BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN GENERAL FUND WORK SESSION
MINUTES
JANUARY 18, 2022

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN GENERAL FUND WORK SESSION

The Chair called the work session to order at 5:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Crystal Vanuch, Chairman; Pamela Yeung, Vice Chairman; Tinesha O. Allen; Meg Bohmke; Thomas C. Coen; Darrell English; Monica Gary.

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

Ms. Light stated that the Five-Year Financial Plan provides the Board and citizens with a snapshot of how decisions could impact future budgets; she indicated that the Comprehensive Plan informs the Strategic Plan, which in turn informs the Five-Year Plan. She reported that the FY23 plan reflects a General Fund budget of $362.8 million and a real estate tax rate of $0.965; this increases to $1.085 in FY27, with a $454.4 million budget and yearly increases ranging from 4.7% to 6.9% throughout the plan.

Ms. Light reported that personal property tax averages 14% of all General Fund revenues and provides revenue in place of the Motor Vehicle License Fee. She noted that Motor Vehicle Personal Property Tax reflects approximately 83% of all property, and the current tax rate is $6.10 and an effective rate of $3.05; the penny rate yield for personal property tax is approximately $90,000.

Ms. Light presented miscellaneous taxes, including Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) at 5%/7% max, Meals Tax at 5%/6% max, Marijuana Tax, and grocery tax. She stated that as part of Governor Youngkin's campaign, 1% of grocery tax comes back to the locality. She said that the Commissioner of Revenue has done a preliminary estimate, and this could mean a reduction of $2.1-2.3 million for Stafford if the grocery tax goes away in full. She said that another percentage of that goes to schools. She stated that Governor Northam's budget supported a hold-harmless provision for the portion of grocery tax that would go to schools, and for Stafford County Public Schools, that's about $780K in FY23 and almost $2 million in FY24, with the difference having to do with the timing of the year compared to the fiscal year.

Ms. Light presented a slide showing all future investments staff included in the plan, from high to low—and the school operating transfer continued to be the biggest plan driver for outlay in the next five years. She said that general government, public safety pay, fire/rescue staffing, debt service, and partner agencies rounded out the top few categories, which she would review with the Board in more detail.

Ms. Light said that the school operating transfer projects a $40.6 million increase over the next five years and is the largest expenditure in the plan. She said the plan assumes an increase for teacher salary scale implementation, and last year, the School Board presented a three-year approach to a teacher salary scale that is similar to the public safety step plan. She noted that they were assuming that this would continue in year two and three. She said that due to bus driver staffing shortages in Stafford and nationwide, the School Board had used one-time money for bus driver salary implementations in the beginning of FY22, which staff estimates at about $1.5 million that would need to be continued support.

Ms. Light stated that for other salary increases for administrative assistants who are not on the teachers' scale, the School Board has been indicating for several years that there is a significant amount of compression in some of those positions. She explained that if someone has one year of service or five years of service, they may have the same pay for their job—but their experience level is very different.

Ms. Light reported that staff is estimating an increase in debt service of $6.7 million, which does include the retirement of debt as well, and that is taken into consideration as older debt falls off. She said they are looking at the high school at $150 million, as well as the 3R bond-funded projects. She said that staff also provided in the plan what was provided to the Board in the CIP—upcoming projects such as Aquia Station, Embrey Mill, offsite costs for high school, Elementary School #18, and Drew Middle School. She noted that some of those costs would begin to come in within this five-year plan.

Ms. Light stated that staff recommends both a scale adjustment and a raise for general government, and a step plan increase for public safety, so the percentage those employees receive would be the same, but how they were implemented would be different, based on the public safety step plan. She said that the assumptions for the first year are 6.5%, with 4.5% in the outyears, and the reason this is a large-percentage increase is driven by a few factors. She stated that the consumer price index for the Washington/Baltimore area is 7.1%, and they are seeing the largest 12-month increase in grocery prices in more than 10 years; gasoline prices are 9.2% higher. She said that a 6.5% raise at this rate of inflation does not even maintain an employee's continuing buying power.

Ms. Light reported that they are also seeing labor shortages, some of which relate to the pandemic impacts—and childcare, schools, and illness are changing the desire for people to come to work. She said that Stafford has a very low unemployment rate at 2.5%, which means they don't have a lot left in their market to pull from; the County also has a lot of retirements approaching in the next five years, with 15.8% of staff eligible for retirement from FY22 to FY27. She mentioned that in her office of six, two of those employees would be retiring in the next six years and take away a combined 40 years of experience in the Stafford County budget office that will not be replaced by the four who remain. She noted that the County was starting to see some of that walk out the door.

Ms. Light stated that they do have some minimum wage increases that had been approved by the General Assembly, and this began at $8.50 and moved to $15.00 by January 1, 2025. She said that this really impacted seasonal staff in Parks and Recreation, for example. It also impacted other scales—because you can't have a lifeguard supervisor making less than the lifeguards, so they end up with compression issues. Ms. Light said because wages are going up across these kinds of jobs and this skill level, it creates a lot of competition in the market for those employees.

Ms. Bohmke commented that Stafford's unemployment rate is low and is obviously driven by the federal government, and she asked what the unemployment rate was for Planning District 16.

Ms. Yeung asked if there were a plan to hire and cross-train some individuals and do some mentoring.

Ms. Light responded that they are implementing succession planning through their Cornerstone software and are in a pilot phase with several departments. This is a new initiative on the cusp of learning, training, and education for the workforce—so it is very much a part of their goals and how they would move forward.

[Sound was cut inaudible for two minutes]

Ms. Light reported that the Fire and Rescue budget increase of $11.6 million reflects the need for additional crew members, chiefs, and safety lieutenants from FY23-27. She said that the assumption drivers include the fact that standards of cover (SOC) were not being met; the plan identified 383 positions and provides for 66, or 17%. She noted that the Fire and Rescue Department would provide the Board with an SOC presentation at the Board's retreat.

Ms. Light reported that the Sheriff's Department budget increase of $2.2 million assumes an increase in deputies to maintain the rate of deputies per 1,000 citizens, continues the pay differential, and assumes a one-time investment of $2.3 million, with ongoing increased maintenance costs of approximately $100K above actual current maintenance costs.

Ms. Vanuch commented that when she attended the body camera event in Virginia Beach, she learned that a new CAD system would be close to $30 million to implement.

Ms. Light responded that staff worked with Captain Davis and the Sheriff's Department to come up with a projected figure, and $2.3 million is what they came up with.

Ms. Vanuch commented that they might want to clarify that, because it's a lot more expensive than they think it is; they need new CADs because the ones they have are terrible.

Ms. Bohmke said that seven or eight years ago, they had issues with CAD, and the Board needs to do a comprehensive overview of the system because they ended up doing things piecemeal and need to understand the complexity of the issues they have.

Mr. Presley stated that staff can have this item brought back to the Public Safety Committee and ask the Sheriff's Office what they've done, current status, and future recommendations.

Ms. Light reported that this plan does include an additional $1.9 million for the body camera implementation, and both the Sheriff and Commonwealth Attorney have identified positions they would need to best implement the system. She said they have also used ARPA funding for year one of the 10-year maintenance plan, the ARPA revenue replacement, and through this plan, the County assumes reducing use of ARPA and relying more on the General Fund. She stated that rather than reducing the County's costs by $764K in FY23, they are backing it down slowly from FY24, 25, and 26 so it doesn't hit tax rate revenues as hard as it would in one year.

Ms. Light stated that partner agencies have increased about $6.3 million overall in the plan, and the jail estimates are early budget estimates for FY23, with that number coming down in the first year. She said that the jail and center are currently having difficulty getting staff to fill those correctional positions, and Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Fredericksburg changed their pay for deputies—making it much more competitive to be a deputy and reducing interest in the jail positions, which are difficult to hire anyway. She stated that the juvenile detention center correction officers are not included like Sheriff's Department or State Police in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), even though they have similar positions.

Ms. Vanuch said that before COVID, the County had built in pay raises for the regional jail and those were agreed upon by the regional partners like Fredericksburg, King George, and Spotsylvania—but when the pandemic happened and everyone had to make tough budget choices, that got taken off the table. She stated that the jail has made some ability to enact pay increases, but not nearly enough to be equitable to the pay scales of Stafford and other localities, which has created some recruitment issues. She noted that the jail superintendent has been asked to bring back a plan to all the partner agencies and regional counties, but if all the localities are not on board, it cannot move forward. She stated that Stafford is the largest financial contributor to the jail and cannot absorb all the cost of the increases; it must be equitable, and the other localities must pay their fair share. She added that it is really challenging to get that done, which is why it ultimately never ends up happening.

Ms. Bohmke stated that VACo has some legislation as it relates to the per diem amount, and she asked if that could go to all operating costs or only to maintenance, etc.

Ms. Vanuch responded that she asked Delegate Durant—who is co-sponsoring the legislation and working on it—to find that out, as it is the salary portion that is the challenge, and that's where they need the money to be an allocated funding source.

Mr. English said that in reference to the Juvenile Detention Center, he asked if the state contributed at all to it or if it was split up by localities.

Ms. Light explained that it was primarily split among localities, but there are some DPP-designated children who would have gone to state facilities; the state only has one correctional facility currently for juveniles, so they like to place them in what were originally supposed to be places closer to their homes—but how that's working isn't always ideal.

Ms. Light reported that the Rappahannock Regional Library figures assume in year one that the FY23 proposed budget reduces from prior year underfunding. She said that in FY22, Spotsylvania reduced their funding for the library by about $180K, and based on the MOU that all localities have signed with the library, that is supposed to reduce services within that county's library system. She said that the library is anticipating restoring those services, and they would need to charge that first $180K to Spotsylvania, with the costs on top of that shared equitably across the other jurisdictions.

Ms. Bohmke noted that the Spotsylvania appointee has asked Martha Hutzel, the library's executive director, exactly where those cuts were made within their system, so he can understand that better—and she does not know what their plans are for the coming year.

Ms. Light reported that in other partner agencies, the plan assumes a 3% increase in those annually; those are agencies that the Board may be very familiar with, such as GWRC, Failsafe, the Boys & Girls Club, and dozens of others.

Ms. Light stated that the plan assumes continued maintenance of general government employee positions per population, and an enterprise resource planning system. She said that their financial system was input in 1999 and was still the same one being used today; there have been some significant advances in technology over the past 20+ year, and the County could take advantage of some of those efficiencies. She said that they are assuming the need for two new positions in the next fiscal year, as well as some one-time funding for startup costs in the following fiscal year. She said they also noticed in the department requests that there is an emphasized increased need for technology to be more efficient to allow staff to be more practical in their jobs and produce more output; they also expressed a need for training—both general HR training and department-specific training.

Ms. Yeung said that she did not see the grants position in this information.

Ms. Light indicated that they are developing that position now and have reached out to other localities to ensure that it is properly graded and structured.

Ms. Light said that the next steps are to bring back any information at the Board retreat or another appropriate meeting, and the County Administrator's proposed budget would be presented on February 15.

Ms. Vanuch stated that she felt it was appropriate to bring this back at the Board retreat, to walk through priorities, the proposed tax rates, and projected real estate values. She asked if it would make sense to have Mr. Mayausky at that meeting to discuss revenues, as well as the fire chief to discuss a fire levy tax.

Mr. Presley stated that it would be part of the fire department's presentation on the SOC plan.

Mr. English asked how much money they generate from rescue calls.

Ms. Light responded that the ambulance fees generate about $2.5 million.

Mr. English said that was soft billing, and he asked if that figure was consistent.

Ms. Light replied that it was quite consistent and has remained $2.1-2.5 million for the past 5-6 years.

Mr. English said that when the Sheriff's Office responds to incidents with mental patients, they have to sit with them for hours at a time, which takes a deputy out of service for an extended period. He asked if there were a way to get reimbursed for those resources, perhaps through the state, and asked if anyone had looked into whether that might be an ambulance fee.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she set up a tour of Fairfax County's diversion program in February, which was set up by the program's chairman, Jeff McKay. She said that the program was all geared about mental health, and they could have two Supervisors attend without it qualifying as a formal meeting.

Ms. Vanuch said that last year, the Board had approved a full-time position because [they] were saying they didn't have the full-time staff to bill all of the ambulances—and she would like to see a five-year historical average to see what return on investment that position had.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to see more definite numbers as it relates to net revenues in excess of expenditures as it related to FY21, so they could see where they have been from a revenue/expense side—such as the cigarette tax, which staff has said would decrease significantly and might not even be relevant in their budget. She said that she would also like to know what revenues the County brings in that are dedicated to certain sources and are not available in the General Fund.

Ms. Yeung asked what impact COVID has made and whether staff has made any adjustments.

Ms. Light responded that they looked at the consumption revenue taxes such as sales tax, meals tax, and TOT, which they thought would take the brunt of the impact. She said that sales and meals taxes continue to be relatively strong, and the Board increased the meals tax to 5% in 2021, and while it has slowed, it was not a big decline. She said that in the 2009 timeframe, the meals tax remained fairly constant; people still go out to eat, which is the story there. She said that they saw a big drop in TOT because of the change in people traveling, but that revenue in 2022 is coming back stronger than what they've seen in the past 10-12 years; staff is hopeful that those will come back and remain consistent.

Ms. Light said that they've been hit the hardest with Parks and Recreation revenues, which used to bring in about $1.5-2 million in fees, and that's been reduced to about $850K-$1 million. She stated that staff isn't sure that people are comfortable coming back or that programs are able to come back in the same way they were before.

Mr. Coen asked if the amounts shown on Slide 7 regarding funds available would be dedicated to certain items on this and whether that would change future investments and future debt, etc.

Ms. Vanuch restated that as whether they could spend $15 million on any of these things.

Mr. Coen stated that he would be interested to see the impact over the five years of applying some of that to body cameras or debt service, for example.

Ms. Light responded that staff could show the Board what they projected within the CIP to use some of those sources. A significant amount of that funding had been assigned to Aquia Station—but new CFO Jonathon Munch said that because of the interest rates, they should push that to the next station and be bond funded, with the next station such as Rock Hill being funded with mostly cash.

Ms. Allen stated that for the Board retreat, her only request was to see the impact legislation submitted as it relates to taxes would have on their projections.

Ms. Vanuch stated that she would like to have Treasurer Laura Rudy come to the retreat and discuss changing the billing dates for personal property and real estate, just to offer her expertise and opinion and how it might impact the five-year financial plan.

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN – UTILITIES FUND

Director of Utilities Chris Edwards stated that he was before the Board to discuss the Utilities Enterprise Fund Five-Year Financial Plan. Mr. Edwards provided an overview of the water and sewer system, stating that the system consists of two water plants and two wastewater plants in a water distribution and sewer collection system. He explained that the metrics on the slide show that the system serves a population of about 120,000, with the four treatment facilities treating over 7 billion gallons per year, all conveyed through about 1,300 miles of pipe. He stated that the big takeaway with the slide shown and the purpose of the presentation is because there is a relatively large system worth over $1 billion at this point, and it requires consistent operations and maintenance. He noted that the system is increasing in both population and size, and they generally see a 1.5-2% growth increase every year.

Mr. Edwards reported that the Utilities Enterprise Fund is self-supporting and is separate from the General Fund; the operational budgets and 3R program are funded by user fees or operating revenues, while capital projects—especially expansion projects and debt service—are funded by availability and pro rata. He said that pro rata is a program whereby development pays for parts of the system expansions that will benefit that development. He said that in 2010, the Board adopted the Utilities Fund financial policies, which were designed to provide stability while avoiding large rate increases; the rate adjustment dictates that the fund go up at least 75% of the increase in the Consumer Price Index. He noted that the CPI they use is a bit different, as there is one that specializes in water and sewerage maintenance, and there has been a 3.2% increase over the past year. He noted that while they are still working on the rates study, they are expecting that the minimum rate increase will help with the financial policy and rate study and will allow them to maintain consistency with their fiscal policy and maintain pace with inflation.

Mr. Edwards stated that with the five-year plan, there have been a few things in the past they've worked towards, the first being the 2018 Master Plan. He explained that the Master Plan is their main planning document for the Utilities Fund and helps with system expansion based upon growth, and it helped them identify in 2018 that they needed to make a focused effort to increase water and sewer services to the Centerport Parkway area. He said the 2021 Benchmarking Study started in 2019 and compared Stafford against about 100 other utilities, and they had high marks in operation and maintenance costs, as well as the number of water main breaks and employee turnover.

Mr. Edwards said areas identified to address were improving the renewal and replacement rate or money spent toward 3R, increasing asset management, and planning for retirements. He stated that they put together a five-year staffing plan to address all three of these things; the first year they were hoping to put the implementation together was for FY21, but COVID delayed that and the first year of the plan is FY22. He stated that in addition to the staffing plan, the pandemic impacted inflationary costs that have affected operation; supply-chain and distribution disruptions have led to delayed capital projects, in addition to operational issues.

Mr. Edwards reported that when they did the 2018 Master Plan, it had been about 15 years since it was last updated—and the goal is to get that on a five-year cycle to keep it consistent with the comprehensive plan and make sure they can plan for growth in the future, incorporate any changes into the capital program, and adjust pro rata fees to make sure they're keeping up with needs. He said that they are also trying to develop an asset management plan, which has become a management best practice and was revealed in the benchmarking study as something they needed to work on; they want to be able to use metrics to enhance the 3R programs and asset management programs, to help move them forward.

Mr. Edwards stated that there is a strong need for Stafford County to employ asset management to help recommend 3R projects, due to several factors: a lot of their infrastructure is getting older, with 28% of the 1,304 miles of water and sewer hitting their 50-year lifespan; four treatment facilities and half of pump stations are approaching 30 years in age, and a lot of renewal programs are needed to keep them in successful operation.

Mr. English asked about the piping in the south end of the County.

Mr. Edwards explained that the areas shown on the map in dark red are those older than 50 years—areas like Ferry Farm, Chatham Heights, and Falmouth Bottom. He said that Ferry Farm was the first subdivision they are working towards, and they are constantly trying to replace that piping; compared to putting in new piping, it's much slower, but they are at a pace to complete two to three miles per year but are hoping to ramp that up. He stated that for sewer, there are some technologies that allow them to line the pipe without having to dig down.

Mr. Coen said that he would be curious with the massive jump in inflation whether 75% is problematic, as there are people who are not getting by.

Mr. Edwards clarified that it's 75% of the CPI, so it's 2.5%—or an average of about $2 per month for a family that uses about 5,000-6,000 gallons per month.

Mr. Edwards presented the FY23-27 Utilities CIP budget, stating that they saw an increase in the overall CIP, due to project costs continuing to increase and adoption of the same escalators as the General Fund. He stated that they have a $168 million CIP over the next five years, which is broken down fairly evenly between water and wastewater. He noted that they are most proud of the fact that they've kept the CIP where two-thirds of funding is being spent on the 3Rs, with the last third dedicated to economic development and growth—the main area being Centerport Parkway, with a lot of projects in that area.

Mr. Edwards reported that they are requesting a Utilities Project Manager in FY23 to implement the overall CIP; the second is for a Water Plant Operator Trainee. He said the benchmarking study identified retirement eligibility as an issue, and one of their biggest vulnerabilities is with water plant operators. He said that each of the two facilities is required to have a senior operator on staff at all times, which requires at least eight Class 1 operators; of those eight, five are eligible for retirement now—and they have not been very successful hiring those people from the outside, so they want to be able to recruit and train people and have them ready to succeed the operators they already have.

Ms. Allen asked what hiring practices they are implementing to improve recruitment.

Mr. Edwards responded that one of the reasons they want this position is because they have started working with the school system; most water plant operators have a two-year degree, and some have a four-year degree. He said they hired an HR specialist this year, and they have been working with a group within the schools that does internships and pairs high school graduates up with internships that fit their skill set. He stated that they have tried to develop an internship with the hope they can partially pay for an associate degree and foster a pipeline for Stafford County. He said that the person might not have a four-year degree but may have a good skill set and be interested in getting an associate degree and entering this field.

Ms. Yeung commented that they need to look at a broad plan across the board and work with the school system, as they have programs and career technology that foster a pipeline of community members who live and work here. She mentioned Germanna as a potential partner and TRAIN, which has a viable program with the schools.

Mr. Edwards said that so far, this has worked out really well with first steps, and if it works out with this position, they would be considering it for other positions as well.

Ms. Light stated that this is definitely on their radar, in working with HR and the school system. She said they have had conversations with Germanna and would be partnering with them on ways to bring in a workforce.

Ms. Gary said that she was trying to understand the pro rata rates to keep with market conditions.

Mr. Edwards explained that pro rata is a program whereby if they build a waterline that goes to four vacant properties, when someone develops one of those, they will have to pay a share of that cost. He said that the issue with not updating costs for 10 years is that someone will be charged the rates from a decade ago, instead of the current rate.

Ms. Allen asked if there were grants available to help foster the replacement of workers in the pipeline.

Mr. Mike Smith responded that most of those grants are pay-for-their own infrastructure, and the County hooks them up to help those entities get a share of community service development funding—and they still have to assist. He noted that there were not a lot of grants for counties as wealthy as Stafford, although they did receive some for water and sewer treatment facility upgrades, which was millions, but not as much for the lines.

Ms. Allen clarified that she meant hiring lines.

Mr. Edwards said that they do utilize some small training programs and grants, such as those through Virginia Tech, but he does not know of any entire degree programs.

Mr. Smith stated that when they get employees, they will send them to Virginia Tech to get certifications; there are requirements for experience as well, and you have to work in the industry for six years before becoming a Class 1 operator. He said that it's important to bring in trainees, but it's also important to continue to try to recruit people who have been in the business—which is what the HR specialist is focusing on.

Ms. Bohmke asked what the HR specialist was saying in terms of why they weren't able to recruit these people.

Mr. Edwards said that most jurisdictions pay comparable rates for water plant operators, and most of them have experience in a treatment facility or system—so they don't want to leave their comfort zone when there is no difference in pay. He added that on the reverse side, Stafford has not seen a lot of its operators leave for other localities.

Ms. Gary commented that it seems they should be training people from within because they intend to stay.

Mr. Edwards agreed, stating that they asked for a trainee several years ago and got that position, but they are asking for one additional so they can have one at both facilities. He said that with five of the eight being able to leave, they only have so many open positions, and they are trying to create one or two extra positions to be able to train people and have people ready when the five or so retire.

Ms. Yeung asked if the rate increase of 2.5% was based on the rate study, as well as the financial policy passed.

Mr. Edwards explained that they keep the same rate study going from year to year, and it has all the CIP projects, all the operational revenues, and it will suggest what the minimum rate needs to be. He said that as a starting point, they have gone to the minimum rate of the 2.5% rate increase in the rate model.

Mr. Smith said that it's more of a rate model than a rate study, as it's not comparing Stafford to other jurisdictions. He said it's basically a computer model that looks at all expenses and revenues and ensures they have enough money to meet the debt capacity over the next 10 years, which has done through Raftelis, a local government utility analyst firm.

Mr. Edwards stated that it's looking at the next 10 years, to project rate increases, costs, etc. and ensure they're in a good position going forward.

Mr. Smith said there is a financial policy that tries to stem increases from being too high or too low. He said when they built this model, they looked at the projects they need and pushed some projects out, as there are only so many that can be covered with an incremental increase and the 75% of CPI. He stated that for 10 years, they didn't raise at all because of pro rata money from high growth—then they had to do huge increases for three years, which was not comfortable.

Mr. Edwards noted that they had three successive 9% increases, but that was at the same time they developed the fiscal policy that suggested they follow the CPI so they don't get back into that same position.

Ms. Yeung asked what problems they are seeing with by-right developments and water, as they are often pushing the County for help, and she wondered if there were a strain on the current system in terms of costs.

Mr. Smith stated that by-right developments outside of the service area are well and septic sites that have nothing to do with utilities. He said when they have failures and the County extends the water and sewer, the Board has to authorize that; there is an extension program that limits the amount they can spend. He noted that if they are inside the USA service area, the County has already calculated what growth could go there by that zoning and established what type of pipes were needed. He said that's part of the pro rata program, so when they do that development, they have to pay in for that pipe so current customers aren't charged for that growth.

Ms. Yeung commented that some individuals don't know that situation when they buy a home, and she hoped the County could put some information out there.

Mr. Smith stated that the developers/sellers do have to disclose that the homes are on well and septic, but a lot of people don't understand what that is.

Ms. Allen asked where the Master Plan can be accessed, given the new Board members.

Mr. Edwards responded that it's on the website, but he will send a link to Board members.

Mr. Smith noted that it's also part of the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Allen asked how viable the Master Plan is in terms of how often it should be updated, as they don't want to run into the pro rata situation again—and the last one done was 2018.

Mr. Edwards replied that they'd like to do them every five years, and it takes a year or so from start to finish, and they'd like to start it this year. He added that they'd like to keep it on a five-year cycle, especially after the comprehensive plan, and they'd like to follow behind that with the water and sewer Master Plan.

Ms. Allen stated that the Board should expect an RFP requesting funding for this.

Mr. Edwards said that is in the FY23 CIP budget.

Ms. Bohmke said on the first page, it says there are 36,000 sewer customers and 39,000 water customers, and she asked how many people in the entire County are on wells.

Mr. Edwards responded that it's hard to calculate the exact number of wells, but the population of Stafford County is 155,000-160,000. He said that there are typically three times the number of water customers, so his estimate is that they serve about 30,000-40,000 on well and septic.

Ms. Allen asked if they had been able to keep up to match the growth, especially given the staffing issues.

Mr. Edwards stated that it takes 5-10 years to even start executing what's in the Master Plan, and it's not just for that window, it takes all the land use and approaches it from a buildout scenario. He said they are generally focused on the entire County, so even if there are small changes, most of the infrastructure they're adding will serve their needs. He emphasized that the goal is to get 10-15 years down the road and ensure they're staying on top of planning and continuously doing updates. He added that if there's something that they know has not been incorporated into the Master Plan, they would have to look at it. He said that if there were a large change with something added to the USA that wasn't in the Master Plan, that could cause an issue; most of the time, they are looking at the USA and ensuring they can cover most everything in it.

RECESS

The Board recessed its work session at 6:08 p.m.

Frederick J. Presley
County Administrator

Crystal L. Vanuch
Chairman