful Phase 1 Building Reconstruction



JOINT SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BOARD



JOINT SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BOARD (JSCB)

- Structure
- Phase I
- Phase II



PHASE I



	Project Cost	% Complete
#19	12,412,464	39.6
#31	15,454,993	34.9
#38	10,367,726	34.0
#66	10,534,808	51.8
#67	12,949,353	35.4



PHASE I



	Project Cost	% Complete
#74	16,055,111	21.8
#80	14,575,846	34.0
#302	22,006,382	39.6
#307	24,306,749	45.7
District Wide	23,774,249	68.7



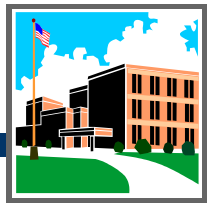
PHASE II



Project List

#6	BEST
#33	Bilingual Center
#37	Futures Academy
#39	MLK Multicultural Institute
#69	Houghton Academy
#82	Early Childhood Center
#90	ECC/Science Magnet

PHASE II



Project List

#91	BUILD
#94	West Hertel Academy
#95	Waterfront Elementary
#192	Buffalo Traditional
#200	Bennett High School
#304	Hutchinson Central Technical H.S.



PHASE II

- Legislation
- Time Line



ADDENDUM H

BUFFALO MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY
Presentation to the
BUFFALO FISCAL STABILITY AUTHORITY



Lakeview on the Park Hope VI



Frederick Douglass Homes



Stuyvesant Apartments

May 8, 2004



BMHA BUFFALO MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

BMHA ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FY04

- Ferry Grider Homes and 515 Clinton transferred from State Housing Program to the Federal Portfolio.
 - *SAVED the City of Buffalo \$1.5 Million annually*
- Designated a developer for Kensington Heights (HLM, LLC) who will pay maintenance costs for the facility.
 - *SAVING the City of Buffalo \$100,000 annually*
- Public Safety department personnel *reduced by 9 officers* as per contract agreement.
- Designated private management firm to manage Marine Drive Apartments for BMHA.
- Lakeview Hope VI Phase II completed.
 - *150 new rental units came on-line*
- BMHA received *172 New Section 8* vouchers increasing the Section 8 portfolio to 1372.
- Selected a Financial Consultant to prepare a mixed finance application for submittal to HUD *to eliminate \$550,000 subsidy from City of Buffalo* to Frederick Douglass Associates.

BUFFALO MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

BUDGET

FISCAL YEAR ENDING 2005

HUD LOW RENT OPERATING	\$ 31,644,710
GRANT BUDGETS	\$ 422,858
HOPE VI	\$ 2,113,327
CAPITAL FUND PROGRAM & REPLACEMENT HOUSING FACTOR	\$ 11,032,753
SECTION 8	<u>\$ 7,679,061</u>
	\$ 52,892,709

FEDERAL OPERATING RESERVES

Although HUD allows use of Reserves for operating expenses, this plan does not rely on the Authority's reserves for operations. Management of the Authority, in conjunction with the BMHA Board of Commissioners, will formalize our policy for the use of reserve funds. It is anticipated that reserve funds will be used for extraordinary maintenance and capital needs of the Authority. For 3rd Quarter 2004, BMHA projected using \$1,022,000 of reserve funds. The cash flow statement for the 3rd quarter shows a current usage of \$538,000. This is a **reduction** of **\$484,000** to our projection in the FY04 plan.

The 3 year projected plan for reserve levels are as follows:

	RESERVES	TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET
FY03 (actual)	\$7,533,000	\$28,936,124
FY04	\$8,020,000	\$30,482,376
FY05	\$7,620,000	\$31,679,302

ASSUMPTIONS FOR FOUR YEAR PLAN

- HUD operating subsidy will continue to be funded annually by Congress at 95%
- Capital Fund continues to be reduced
- BMHA will continue to get renewable grants
- Frederick Douglass will not receive a fixed city subsidy because it will be moved into the Federal Portfolio.
- No BMHA Housing Developments will receive operating subsidy from the City of Buffalo.
- Kensington Heights will be privatized and be returned to the City's tax roll.
- 95% lease up rate for 1372 Section 8 certificates
- Redevelopment of Jasper Parrish Homes – begins
- Lakeview Homes HOPE VI Redevelopment Completed
- Frederick Douglass Associates Redevelopment completed
- Employee pension and health costs continue to increase

BUFFALO MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

FOUR YEAR FISCAL PLAN

1. BMHA *HAS BALANCED ITS' BUDGET AND HAS A OPERATING RESERVE LEVEL OVER \$7 MILLION.*
2. BMHA *WILL CONTINUE TO BALANCE ITS' BUDGET.*
3. BMHA *WILL UTILIZE FEDERAL SUBSIDY ALLOCATIONS* AND OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING TO ACCOMPLISH ITS' MISSION.
4. *NO* BMHA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL RECEIVE *OPERATING SUBSIDY FROM THE CITY OF BUFFALO.*

Office of Strategic Planning

Report to the
Buffalo Financial Plan Commission
May 8, 2004



Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency Operating Budget

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING	JUNE 30, 2005
ENTITLEMENT & FORMULA GRANT BUDGETS	
Grant Revenues and Related Income	
CDBG	\$19,551,000
HOME	5,269,619
American Dream Downpayment Initiative	394,284
ESG	728,773
HOPWA	472,000
Economic Development Initiative Grant	750,000
CDBG Program Income	2,800,000
Additional loan recovery and sales of assets	200,000
HOME Program Income	<u>250,000</u>
TOTAL GRANT INCOME	\$30,415,676

Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency Operating Budget

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING	JUNE 30, 2005
ENTITLEMENT & FORMULA GRANT BUDGETS	
Grant Expenditures	
CDBG public service costs @ 15% to 12%	\$ 2,537,307
Section 108 loan repayments	4,331,974
CDBG payroll reimbursement to City	1,725,483
CDBG indirect cost reimbursement to City	193,343
CDBG program costs	10,487,207
HOME CHDO set aside @ 15%	790,443
HOME program costs	4,177,214
American Dream Downpayment Initiative	394,284
Emergency Shelter program costs	692,335
HOPWA program costs	<u>457,840</u>
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$25,787,430

Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency Operating Budget

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING	JUNE 30, 2005
ENTITLEMENT & FORMULA GRANT BUDGETS	
Admin & Planning Costs	
CDBG admin costs @ 18.17% grant + PI	\$ 4,025,686
HOME admin costs @ 10%	551,962
Emergency Shelter admin @ 5%	36,438
HOPWA admin costs @ 3%	<u>14,160</u>
TOTAL ADMIN & PLANNING COSTS	\$ 4,628,246
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$30,415,676

Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency Operating Budget

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING	JUNE 30, 2005
BURA OPERATING BUDGET	
BURA Administrative Cost Budget	
Base salaries	\$1,452,868
Longevity	49,225
Step increments	-
Perfect attendance incentive	<u>15,000</u>
Total Direct Salaries	<u>\$1,517,093</u>
Fringe Benefits @ 35%	530,983
Pension cost increase	<u> </u>
Total Fringe Benefits	<u>\$ 530,983</u>
Indirect cost reimbursed to City	193,343
General Operations	<u>540,754</u>
	<u>\$2,782,173</u>

Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency Operating Budget

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING	JUNE 30, 2005
BURA OPERATING BUDGET	
BURA Program Delivery Budget	
Base salaries	\$1,503,496
Longevity	15,150
Step increments	-
Perfect attendance incentive	<u> </u>
Total Direct Salaries	<u>\$ 1,518,646</u>
Fringe Benefits @ 35%	425,221
Pension cost increase	<u>150,350</u>
Total Fringe Benefits	575,571
General Operations	48,548
BURA Program Delivery Costs	<u>2,142,765</u>
	<u>TOTAL BURA OPERATING BUDGET \$4,924,937</u>

Grant Revenues

Historically grant revenues administered by BURA have remained fairly consistent over the past five years with the exception of the grant program year beginning May 1, 2003. A significant decrease was evident for that year and the major contributing factor to the grant reduction was the City of Buffalo's population decrease, as noted in the year 2000 census. Population is one of the factors used in the allocation formulas established by federal law for distributing grant funds. Population changes will not be an issue in the period covered by the four year plan as numbers are based on the national census which will not recur until the year 2010.

Impacts on Funding

- In the 2004-05 funding authorization, a reduction in funds allocated to the HOME program caused a \$500,000 decrease in the HOME grant allocation.
- At the same time, a new federal grant, the American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI), was instituted. The City was allocated \$180,862 and \$213,422 for the program years ending April 30, 2004 and 2005, respectively. HUD allocated both years of ADDI funding to recipients in 2004-05. As a result, net grant dollars allocated to BURA decreased by about \$100,000 for the 2004/05 fiscal year.

Program Income

Program income for the CDBG grant is budgeted at the same as the amount budgeted for the prior year. Although current year program income has exceeded that amount, the increase is the result of income generated by a subrecipient. HUD regulations require that BURA report and monitor the use of program income generated by subrecipients. Should that income not be used by the subrecipient for allowable grant activities, BURA has the right, and the responsibility to recover that income and use it for additional grant activities.

Administrative Cost Caps

A) A regulatory cost cap for planning and administrative costs under the CDBG program is established at 20% of the total of the grant amount plus any program income generated by grant activities. Planning and administrative costs for the 2002-03 grant period exceeded the 20% cap by \$1.2 million. Under a negotiated agreement with HUD, we have voluntarily reduced the spending cap to approximately 18.17% for the 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 grant years. Under this arrangement, approximately \$400,000 of the excess spending is recovered each year of the 3 year recovery period. In the 2007-08 grant year, the planning and administrative cost cap reverts to the mandated 20% level.

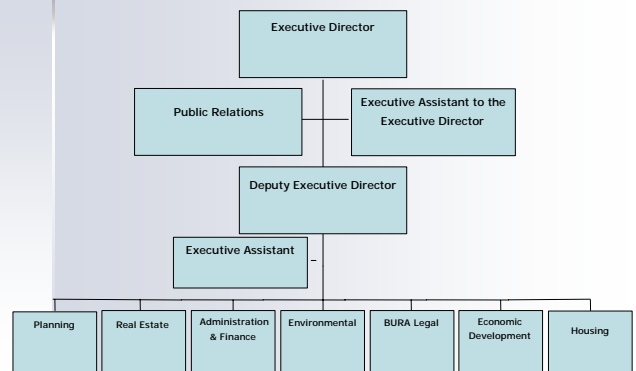
Administrative Cost Caps - Continued

Similarly, HUD has accepted a 3% reduction in costs to eliminate a prior \$1.2 million overage in the public service cap. This results in a decrease of approximately \$600,000 per year in this category.

B) The HOME administrative cost cap is established at 10% of the total of the grant amount and grant program income. Similar caps of 5% and 3% exist for the Emergency Shelter Grant and HOPWA Grant programs, respectively.

Administrative salaries, fringes and other such costs included in this forecast are limited to the levels needed to meet these cap requirements.

Staffing - OSP Org Chart



Staffing

	Staff Count <u>2003-4</u>	Staff Count <u>2004-5</u>
BURA		
Funded with grants	87	60
City of Buffalo		
■ OSP employees fully funded with grant funds	9	11
■ Non-OSP employees who work on one of our grant programs	37	1
■ Inspectors & related support staff & costs	82	14

Staffing Projections

- No increase in base salary rates are budgeted through June 30, 2008.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

- BURA's potential savings include insurance and longevity payments.

Section 108 Loans

- Economic Development Initiative Grant funds solicited and received for the Homeownership Zone project were earmarked for, and will be used to pay, \$750,000 of the principal payments due in 2004-05 for this project.

Budget Control Measures

- We have notified all subrecipients that final requests for reimbursement must be submitted by June 1, 2004 in order to allow us to accrue prior grant period costs in the appropriate budget period. As indicated in our notice, requests received after that date will not be honored.
- We notified BURA and City staff responsible for planning costs that their contracts too will expire as noted above.
- We have identified all unnecessary planning and administrative costs and eliminated them from our current spending plan.
- We have identified contracts with unspent balances and have taken steps to closeout the contracts and defund those budget lines.

Future Budget Years

- 2004-05 program expenditures are strictly within cap requirements.
- OSP now monitors budgets monthly.
- New subrecipient policies have been established to ensure accountability and timeliness by subrecipients.
- For future periods, all administrative purchases will be directed through a centralized location and one assigned employee who will ensure that purchases are necessary and within the approved budgets.

Provisions for Reserves and the BURA Deficit

- Grant regulations prohibit using grant funds for reserves. Accordingly, BURA does not budget reserves in the forecasts provided to the BFSAs.
- However, BURA has utilized grant funds to alleviate portions of the BURA deficit which exists from prior years.
- As current and prior projects expire without fully utilizing amounts previously set aside, we have reprogrammed those dollars to budget for these costs previously expended in excess of the prior years' budgets.

Unreserved Fund Balance

- BURA's audited financial statements at June 30, 2003 identify an Unreserved Fund Balance of \$1,358,429. This amount is displayed in the Balance Sheet for Governmental Entities and relates solely to the BURA General Fund. This fund is used to account for any unrestricted funds held by BURA.

Facilities Inventory

- Income generated from rental properties is included in program income reported in our four-year plan.
- BURA also owns about 100 parcels of land which were acquired using grant funds. As property is sold, proceeds are included in program income and will be used for other eligible grant activities.

Program to Eliminate the Gap

- BURA continues to process (close) old budgetary accounts to alleviate our funding deficits.
- This action along with budgeting grant funds to cover projects that are affected by the deficit will result in eliminating the deficit as described in the four-year plan.

Certification

The proposed budget -

- is in balance;
- is prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
- is prepared in accordance with the submitted financial plan except for the increase in Section 108 loan payments caused by developer defaults; and
- is feasible for successful operation over the next four years.

Buffalo Water Board/ Buffalo Municipal Water Finance Authority

Chart 1 - Annual Cash Collections from Water Sales

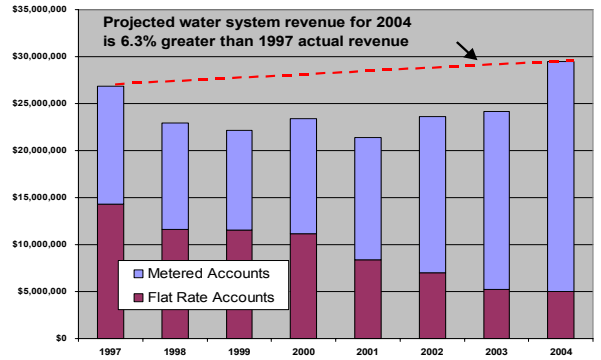


Chart 2 - Annual Cost of Operations

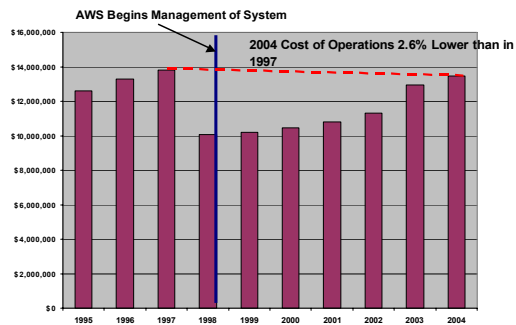
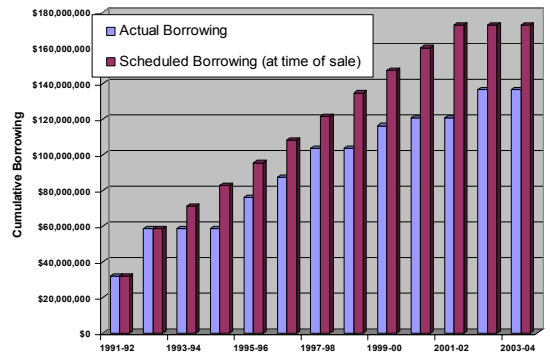


Chart 3 - Buffalo Water System - Total Capital Debt



City of Buffalo Typical Annual Cost of Water
(Chart 9)

