

# Political Watch Committee

Arlington, Texas

A combined Committee of Members of the Arlington Republican Club and the Republican Women of Arlington

Report #10

October 2023

## Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
National Offices	1
State Offices	2
County Offices	4
City Offices – City Council Meetings	6
AISSD School Board of Trustees	11
Mansfield School Board (34% of MISD students live in Arlington)	13

## National Offices

### Senator John Cornyn

In the month of September **Cornyn** has continued his bad track record of co-sponsoring Democrat Senate bills and voted with them six times. Some examples include a bill (S.2993) introduced by Debbie **Stabenow** (D-MI) to amend the Social Security Act and Public Health Service Act to Permanently authorize certified community behavioral health clinics, and he also co-sponsored Democrat Senator Margaret **Hassan's** bill (S.2919) entitled the Alert Communities Act. John **Cornyn** also voted with democrat senators and RINO's in the latest Continuing Resolution, a bill that on the surface may seem good to avoid a government shutdown, however, this bill continues to fund Ukraine and contains no money for our own southern border. **Cornyn** can always be counted on to betray his party, his state and the country.



### Senator Ted Cruz

Senator **Cruz** joined eight other Republican senators and voted against the latest Continuing Resolution. In addition, he introduced a bill (S.2983) to stop the funding of any public-school facilities that provide shelter to illegal aliens, and co-sponsored the Protecting the Right to Keep and Bear Arms Act of 2023 (S.2911).



### Rep. Roger Williams - CD25



Congressman **Williams** co-sponsored HR.5561, which is the house version of the Protecting the Right to Keep and Bear Arms Act of 2023. He also co-sponsored HR.5073, which is a bill to promote domestic energy production. As the chairman of the House Small Business Committee, Roger **Williams** has frequently introduced and co-sponsored bills that help our business community. Although these bills never get any main stream media coverage, they help keep Texas the economic power

house of the country. Roger **Williams** voted against removing Speaker **McCarthy**.

**Rep. Jake Ellzey - CD6**

Jake **Ellzey** co-sponsored HR.5507, a bill to prohibit the use of federal funds to establish a Disinformation Governance Board. Additionally, he joined 33 other House Republicans in co-sponsoring HR.5465, the Congressional Access to Bureaucratic Offices Act. Currently, agencies like the FBI can block congressmen from access to their offices and building which makes it easy for them to hide things from the public and congress. Jake **Ellzey** voted against removing Speaker **McCarthy**, and as of the date of this report, has voted against Jim **Jordan** for Speaker.



**State Offices**

After the Texas House impeached Attorney General Ken **Paxton**, the Senate took up the case. The House Managers (think prosecuting attorneys) presented witnesses that basically testified they had no evidence of wrongdoing. In the end, **Paxton** was only guilty of being an effective conservative voice. He was acquitted with only two Republicans voting with the Democrats to remove him. Arlington Senator Kelly **Hancock**, usually a good conservative, inexplicably was one of them.

There were several issues that were prioritized for this session of the legislature. Since both the House and the Senate are majority Republican, the only way to block priority bills is through parliamentary tricks or blocking them in committees. The table below shows a summary of how Arlington Senators and Representatives voted on priority bills.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Chamber</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>HB1243</i>	<i>HB5180</i>	<i>SB1403</i>	<i>SB1900</i>	<i>SB14</i>	<i>SB12</i>	<i>SB1527</i>	<i>HB3</i>	<i>HB3137</i>	<i>SB29</i>
Kelly <b>Hancock</b>	Rep	Senate	SD9	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea *	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea *
Phil <b>King</b>	Rep	Senate	SD10	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea *
Brian <b>Birdwell</b>	Rep	Senate	SD22	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea !	Yea *	Yea *	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea !
Royce <b>West</b>	Dem	Senate	SD23	Nay	Nay	Nay	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay
Nate <b>Schatzline</b>	Rep	House	HD93	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Yea *	Yea
Tony <b>Tinderholt</b>	Rep	House	HD94	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea
David <b>Cook</b>	Rep	House	HD96	Yea *	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea *	Yea	Yea
Chris <b>Turner</b>	Dem	House	HD101	Nay	Yea	Nay	Nay	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay

Key:

- ! – Authored
- \* - Coauthored

The next table summarizes the priority bills and their result. Note that the bills that failed never came to the floor for a vote. Also, note how many bills died in committee or through some parliamentary trick. There were many more bills submitted in the most recent session, including ones that related to the stated priorities, but these are a representative sample.

<b><u>Bill</u></b>	<b><u>Issue</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Result</u></b>
HB1243	Elections	Increases penalties for fraud	Signed into law
HB5180	Elections	Allow public inspection of election records	Signed into law
HJR98	Elections	Gives AG authority to prosecute election law violations	Died in Committee
HB125	Elections	Deals with DAs that refuse to prosecute election law violations	Died in Committee
HB1671	Elections	Prohibits ballot harvesting	Died in Calendars Committee
SB1403	Borders	Coordinate with other states; build a wall	Signed into law
SB1900	Borders	Provides resources to fight foreign terrorist organizations	Signed into law
SB14	Gender Modification	Bans gender reassignment surgery on minors	Signed into law
SB249	Gender Modification	Creates a stronger penalty for gender reassignment surgery	Died in committee
SB12	Sexualization of Children	Restricts sexually oriented performances for minors	Signed into law (Currently being blocked by courts)
SB1527	Sexualization of Children	Fights human trafficking	Signed into law
HB4876	Abortion	Imposes liability on abortion providers	Died in committee
HB3	Gun Rights	Require armed safety officers in schools	Signed into law
HB3137	Gun Rights	Prohibits local laws to restrict gun rights	Signed into law
HB636	Gun Rights	Allows election judges to be armed	Died after Point of Order
SB29	Parental Rights	Bans Covid 19 vaccine and mask mandates in schools and businesses	Signed into law
HJR37	Parental Rights	Protects private schools from government regulation	Died in committee
HB360	Parental Rights	Requires disclosure to parents of certain materials and activities	Died in Committee



In other news, Tony **Tinderholt** (R-HD 94) made an inquiry from the floor regarding vacating the chair. Speaker Dade **Phelan** (R-HD 21) subsequently banned Representative **Tinderholt** from asking further questions from the floor. This is an extreme move and another reason why the speaker must be replaced.

## County Offices

Judge Tim **O'Hare** led Tarrant County to approve a lean budget, reducing spending by \$8.1 million, achieving the county's lowest property tax rate in at least a decade.

The County Commissioners voted to block funding for Girls, Inc. in a 3-2 vote. On Tuesday October 3rd the commissioners were asked to allocate \$115,334 in state grants for a "progressive" non-profit organization called Girls, Inc. The three who voted to reject funding for Girls Inc. said they were concerned about the messaging put on display by the national organization. The group recognized "Bisexuality Visibility Day," they shared their celebration of LGBT "Pride Month," saying "Pride is everyday." The organization also supports abortion. They also expressed outrage over Texas' Heartbeat bill. They blasted the Texas Legislature for introducing legislation protecting women from men competing in their sports. Thankfully the County Commissioners Court is protecting tax payers hard earned money from those who would subvert our culture, our morays and our children!

Despite the name, Commissioners Court is not a Judicial court but is the general governing body of the county. Among the major duties of the Court, the Court is to:

- Set the tax rate and adopt the County budget;
- Appoint county officials and hire personnel;
- Fill elective and appointive vacancies;
- Establish voting precincts, appoint precinct judges and call County bond elections;
- Let contracts and authorize payment of all County bills;
- Build and maintain county roads and bridges;
- Build, maintain and improve County facilities, including jails;
- Provide for hospitals, public welfare and veterans assistance;
- Manage all County facilities;
- Provide for the data services and archival needs of the County;
- Appoint an Administrator to oversee the operations of those departments reporting to the Court.

There are 25 County Boards and Commissions acting as advisory bodies to the Court. To be considered for service on one of these advisory bodies contact the Commissioners Court Secretary at (817) 884-1234 or your Court's precinct Commissioner.

The court is composed of four Commissioners representing four precincts and the county judge. A County Clerk provides supports staff for the Tarrant County Commissioners Court. The County Clerk is responsible for keeping court minutes and records.

Our new County Elections Administrator, appointed on August 1, is Clinton **Ludwig**. Clint is Captain U.S. Marine Corps (Retired) and he was a counterintelligence / human intelligence officer. We can be assured his LIDMAC (loyalty, integrity, discretion, morals and character) to our Republic was tested every which way, including Sunday, for 20 years from the days when he was an enlisted Marine. Clint was / is a Mustang officer up from the enlisted ranks and



commissioned. Bravo Zulu (well done in Naval Service vernacular) Clint! We can all look forward to well run County Elections Administration. His deputy director, Troy **Havard**, is another retired Marine officer. I think Tarrant County elections are in good hands.

### **Projections for Precinct-Based Voting and Hand Counting in Tarrant County**

The Elections Office did a study to determine the cost that would be incurred if the county reverted to precinct-based voting and hand counting ballots. The considerations and cost are shown below.

#### **Precinct-Based Voting**

1. Currently have 694 voting precincts.
2. On average, an Election Day polling location costs \$2500, which includes supplies and labor.
3. For our current vote center process, we are required to have minimum of 347 polling locations based on a new law.
4. Would cost approximately an additional \$867,500 for polling locations.

#### **Conducting Hand Count**

1. Must utilize precinct-based voting.
2. The Presiding Judge may not leave once hand count has started and must have the results to the Elections Administrator within 24 hours of the polls closing or commits a class B misdemeanor.
3. Requires the use of 3 tally sheets simultaneously.
  - a. Minimum 2 people- Example; 1 person calling votes and marking a tally sheet and 1 person marking other 2 tally sheets.
  - b. Ideally, 4 people- Example; 1 person calling and 3 people tallying one sheet each.
  - c. To be complete the results on all 3 tally sheets must match.

#### **Approximate Numbers to Count 2020 General Election**

To calculate the time for counting ballots, an estimate of six seconds was used per race on a 35-race ballot (3.5 minutes a ballot). The six seconds comes from a test done by the Secretary of State to determine the time it takes to hand count. The average number of races on a ballot in the 2020 General Election was 35. (Note – our ballot board also conducted a hand count time study and we are awaiting the final report.)

To calculate the cost, the study used the hourly rate for a three-person counting team (1 caller and 2 talliers) and a Presiding Judge for each location.

In a perfect world scenario where no recounts were needed; counters maintained a six second per race pace with no breaks; no adjudications were required; and they had a full 24 hours to count. This did not account for set up time or transit time to get results to the Elections Office.

1. Since precinct-based voting is required to accomplish the hand count, additional polling locations would cost approximately \$907,500.
2. Approximately 1,597 counting teams (4791 people) would be needed to count all the

ballots at polling locations and the Ballot Board within 24 hours of the polls closing. This would cost approximately \$2,899,759.11 in additional wages.

3. The total for the additional polling locations and the wages to pay for the hand count would be approximately \$3,812,259.11.

### **City Offices – City Council Meetings**

There are 21 Citizen Boards and Commissions for the City of Arlington. These are volunteer positions for various committees giving advice and direction to our City Council members. Each council member may nominate one person for each board/commission. The mayor may nominate two citizens for each. An application is available online at [arlingtontx.gov](http://arlingtontx.gov) where all boards/commissions are listed and defined. Contact your representative council member or the mayor for consideration of your application. At that same website you can find reports and minutes of all City Council meetings for any further research you might wish to do.

#### **June 27, 2023 Meeting**

The Consent Agenda included expenditures and other miscellaneous items. The expenditures are shown here:

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Demolition and Abatement Services Project # 23-0184	\$400,000
Electrical Services Project # 23-0133	\$300,550
Contract for Purchase of Software and Related Services Project # 23-0216	\$2,530,000
Contract for Purchase of IT Hardware and Related Services Project #23-0217	\$1,100,000
Fleet Focus Software Management System Project #23-0143	\$321,249
Contract for Generator Maintenance Project # 22-0145	\$58,200
Contract for Bullet Resistant Vests APD Project # 20-0145	\$251,906
Contract for State Highways Right of Way Mowing Project #19-00723	\$275,000
Contract for Grounds Maintenance for Water Treatment and Remote Sites Project #22-0121	\$53,969
Contract for Maintenance and Repair of Operable Walls for the Esports Stadium Arlington and Expo Center	\$450,505
Contract for Liquid Asphalt Emulsion for Potholes Project #22-0174	\$50,400
Contract for Concrete Materials Project #22-0078	\$486,345
Purchase of Playground Equipment for JW Dunlop Sports Center and Fish Creek Neighborhood Park Project #23-0200	\$432,637
Purchase of 2 Tractors for Parks and Recreation Department Project #23-0220	\$82,347
Purchase of 3 Transit Vans for Parks and Recreation Department #23-0224	\$163,685
Purchase of 1 Hazmat Utility Truck for AFD Project #23-0210	\$83,708
Purchase of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Command Vehicle for APD #23-0198	\$150,000
Purchase and Installation of New Carpet on 3rd Floor City Hall #23-0227	\$177,486

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Sole Source Purchase for Upgrades of the Water Utilities Billing System # 23-0218	\$847,690
Contract Modification #2 for Construction Contract for Pierce-Burch Water Treatment Plant Chemical Clearwell Pump Station Improvements #WUTR 18001	\$2,700,000
Construction Contract for Julia Burgen Park Trail Connection	\$1,409,132
Professional Service Contract for Helen Wessler Park Design Project #23-0212	\$558,000
Engineering Services for Lower Johnson Creek Drudging Phase II Project PWD23011	\$277,665
Engineering Services Contract for Lake Arlington Dam Breach Analysis Project WUTR 23014	\$56,200
Modification of Four-Year Contract for Implementation Services of Enterprise Resources Planning Software Project 20-0050	\$916,360
Payment of Oncor Pole Contracts Rental for Department of Public Works	\$55,958.80
Real Property Appraisal Services for Division Street Sidewalk Project #PWSW 16003	\$137,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$17,659,858.44</b>

These remaining items were also considered at the meeting:

- A zoning case for 2221 and 2231 Forum Drive and 3231 East Arkansas Lane changing zoning classification to Planned Development for Residential Medium Density 12 and Community Commercial plus Banquet Hall passed 7-2 with **Moise** and **Hogg** dissenting.
- Zoning changes for properties in the 600 and 700 block of S. Center Street, 100 and 200 block of E 3rd Street, 700 block of Glenn Crossett Court, and 200 block of E 4th Street for Atlantic Student Housing Project passed 6-3 with **Moise**, **Gonzalez** and **Hogg** opposing.
- Resolution authorizing \$1,862,685 for traffic light improvements and for installation of flashing yellow arrows for traffic signal improvements passed.
- Honorary Street Naming for Miss Persis **Foster** along S Oak Street unanimously passed. Six speakers in favor and five non-speakers supported this resolution.
- Bret **Stidham** was unanimously confirmed as Arlington Fire Chief.
- An ordinance was unanimously accepted to appoint an Associate Municipal Judge for the Municipal Court of Record for the City of Arlington to declare an emergency.
- A Parks Mall Performance Agreement for the redevelopment of the mall passed 8-1 with Council member **Boxall** opposing. The Parks Mall is the 9th most visited mall among the 48 Texas malls. Please see the staff video presentation on this topic at the afternoon meeting June 27, 2023 Council Meeting.
- The Council agreed unanimously to award construction incentives to improvements planned for Front Street in Arlington. During Citizen Participation one Viridian

resident complained of trash, traffic, and graffiti in that neighborhood. Two citizens complained of inappropriate adult exposure during Gay Pride Festival entertainment in Arlington.

**August 1, 2023 Evening Meeting (There were no Council Meetings held in July)**

Sixty citizens were added to Arlington Boards and Commissions.

Improvements to 2401 SW Green Oaks Blvd. (Item 6.1) was unanimously approved. (See the video of this meeting to research more about this topic.)

The Consent Agenda included expenditures and other miscellaneous items. The expenditures are shown here:

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Contract for Citizen Reporting Tool Project # 23-0222	\$261,615
Contract for Crowd Management at Esports Stadium Arlington and Expo Center Project # 19-0067	\$85,470
Painting Services City-owned Properties Project #22-0061	\$788,580
Elevator Maintenance, Repair, and Inspections Project #22-0137	\$71,460
Ott Cribbs Public Safety Renovation Project #PJ000174	\$546,865
Contract for Airport Consulting Services Project # 23-0077	\$232,872
Artist Contract within Entertainment District, along Johnson Creek Project #PJPKL23004	\$90,000
Consultant Services for River Legacy Park Erosion Issues	\$19,922
Contract for Polly Webb Road Project Modification	\$328,295
Purchase of Closed-Circuit Television Equipment for Water Department Project # 23-0239	\$327,609
Purchase and Installation of the HVAC Replacement System Arlington Municipal Airport Project # 23-0240	\$69,873
Purchase 4 Vehicle Replacements for Various Departments Project #23-0245	\$308,255
Purchase and Installation of Lift Station Pump Replacement at Northeast Library Project # 23-0235	\$71,370
Purchase and Installation of New Carpet at Southeast Library Project # 23-0236	\$84,390
Real Property Acquisition Services Contract Division Street Project PWSW16003	\$336,300
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,622,876</b>

There was also a discussion of a rate increase by Oncor to their Arlington electricity customers. (Please view the staff report online at this portion of the meeting minutes for more information)

In addition, there was a discussion of a waiver of development fees for reconstruction of Bell’s Aircraft Parking at the Arlington Municipal Airport. (Again, please review the staff report online if you have an interest in this topic.)

**August 22, 2023 Evening Meeting**

The Consent Agenda included expenditures and other miscellaneous items. The expenditures are shown here:



<b><i>Item</i></b>	<b><i>Amount</i></b>
Contract for Sensus Meter SmartPoint Project # 23-0234	\$2,262,000
SCADA annual contract to monitor and operate water treatment plants in Arlington (these plants produce more than 18 billion gallons of treated drinking water For the City each year)	\$70,000
Contract for Management of Software Project # 23-0215	\$88,007
Purchase Contract of IT Network Communications Hardware and Services	\$1,533,000
Renewal of Contract for Communication Cable and Installation Project # 21-0114	\$690,075
Renewal of Annual Contract for Landscape Project # 22-0080	\$228,510
Renewal of Contract for Supplemental Taxi Services for Handitran Project #17-0047	\$2,423,500
Renewal of Staffing Contract at Esports Stadium Arlington and Expo Center Project # 21-0057	\$535,000
Contract for Water Instrumentation and Testing Supplies Project # 23-0238	\$500,000
Purchase of 3 Crew Trucks for Arlington Water Utilities Department Project # 23-0250	\$141,910
Purchase of Overseed Products for City Golf Courses Project # 23-0254	\$134,075
Purchase and Installation of Equipment for Fire Training Project # 23-0232	\$82,857
Contract Modification for 101 Center Street Parking Garage Assessment Project # CMAM20006	\$49,000
Contract Modification to California Lane Drainage Improvements Project # PWDR19002	\$269,726
Engineering Services Contract for 2023 Pipeline Stream Crossing and Geomorphological Services Project # WUWS23004	\$150,000
Engineering Services Contract for Stormwater Services Project # PWDR2313	\$100,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,258,460</b>

The Council gave unanimous approval for a new housing type known as “Cottage Communities”. See the staff report concerning this topic in this meeting’s minutes online to find more detailed information about this new designation.

The Council also gave unanimous approval to change zoning on certain properties on California Lane and Sprocket Drive to Planned Development for Residential Single Family.

During Citizen Participation, one citizen complained about the long wait at a traffic light near his home.

### **September 5, 2023 City Council Evening Meeting**

The Mayor proclaimed September 17 through 23, 2023 Constitution Week, which was accepted by Daughters of the American Revolution. Arlington Charities were also recognized by the Mayor for feeding the hungry of Arlington. September 2023 was proclaimed Arlington Hunger Action Month by the Mayor.

There were 23 appointments to Boards and Commissions of the City of Arlington.

The Council considered two properties for condemnation on East Mayfield Road and New York Avenue by use of eminent domain. This was unanimously passed by the Council.

The Consent Agenda included expenditures and other miscellaneous items. The expenditures are shown here:

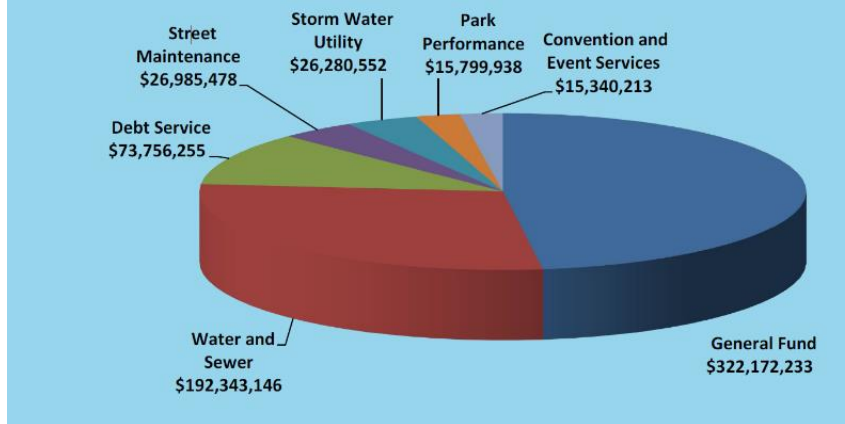
<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Five-Year Requirements Contract for Managed Print Services Project 22-0204 (for FY 2024,2025,2026,2027, and 2028)	\$2,680,000
Annual Requirements Contract for Overhead Door Repair Project # 23-0197	\$95,000
Annual Requirements Contract for Support and Maintenance Subscription for LeanIX Software Project # 23-0263	\$121,863
Annual Requirements Contract for Support and Maintenance 23- Subscription for PPMP Software Project # 23-0261	\$60,498
Annual Requirements Contract for Support and Maintenance for Sole Source Purchase of ePlanREVIEW Software Project #23-0265	\$114,865
Renewal of Annual Requirements Contract for Mowing of Code Violations Properties Project # 19-0058	\$72,275
Renewal of Annual Requirements Contract for Street Mill and Overlay Program Project # PWSM22003	\$3,422,640
Renewal of Annual Requirements Contract for Breakaway Signposts Project # 22-0201	\$90,306
Renewal of Annual Requirements Contract for Tree Trimming Services Project # 19-0137	\$650,800
Renewal of Annual Requirements Contract for Irrigation Components, Parts, and Supplies Project # 19-0234	\$52,955
Renewal of Annual Requirements Contract for Calcium Hypochlorite Tablets Project #22-0154	\$129,600
Purchase of Three Dump Trucks for Arlington Water Utilities Department Project # 223-0251	\$418,486
Purchase of Two Sewer Cleaning Trucks for Arlington Water Utilities Department Project # 23-0252	\$640,080
Construction Contract for 2022 Water and Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project # WUWS22011	\$9,453,254
Ratification and Modification to the Contract for the North Texas Softball Umpire Association of Fort Worth, Texas	\$82,000
Engineering Services Contract for Airport Road Environmental Study Project #23-0260	\$362,835
Engineering Services Contract for Airport Parking Apron Environmental Study Project # 23-0259	\$69,253
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$18,516,710</b>

These Minute Orders were unanimously approved by the Council 9-0.

The FY 2024 Proposed Property Tax Rate of \$0.5898 per \$100 valuation (“which is effectively a 10.5% increase in the tax rate”) was unanimously approved 9-0. The FY2024 Operating Budget of \$322,399,537 was unanimously approved. There was one speaker opposed to the budget stating that the budget should reflect the 3% inflation in our economy not the 10% increase proposed. Please, see the video from this meeting for more information.

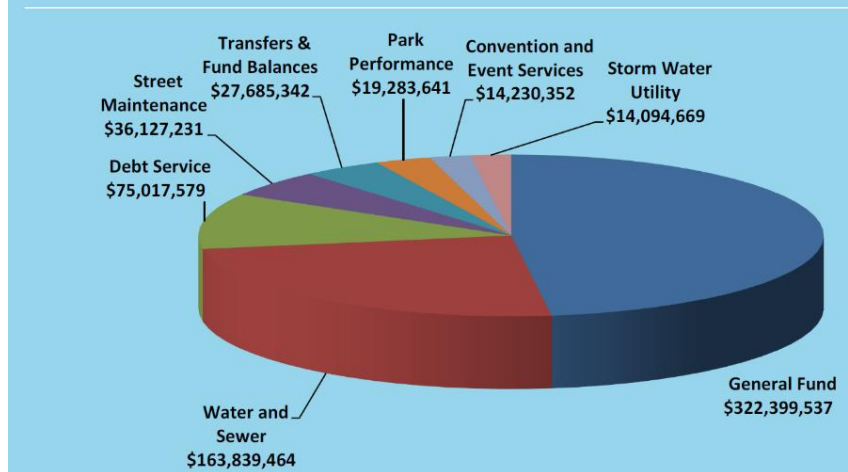
The City Manager, Trey **Yelverton**, provided an estimate of the City Revenues for FY2024 by fund, shown below. The sum of the expected revenues is \$672,677,815.

## City Revenues by Fund



**Yelverton** also showed the Expenditures by fund. These expenditures also total \$672,677,815, indicating a balanced budget. The expenditures are shown in the chart below.

## City Expenditures by Fund



### ***AISD School Board of Trustees***

The board met twice the week of October 16th. They met on Monday for team leadership training (no agenda items in open session). They also met Thursday, October 19 for their regular meeting. The agenda for the Thursday meeting can be found [here](#).

TEA Accountability Data:

- [2022 Accountability](#)
- [2021 Accountability](#)
- [2019 Accountability](#)

In 2020, the AISD was tied for the highest Maintenance and Operation (M&O) rate of all the school districts in Tarrant County. In 2021 through 2023, there was NO tie. The AISD now

HAS the highest M&O rate in Tarrant County. [school district tax rates]

**Highest M&O Rates in Tarrant County (21 ISDs Total):**

<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>ISD</u></b>	<b><u>M&amp;O Rate</u></b>
1	<b>Arlington</b>	\$0.824900
2	Fort Worth	\$0.790400
3	Mansfield	\$0.789200
3	Birdville	\$0.789200
3	Everman	\$0.789200

**Lowest Tax Rates in Tarrant County (21 ISDs Total):**

<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>ISD</u></b>	<b><u>Tax Rate</u></b>
1	HEB	\$0.921100
2	Burleson	\$0.924700
3	Carroll	\$1.002500
4	Azle	\$1.025000
5	Fort Worth	\$1.062400
6	Keller	\$1.087500
7	Northwest	\$1.090200
8	Everman	\$1.094146
9	<b>Arlington</b>	\$1.115600
10	Lewisville	\$1.130100

**State delays the release of school ratings**

The state is delaying the release of A-F Accountability ratings for schools. As mentioned in a section of the story, ratings are not based on straight student test results, but also schools take into consideration progress and efforts made toward closing the gap. (This makes the ratings given practically useless. This is how a district like Arlington ISD can get a “B” with over half the students failing the test]. The Fort Worth Report story can be found [here](#). Many school districts, including Arlington, are suing the TEA on related issues.

**Grievances Filed**

The following account is from David Jarvis regarding a series of grievances he has filed with AISD.

During the period from early Nov 2022 early Oct 2023, I filed several Public Complaints (Grievances) against AISD. A sample of my grievances includes: the AISD Board refused to answer my questions about what guidance AISD gives to teachers about how to answer questions from male and female students about sensitive issues such as same sex attraction, gender identity and male students identifying as female allowed access to female locker rooms; the Board refused to

take action against AISD General Counsel **Eichelbaum**, who engaged in retaliation against me when he informed me that all AISD administrators were too busy to communicate with me – thus completely denying me access to all administrators; the Board refused to take action when AISD Superintendent barred all taxpayers from observing AISD Public Complaint (Grievance) hearings, although AISD policy and prior precedent did not authorize such banning of citizen observers; the Board refused to take action when I sent the Board a transcript of an audio recording of a public hearing on 5-15-23 in which an AISD official twice insulted citizen observers by referring to them as “minions”. This official was never reprimanded or held accountable for using such demeaning words when referring to AISD citizen observers.

On 6-8-23, AISD scheduled a Level Four consolidated grievance hearing before the entire AISD Board of Trustees covering my four grievances (detailed above). Prior to presenting my arguments in favor of my grievances, the Board announced they planned to close the 6-8-23 hearing and remove all public observers. I argued that it was vital that the people be allowed to hear about the misconduct of AISD officials. I also assured the Board that I would not identify any AISD officials by name – so there would be no chance that the character or reputation of any AISD official would be damaged in any way. Notwithstanding my assurances, the Board closed this hearing over my objections. All citizen taxpayers were forced to leave the hearing room and not allowed to hear to hear my arguments in support of my grievances. The Board later denied all four of my grievances.

On 9-21-23, counsel for the public interest law firm Citizens Defending Freedom served a demand letter on AISD – informing AISD that a lawsuit would be filed against AISD for their unlawful closure of the 6-8-23 grievance hearing. The unlawful closure on 6-8-23 was in clear violation of the Texas Open Meetings Act. In the demand letter, AISD was informed that if AISD allowed a rehearing of the same four grievances in open session with the public allowed to attend – then no lawsuit would be filed. AISD was given a deadline of 9-29-23 to agree to schedule a public rehearing of these four grievances. AISD ignored the deadline, so a lawsuit against AISD will be filed soon.

The banning of parents and taxpayers from the 6-8-23 hearing was part of a clear pattern I have experienced over several months in my interactions with AISD. To put it mildly, AISD has not been “a model of transparency” when responding to my inquiries. Over several months, I have sent several emails to the Board of Trustees seeking information and answers to specific questions. The elected members of the Board have consistently ignored my questions – forcing me to file public complaints to compel some form of AISD response.

On their own website, the Board proudly proclaims that they see themselves as “guardians of the public trust”. A noble goal, to be sure – but why should Arlington parents and taxpayers trust the Board with their vote, when the Board has consistently shown the Board does not trust the people with the truth?

### ***Mansfield School Board (34% of MISD students live in Arlington)***

- Advisory Committees for the Attendance zones, Utilization of Buildings and Campuses, and Choice of Schools presented their findings over the last seven months. The committees’

selection comprised Board of Trustee Appointees, Superintendent Appointees, Staff, Administrators, and Community volunteer Members. A variety of recommendations was presented and showed the overlapping findings for district wide resolutions and the deliberate planning processes of each committee.

- Consideration and approval of the attendance zones and corresponding options passed unanimously.
- Consideration and approval of the ordinance levying taxes for the 2023 Fiscal Year and directing the assessment and collection of taxes passed unanimously.
- A motion was made for MISD to join the A through F accountability lawsuit against TEA Commissioner Mike **Morath** over the revised accountability system and to approve the legal services. The motion passed 5 -0. Two trustees were absent.

Note: Public school taxes involve two figures, which divide the school district budget into two “buckets.” The first bucket is the Maintenance and Operations budget (M&O), which funds daily costs and recurring or consumable expenditures such as teacher and staff salaries, supplies, food, gas, and utilities. Approximately 85 percent of the district’s M&O budget goes to teacher and staff salaries. The second bucket is the Interest and Sinking budget (I&S), also known as Debt Service, and that is used to repay debt for longer-term capital improvements approved by voters through bond elections.

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Political Watch Committee (PWC) members are members of the Arlington Republican Club and the Republican Women of Arlington (RWA): Steve Eklund, Bert Smith, David Rakes, Karyn Douglas, Melodie Morris, Barbara Caho.

Disclaimer: The reporting and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official policies and agenda of the Arlington Republican Club (ARC), nor those of the Republican Women of Arlington (RWA).

If you want to send a “**Letter to the Editor**” or just your comments regarding this report, please send it to: [eklundastephen@yahoo.com](mailto:eklundastephen@yahoo.com). Thanks!