BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
ARPA Funding Work Session
October 5, 2021

Call To Order – A regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Crystal Vanuch, Chairman, at 1:38 p.m. on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, in the Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

Roll Call – The following members were present: Crystal Vanuch, Chairman; Cindy C. Lamb, Vice Chairman; Tinesha O. Allen, Meg Bohmke; Thomas C. Coen; L. Mark Dudenhefer; Gary F. Snellings.

Also in attendance were Frederick J. Presley, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Cheryl Giles, Deputy Clerk; Julia Homes, Assistant Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

1. Budget Related Item- Conversion of Finance Position
Chief Financial Officer Jonathon Munch stated that the FOIA officer for the County is retiring at the end of October, and the Deputy County Administrator approached him about possibly reclassifying the Records Retention Specialist position the Board authorized for this fiscal year and adding the FOIA responsibilities to that position. Mr. Munch said they are basically asking the Board to reclassify the position at a higher grade to denote the additional FOIA officer duties and convert it from a part-time position to a full-time one. He noted that the estimated cost of that would be about $43,000.

Ms. Bohmke asked if that would be the expense for FY22.

Mr. Munch responded that this is a full fiscal year cost, and it would be about three-quarters of that for FY22, so about $32,000.

Ms. Bohmke noted that in FY23, it would be the full amount, and that includes benefits.

Mr. Munch confirmed this.

Mr. Presley pointed out that this position was part of their five-year plan for FY23 anyway because they were looking to move this outside of the Executive Assistant, who is currently doing it—but that person's retirement was the catalyst for moving on it sooner, as well as the opportunity for this other individual in Finance.

Mr. Snellings asked how many FOIA requests they have ever year.

Ms. Bohmke commented that it was a lot.

Mr. Presley stated that he did not have the exact number but could get it for them, and it has grown exponentially in the last five years—with a lot of that driven by social media, in his estimation. He said they can sometimes get 10 to 20 in a week, and some are very quick but others are quite exhaustive. He clarified that they get some related to individual departments, such as matters related to development, but they can be related to any department-type issue, and they only go to those people who need to respond.

Ms. Vanuch asked what staff needed from the Board today.

Mr. Presley responded that this was just an opportunity for the Board to ask any questions, as they did place this on the Consent Agenda, and with the retirement at the end of the month, there is an opportunity with an individual who is part-time in Finance and increase him to a full-time position. He stated that this person would need to be trained and certified as a FOIA officer, but before they moved forward with that, he wanted to make sure they had the Board's approval.

Ms. Bohmke said that she agrees with Mr. Snellings that they need to see some data.

Mr. Presley responded that he could get a number for them, but anecdotally speaking, this is currently taking up about 60% of FOIA Officer Wendy Mallow's time, which is a demand that takes her away from her regular duties as Executive Assistant.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she would like to know how many FOIAs they see, as the Board only sees about one per month.

Ms. Allen clarified that they are going to expedite this so they can meet the deadline before the person retires, but they would come back with the data—but she wanted to know if Ms. Bohmke wanted the data before expediting it.

Mr. Presley said he would work on a number with staff before their regular meeting that day.

Ms. Vanuch stated that she had a conversation with staff recently when there was a FOIA issue and asked the same question about volume. She said that the ones that the Board receives are those fueled by social media and hot topics being FOIA'd by the public—but they also need to keep in mind the FOIAs that are coming into planning and zoning from the developers or just applicants or residents in the neighborhood who want to FOIA everything. She said there are significant FOIAs that are only focused on planning and zoning, and the Board never sees those.

Mr. Presley added that there are a lot of contract awards as well, and if a company doesn't win a contract, they would FOIA all the records from a contract solicitation.

2. Budget Related Item- Department of Social Services Position

Ms. Andrea Light stated that there is another position on the Consent Agenda this afternoon, for a Self-Sufficiency Specialist in Social Services, effective January 21, 2022. She said that this is being presented outside of the budget cycle because the state has provided 100% of funding for half a year—so after FY22, it would be about 15.5% funded by the locality, which is about $13,000, with no costs this year. She stated that this specialist makes determinations of eligibility for program participation, establishes and monitors self-sufficiency goals through information and assessment of the client backgrounds, carries a caseload of clients receiving employment services, develops employment plans for clients facing the most complex situations, and develops job-readiness and job-research workshops.

Ms. Vanuch asked how many Social Services positions they have hired in the last two years, as it seems that they continuously add positions.

Ms. Light responded that she would have to look back for an exact number, but as they started the five-year plan in FY2019, the Board made a commitment at that time to hire 10 new Social Services positions over the five years. She said there were then six positions tied to a specific state initiative, for a total of 16 positions.

Ms. Lamb stated that the information presented showed that the SNAPET would have 105 clients, and she wondered if this new position would have that many starting out of the gate or if it would be shared among other workers—as 105 seems like a huge caseload.

Ms. Light said that she would defer to Social Services for that information.

Department of Social Services Director Michael Muse stated that this would be new clients because it is a new initiative to work with families who are receiving supplemental nutrition assistance, the SNAP program, to move towards employment. He said this is not something they are currently doing, and they have a position where they work with families who are receiving temporary assistance to needy families (TANF) to move them towards employment, and there are two individuals who work with them currently. Mr. Muse reiterated that the position before them is a new role, and for the first six months of this fiscal year, it would be 100% funded.

Ms. Lamb said if they have 105 people, assuming they meet once per month, when a person walks in the door, how many case workers do they go to before they get down to this level.

Mr. Muse responded that it was probably two.

Ms. Lamb asked if they would automatically be sent over to this specialist.

Mr. Muse replied they would, if they meet the criteria—but there would be more families who meet the criteria for participating in this program than they have the ability to cover, and he wanted to be clear about that. He emphasized that they have many more families that they need to move towards employment and away from public assistance, but this is only a start to provide the opportunity to do that.

Ms. Lamb commented that it doesn't seem like enough coverage.

Mr. Muse said that was correct, but DSS was asking for the position they were receiving funding for.

Ms. Allen asked if this, along with the other positions funded in recent years, are just meeting the basic needs and not even to be above water. She also asked if this position was temporary, and the amount of people coming would be much greater versus having permanent cases, due to the constant fluctuations in jobs and income.

Mr. Muse explained that this job does not cover the typical caseload; it is to help move families that are receiving SNAP benefits towards employment, with less dependency upon public assistance. He acknowledged that it's not really enough to cover the entire caseload, but it is a position where there is possible funding, so they want to make sure they're taking advantage of that to move families toward self-sufficiency, rather than just maintain a caseload—as that's not the most efficient way to do business. He emphasized that they want to move people toward a point where they don't need DSS.

Ms. Bohmke said that there is a very active Virginia Career Works at the Goodwill, and she asked if DSS had any kind of relationship with them, and she asked whether this position was duplicative of those efforts.

Mr. Muse responded that DSS does work with them very closely, and often the families DSS are working with need more assistance than they can get there, with more of an emphasis of moving towards employment. He said sometimes the services there are optional services, and sometimes those providing the services have a bit more leverage in providing them because they are not subject to the same penalties that DSS is—because the workforce investment side is optional.

3. American Rescue Plan Act Work Session
Ms. Light reported that this is their second ARPA work session with the whole Board, and this is to provide them with a review of the proposed ARPA spending strategy and gain the Board's approval to start moving these projects forward. She said that they would cover state and federal funding, review the ARPA spending strategy appropriation actions, and gather the Board's support and direction to move forward.

Ms. Light stated that there is a significant amount of ARPA funding available through the state and possibly the Infrastructure Investment Job Act at the federal level, and the state did receive about $9 billion in ARPA funding. She said they are watching a few of these items specifically, such as broadband funding, marketing an incentive for tourism, K-12 initiatives such as ventilation systems and bonuses for new instructional positions, and Compensation Board-funded bonuses for sworn sheriff's deputies.

Ms. Light stated that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a $973 billion act that was supposed to have been approved prior to September 30, but the federal government has not yet approved it and has extended that time. She said the County is observing that it is to improve energy efficiency in public schools, additional broadband initiatives, cybersecurity, and a $10 billion grant program for infrastructure.

Ms. Light stated that with all of the funding out there, it provides significant opportunities for Stafford County to take advantage of future grants. She said they are recommending adding two mid-year positions, which would be funded by operating savings from grant submissions, contingent upon future funding, and these would be a grant writer and a grant accountant. She said that working with Prince William County, they have used a consultant to do the grant-writing piece of that, so they will be exploring that before they bring it back to the Board. She stated that it might be consulting services in one position, but they are looking at this to expand the base of grant revenue and the money that can be infused in the County through federal and state governments.

Ms. Light stated that the Compensation Board funded bonuses for all sworn deputies, of which Stafford has 93—which is approximately 46% of sworn deputies. She said this creates an unfunded mandate for the Board to consider this, but it must be accepted and there is no opportunity to give it back to the Comp Board or not provide the bonuses. Ms. Light said that this is not based on merit or ability or any other rational reason; it is literally an inventory of people who get put on there. She said to provide it for 93 of the 207 total individuals does not really make a lot of sense.

She said staff also noticed that the regional jail would be providing a $3,000 bonus to all employees, funded in part by the Comp Board as well as vacancy savings. She said the Rappahannock Juvenile Detention Center would follow the jail's implementation through the use of vacancy savings and current budget year savings, but they are not Comp Board funded. Ms. Light said that staff would bring this back to the Board with a public hearing on October 19 since it is a bonus, and all bonuses require a public hearing.

Ms. Light reported that based on their share of sworn positions, they now have 207, a total County contribution of $368,000 would be necessary to fund a $3,000 bonus for all sworn positions. She said that staff recommends consideration of other public safety positions, including ECC and Fire/Rescue uniformed positions. She stated this would create about a million-dollar County contribution to provide a $3,000 bonus to all employees, and they would recommend using revenue replacement from ARPA funding to provide for the $1 million to support these positions.

Ms. Light noted that they have looked at using regular ARPA funding and having the bonuses being an applicable charge; the consultants recommend that they would first need a policy in place to see these people are essential service providers, and they would have to follow the FEMA guidelines for information, so staff would go forward and look at those kinds of details to see if that lift is too burdensome or if it just makes sense.

Ms. Vanuch explained that to advertise the public hearing, they had to advertise it as giving bonuses to everyone, since they can't go above that in their actions—so staff would need direction on what they would like to do. She said that last year, there were a lot of questions when they proposed $1,000 bonuses to match what the Comp Board did for public safety, and they had to gather the information quickly for all bonuses.

Mr. Presley mentioned that there is one more slide after this that covers the rest of staff and provides all the information at that point, and it would be good to have the Board's direction so staff can prepare for the public hearing.

Ms. Light stated that they've put together items for other general government staff at different levels—$500 to $3,000—and what that would look like. She said if the Board wished to consider bonuses outside of public safety, staff would recommend a $1,000 level or $500 for part-time positions, again using the revenue replacement for general government employees, which would be about $631,000. She stated that utilities personnel at the $1,000 bonus can be funded through their current vacancy and budgetary savings. She noted that staff has also provided school personnel at that same level, for the Board's information.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the schools have ARPA money that they receive that they can use for paying their employees bonuses.

Ms. Light responded that in discussion with the school staff, they have already allocated all of their funds, and if there were bonuses, it would probably be out of their capital projects reserve—their savings from prior years—that they would ask for that from. She noted that they haven't put it on their School Board agenda or talked with them about it yet.

Ms. Bohmke asked if there was a list of what they spent all of their ARPA money on, from the schools.

Ms. Light replied that staff can request that.

Ms. Vanuch commented that the schools are just on here for informational purposes, and it wouldn't be something they are deciding on today.

Mr. Presley stated that staff isn't making any recommendation and is just providing the information, as they have to give the $3,000 for the 93 Comp Board people, and they feel it would be prudent to at least provide that to the other sheriff's deputies; otherwise, there would be a huge inequity there. He said they've also provided the numbers for other public safety. He said the additional numbers are just based on past experience, as the Board has wanted to see the figures for what it would cost to compensate the rest of staff. He commented that it is difficult, and the state put them in a position to address these inequities in terms of bonuses, so they just need direction to prepare for public hearing.

Mr. Snellings asked why they needed to make a decision now if they were having a public hearing and advertising all of this.

Mr. Presley explained that because of the timing of the public hearing, the Board would need to make a decision then—because the County needs to pay the Comp Board bonuses by the end of November, and to make all that happen, the decision will have to be made on the 19th. He said that staff wanted to make sure the Board had all the information for their concerns and questions, so if there's any scenario they want to see—as staff would not have the luxury of time to go back and get that information on the spot. He confirmed that they do not need a decision today.

Ms. Bohmke said that at their George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) meetings, which includes regional partners from Planning District 16, they all compare notes about various objectives—and others are often surprised at what they do in Stafford and feel that the County is "really generous." She asked if there was information available on how ARPA funds are being treated by other localities and how they plan to use it, adding that the sheriff's department is obvious, given what the state has done—and they always put localities in this situation, whether it's standards of quality or sheriff's deputies.

Ms. Light responded that they don't keep specific lists but keeps in touch with colleagues from other jurisdictions, especially in the City of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, but they haven't had an opportunity to have a really good discussion about ARPA yet. She said that looking at the VGFOA information that gets provided, many localities that have responded are providing this for the sheriff's office and fire/rescue.

Ms. Vanuch noted that it is the $368,000 plus the $100,000 plus the $532,000, and they are doing it at the $3,000 level.

Ms. Light confirmed this.

Mr. Presley noted that they have regular CAO meetings with the others in the region, and they are all in the same place as Stafford—having these same discussions, dealing with the Comp Board, going back to their boards and asking for guidance. He said that staff is letting them know what Stafford is presenting, and those localities are basically presenting the same information back to their boards.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they were to do these bonuses outside the Comp Board employees, could they make a six-month retention bonus so if they left employment, the County could get its money back because they didn't stay for their full six-month retention period.

Ms. Light responded that she would look to the County Attorney for that, but were it deemed appropriate, they could add it to the public hearing.

Ms. Vanuch clarified that this would be for the non-Comp Board employees, and they would also be able to limit it so that anyone who made more than $150,000 a year was capped.

Ms. Light confirmed that those are the types of things the Board should get back to staff about.

Ms. Light also mentioned that less than 2% of the workforce is over $150,000, and two of them would be funded through the Comp Board funding; so 18 members would be the savings there.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Comp Board employees include the commissioner of revenue, sheriff, clerk of court, and commonwealth attorney.

Ms. Light responded that it does include all of those elected officials and their staff—but the Comp Board funding is specifically for sworn officers. She said that even in the sheriff's department, there are a few administrative positions (approximately five) that are not included in the Comp Board funding.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they have information over the last two years as to what other localities have done in terms of raises and bonuses.

Ms. Light responded that they have that available and can provide it as part of the public hearing presentation, to help the Board make that decision.

Ms. Allen commented that she respectfully diverges from Ms. Bohmke's point, because she does not need to know what other counties are doing with their employees; what matters is how Stafford treats theirs.

Ms. Light stated that the Board's actions to date have budgeted and appropriated about $5.6 million in ARPA funds for the various items listed, with a remaining not appropriated of about $24 million. She said that staff has suggested in a prior work session two-tiered spending strategy—the first to set aside specific amounts for specific purposes, and the second to support Board priorities and department requests.

Ms. Light said the Tier 1 strategy to set aside for specific purposes, revenue replacement has been calculated through December 2020 and is about $9.5 million, which must be used for government services; they recommend that to support department request, the remainder of it to be part of CIP funding projects. She said staff recommends that the Board delegate authority to the County Administrator to effectively and efficiently use this revenue. She said that staff funding is about $5.1 million, with $5 million for furloughed PRCF staff that have been rehired. She noted that the Board took action on that at their last meeting and appropriated about $145,000 back to the prior year. She noted that there is administration of the grant, so staff salary and benefits of up to about $100,000.

Ms. Light stated that they also have citizen economic development set-asides, with 20% of total award set-aside to help citizens in economic development. She said the United Way has already been given $300,000 in an earlier action by the Board to help fund those citizens that need economic support. She said that for the United Way, there is a suggestion that $1.2 million in total—of which $300,000 has already been provided—be set aside for the remainder of the next few years. She noted that future citizen support would comprise the remainder of that 10% of the ARPA funding, or about $1.8 million, and staff could come back to the Board with proposals on how to support citizens.

Ms. Bohmke said that when the Board approved the funding for United Way, the Board requested that they bring back a summary report of actions taken, and she wondered if that was coming back on October 19.

Staff confirmed that it was.

Ms. Vanuch said when they awarded the $300,000, they knew the evictions were coming to an end, and she asked if the eviction moratorium was still in place.

Ms. Light responded that she believed it had been discontinued.

Ms. Vanuch said that she also understood that it had been extended, and she asked staff to find out more.

Ms. Light said the second set-aside would be for economic development initiatives, with a number of items they have identified to provide support to the business community. She said the first two items—the ARPA consultant and the tourism smart kiosks—are on the Board's agenda for their afternoon meeting, to be appropriated for immediate use. She stated that economic development is looking to get that consultant on board as soon as possible, with the guidelines for the other programs they are recommending: a workforce training to impacted persons, collaborating with the Bay consortium to provide that for citizens needing assistance; a heritage trail, which would be engineering for a countywide trail that could be used as a match for federal grants—

Ms. Bohmke asked about heritage trail and wondered where it was, as the Board had just killed a trail at their last meeting, and she was the only one that supported it.

Ms. Light responded that it was a regional trail from Quantico to Dahlgren, making use of recent GWRC greenway plans.

Ms. Bohmke stated that before they do anything with that, they need to talk to Senator Richard Stewart, as that trail is owned privately and has a long history.

Ms. Bohmke also said that for all of the information that goes out from now on, they need to start calling it the "Belmont to Chatham Bridge," as it is no longer "Ferry Farm." She stated that she does not feel the heritage trail planning should be in here at all, and she has talked with people in King George who are very familiar with the trail and say it's a dead end. She stated that it would be great if they started at Quantico and worked their way down.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the ARPA consultant job was $199,500 for one person, and there must be more in this than the consultant's compensation and benefits.

Ms. Light responded that it would be getting consulting services, an organization or company that would help to develop all the grant issuances and manage those, so it would not burden staff.

Ms. Bohmke said they may want to recategorize that, as "consultant" implies one person.

Mr. Snellings asked if this was a one-time allocation or something ongoing.

Ms. Light responded that it would be ongoing, through all of the expenditures of economic development, and any other grant programs through ARPA funds. She clarified that there would be no ongoing costs—as the County would be done with the consulting services once the grants are established, issued, recorded, and reported on.

Mr. Snellings said that he agreed with Ms. Bohmke on this being expensive.

Ms. Vanuch said she agreed with the comments made about the consultant and wants to know what a "tourism smart kiosk" is. She stated that someone from King George sought her out at a GWRC meeting and mentioned that they had seen in Stafford's documents that economic development was going to spend several hundred thousand dollars, and that trail is DOA for King George—so they can't move forward with that.

Ms. Vanuch said she didn't mean to sound insensitive, but in terms of workforce training for impacted persons, every single business in this County is hiring—and she's not sure why they need to spend $650,000 of taxpayer money to train people to find jobs, as there are thousands of jobs available here. She stated that she would want a lot more information about what that is and what it's doing, and what exactly they are training people to do.

Ms. Vanuch noted that this is on the Board's afternoon agenda, and she doesn't feel it is even close to ready in terms of these particular items.

Mr. Presley pointed out that the bulk of those items are not under consideration for today's meeting, just the first two items—the ARPA consultant and the smart kiosk. He said the other expenditures relate to the strategy as a whole, but those would come back to them at a later date for appropriation. He said that the consultant is a consultant firm, and that is to manage grants with local businesses until the ARPA funds are expended, and that would go to the end of 2024 as it currently stands. He stated that that's a long timeframe, and there are multiple grant opportunities to help local businesses recover from this pandemic.

Mr. Presley said there is background material on the smart kiosk in their packets, but they can certainly defer that to a future meeting and provide more details, but it's for across-the-county integrated kiosks that guide people to tourism opportunities throughout the County and send them to local businesses.

Ms. Vanuch said that the Board's agenda talks about "Adopting American Rescue Plan Funding Strategy," and this seems to be what they're looking at, so she has issues with it.

Ms. Allen asked Ms. Light what the alternative would be if they don't hire the ARPA consultant.

Ms. Light responded that staff may be able to work through some of these initiatives, but it will take them longer to get through that, and there are definitely some risks involved with adding this amount of work to someone's plate and then make sure it's reported correctly to the federal government, which also has some risks.

Ms. Allen asked if this was a part-time position.

Ms. Light clarified that it's a contracted service that would be used until all the funds are spent before 2024.

Ms. Allen said it's not $199,500 in one year, it's through 2024, so it's 3.5 years.

Ms. Vanuch asked her fellow Board members if they were comfortable having this on their regular agenda that afternoon, or if they needed more information and time.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she needs a lot more information. She said that going back to the workforce training, she has been working with Andrew Spence on Virginia Career Works, as that is something available to everyone in the region—and they could be bringing one-stop shopping here and pushing that message out. She stated that this organization focuses solely on getting people work, and they are doing all the work with the Amazon employees. She said that she feels this is a duplicative effort, and she has concerns about the other items as well.

Ms. Lamb stated that she agreed with the concerns about the workforce item and the heritage trail planning that she knows nothing about. She said that for the ARPA consultant, she looks at this is an unfunded mandate, as there are all these new rules and regulations and associated items related to this—and taking staff and having them go learn all of that would probably not be the most efficient approach, especially as Congress changes things. She stated that she has no problem farming out the ARPA work to a consultant in the best interest of constituents, to move the funding faster and not end up like they did with the CARES Act.

Ms. Vanuch asked for confirmation that this was only for the economic development piece.

Ms. Light confirmed this.

Ms. Vanuch said that if they decide they don't want to move forward with all the "and thens" at a later date, they've just allocated $200K for nothing.

Ms. Light also confirmed this. She also said that the strategies are brought to the Board for these kinds of questions, and economic development can take that information and go back to provide things that are more aligned with the Board's needs.

Ms. Light reported that the remainder of the funding is allocated as $4.9 million under "dedicated and responsive public safety," which would support storage needs for fire/rescue, a headquarters renovation, hazmat apparatus replacement, light and air apparatus replacement, rehab of apparatus replacement, and Knox Box and e-lock update. She said for the sheriff, it would provide funding for in-car digital video recorders, public safety building fueling project, a camera trailer, iPad purchase, and a message board.

Ms. Light stated that under "vibrant and exciting business community," there is $2.4 million to provide critical infrastructure for economic development in the Centreport area, by providing a water transmission main from Enon to Centreport. She said that under "organizational excellence," there is $2.7 million additional for fiber projects, with $3 million already appropriated, and $200K to support comprehensive communication systems for both internal staff and external citizens. She stated that under "heartbeat of recreation," there is $400,000 for Gauntlet Golf Course parking lot pavement.

Ms. Bohmke asked for clarification of what "critical infrastructure" refers to.

Ms. Light responded that it's a water transmission main from Enon to Centreport.

Ms. Bohmke asked if that wasn't something in the utilities budget.

Ms. Light replied that it would provide that funding, and the growth in the Centreport area has been happening faster than the utilities CIP anticipated, so this is a project in addition to that.

Director of Capital Projects, Bryon Counsell, stated that it is in the CIP and is in design currently, and "critical infrastructure" means it is necessary to support everything currently in the Centreport area as well as what's expected to happen.

Mr. Snellings asked where it would be located.

Mr. Counsell responded that it would go from the new water tank, with 340/206 being the one that comes from the Truslow Road area, and this is the first of two legs that will go from the Old Forge area up to Centreport—so there is a follow-on project that goes from the Enon tank up to the Centreport area, which they call 340/215. He said that 340/206 has been in the construction report now for several months, and 340/215 has started to show up in the last two construction reports, and those together are the critical water transmission infrastructure, coming from Lake Mooney to Centreport to support all that economic development.

Mr. Snellings commented that he may need to talk with him offline about it, and Mr. Counsell said he would be in touch and they could sit down and talk about it.

Ms. Light reported that the Board had budgeted and appropriated $3 million for broadband initiatives at their July meeting, and this was to help with a VATI grant. She said that subsequent to that budget appropriation, it was determined that fiber-to-County facilities were not VATI eligible. She stated that IT staff has put forth a VATI grant application to serve 634 unserved and underserved homes, and it's estimated to use $1.5 million of the ARPA fund from the County facilities projects. She said staff would continue to evaluate additional funding options—either federal or state—and there are a number of fire/rescue stations proposed for the CIP, so the fiber to those stations would be part of the cost of that project and may help reduce the overall broad band cost of getting it to all County facilities.

Ms. Lamb asked about the telecommunications study for all of Stafford and whether that would be eligible for funding.

Ms. Light responded that to use a VATI grant, it must go to unserved and underserved citizens and businesses, not just County staff.

Ms. Lamb clarified that she meant that the study would have identified who the unserved and underserved populations are, as providers don't supply those heat maps, and she wondered if that study qualified.

Mr. Presley confirmed that the study is already underway, so it would be too late for this.

Ms. Vanuch asked where the 634 homes are located in the County.

Ms. Light responded that it was Westlake and the Hartwood and Rock Hill districts.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they are allowed to use ARPA funding for areas of the County where they know they have water and sewer problems in certain neighborhoods where the infrastructure is very old.

Ms. Light confirmed that this would be a good use of ARPA funds.

Director of Utilities, Chris Edwards stated that one strategy in putting projects toward ARPA funding was putting forward projects that can easily meet federal requirements, and in the upcoming CIP, they hope to put more money in the utilities CIP toward projects like neighborhood or transmission rehab.

Ms. Allen asked if they could use some of it for stormwater management for some of the older communities.

Mr. Edwards responded that they could not.

Ms. Light said there is revenue replacement that can be used for government service, and she asked if this is calculated on a calendar year basis, so 2020 has already been calculated as $9.5 million; they would do a recalculation for calendar year 2021. She stated that staff recommends that the Board direct the County Administrator or his designee to use these funds to support Board direction in the most efficient manner, to reduce federal procurement burdens for the staff. She said this would mean they could use revenue replacement for something like salaries in the general fund, so the revenue replacement would then become freed up to support some of these programs—like stormwater. She said it would need to be approved by the Board and appropriated and accounted for in a way to provide the most efficiency. Ms. Light said they have an allocated revenue replacement to support any future capital costs, totaling about $1.1 million.

Ms. Light stated that the agenda item is a proposed resolution to adopt the ARPA Funding Strategy, which is very broad, and it supports setting aside 10% for economic development initiatives, with the Board then individually appropriating those as they see fit. She said the remainder of the 10% for citizens support would provide dedicated funding for public safety, the heartbeat of recreation, and the other Board strategies. Ms. Light stated that they would also ask the Board to consider the appropriation for the sheriff's detectives' iPads, as well as what they discussed for the consulting services and kiosks.

Ms. Vanuch asked what she needed for the Board to go into this afternoon.

Ms. Light responded that the strategy is just really for future grant opportunities they would bring back to the Board at a later date, and staff has received their direction to bring back in the public hearing different options for personnel bonuses, and to provide raises and bonuses information from comparative localities, and to confirm or disaffirm the ability to take bonus funds back if an employee has resigned within six months.

Ms. Light asked if the Board had support for the citizens set-aside, which would be 10% and brought back to them at a later date for appropriation; the United Way would be coming in October.

Ms. Vanuch asked if these appropriations required public hearings and whether the Board cannot appropriate past October 19 because of their bylaws.

Ms. Light confirmed that they did not require hearings, and they can't budget but they can appropriate; the budget has already been done with the initial public hearing.

Ms. Allen asked if it would be possible to get some type of list beforehand with the citizens set-aside support, so they already know what it is before the vote.

Ms. Light responded affirmatively, noting that in a perfect world, they like to be able to provide this to the FAB, which would make a recommendation to the full Board and then bring it back for future appropriation. She said this planning strategy allows staff to see an agreed-upon strategy on ways to support citizens, then they would bring that back to the Board. She said that by approving a strategy to do a 10% set-aside, it does not bind the Board to any decision in the future.

Ms. Bohmke stated that in looking at the smart kiosks, she sees there would be six of them "around the County," and she asked where they would be anticipated to go. She asked if one would go at Belmont.

Mr. Mike Smith stated that he does not have those specifics, and he would recommend that this be pulled from the agenda and brought back with additional information. He said that the idea is to promote tourism and hotels, but he wants to make sure the Board is comfortable before moving it forward.

Mr. Coen commented that these kiosks had been discussed previously, and it would be helpful for them to have that background information and where it was in the CIP. He said that it would also be helpful with the bonuses to have a visual depiction of what's required and how the pieces fit together, as the clearer the pathway, the easier it will be for the public to comprehend.

Adjournment At 2:33 p.m., Chairman Vanuch adjourned the October s, 2021 Stafford County Board of Supervisors American Rescue Plan Act Funding work session.

Frederick J. Presley
County Administrator

Crystal L. Vanuch
Chairman