BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION
APRIL 19, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – A work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Crystal Vanuch, Chairman, at 12:35 p.m. on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, in Meeting Room ABC, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

ROLL CALL – The following members were present: Crystal Vanuch, Chairman; Pamela Yeung, Vice Chairman; Meg Bohmke; Thomas Coen; Darrell English; and Monica Gary.

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

SENIOR TAX RELIEF
Ms. Vanuch said she would turn the meeting over to Ms. Light.

Ms. Andrea Light, Budget Director, said Mr. Mayausky was present, and he would be going over tax relief. She said Mr. Mayausky provided documents to the Board.

Commissioner of the Revenue Scott Mayausky said the Board was receiving a chart comparing the County's tax relief program to Spotsylvania, Fredericksburg, and Prince William because there was a session at one of the work sessions where they discussed raising the cap, as to where some of the comparable jurisdictions did. He said taxes were almost regional, so it was helpful to see the taxes of the region compared to the County. He said each County adopted a different philosophy. He said the County's philosophy was to keep the programs small but provide the most amount of relief to those who needed it the most.

Mr. Mayausky explained there was a two-tiered system in Stafford. He said if a taxpayer was under $35,000 with a net worth of $400,000 or less, excluding the house and up to 20 acres for the net worth calculation. He said taxpayers falling into this category would have 100% of their taxes would be exempted up to $3,000 dollars. He said anything over $3,000 would be taxed. He said the second-tier program was a 50% program from $35,000 to $40,000 with a net worth under $200,000—a higher income threshold and lower net worth. He said the house and acreage was also excluded in the net worth calculation. He said taxpayers who qualified received a 50% tax exemption capped at $3,000.

Mr. Mayausky explained that Spotsylvania had a one-tiered system, from $50,000 to $200,000. He said the cap for Spotsylvania was $1,500, so anything over $1,500 was taxed. He explained the

City of Fredericksburg increased its cap to $3,000 this year—it had been $1,500 prior to this year and was changed to adjust for inflation. He said Prince William County had a multi-tiered system. He said the income caps reached up to $95,000 with a net worth of $340,000, and taxpayers in that category could still receive tax relief. He said the issue came up because Mr. Coen proposed to increase the cap from $3,000 to $3,500. He said the cost to the proposed budget would be about $500,000, and the current budget would be impacted by half, $250,000. He said he was available for questions.

Ms. Vanuch asked if supervisors had questions. She reminded the Board that on the ups/downs, this item was not proposed to move forward. She said if it were to move forward, the ups/downs would have to change along with the tax rate.

Mr. Coen said he and Mr. Mayausky had worked on the item for the four years he had been on the Board. He asked Mr. Mayausky to delineate the actions taken up to this point and what was different from what was proposed.

Mr. Mayausky said the previous year, there was a three-tiered system, and the County eliminated one of the tiers and combined it with the 100% relief program to provide more tax relief. He said the hard filing deadline of April 1 was removed, so now there was a rolling deadline. He said if someone moved to the County in October and they qualified, they could get relief prorated for the months they lived in the County and did not have to wait for the next tax year to apply for relief.

Mr. English asked if the item was considered under the veterans item.

Mr. Mayausky said the item was separate.

Mr. Coen clarified if a taxpayer qualified under the veterans' program, they would not qualify under this program.

Mr. Mayausky said a taxpayer who qualified for the veterans' program would not want to apply for this program. He said this program required an application each year, and the veterans relief was a blanket exemption.

Ms. Vanuch asked if there were further questions.

Ms. Bohmke asked how the $400,000 net worth cap was determined for those who made less than $35,000 a year.

Mr. Mayausky said the number was based on a Board decision.

Ms. Vanuch said they voted on the $400,000 net worth cap the previous year.

Mr. Mayausky clarified Ms. Vanuch was partially correct. He explained the $400,000 had been in existence for a long time, over 10 years. He said the thought was that there were a lot of folks who owned land—and the decision was made prior to the exclusion of 20 acres from the net worth calculation, a new addition granted by the state. He said there were folks with higher net worth but lower incomes. He said there would be a higher net worth category with lower income limits. He said the income limit was lower than the surrounding localities. He said it was a specific discussion he had with the tax relief committee, and the Board voted to approve the requirement.

FINALIZE GENERAL FUND CHANGES TO PROPOSED BUDGET

Ms. Light displayed a chart with the ups and downs. She said on line 7, the real estate rate was adjusted to $0.85. She said it was discussed at the April 12 work session. She said item 8 was new to the Board. She said when the County prepared the assumptions for real estate, a certain dollar amount or percentage was held back during reassessment years due to appeals. She said appeals happened through the end of March. She said because the assessments increased significantly this year, 1% of the real estate was held. She said the appeal process was over, and the Commissioner of the Revenue Office had reviewed the appeals, and there was an increase of real estate revenue of $650,000. She said the County was typically closer than that.

Ms. Light noted line 11 of the chart. She said at the previous work session, she had stated the budget-to-budget rate for personal property was at $4.29, but that was a misstatement. She said the budget-to-budget rate for personal property was actually at $4.49. She said at $4.49, there was no change to the bills, citizens, or to the budget from what was discussed.

Ms. Light said the revenue for item 12, the increase to cigarette tax, was pushed further looking at the two months of revenue. She said it was moved to under $1.1 million. She said the County currently received over $100,000 in the last two months, and assuming the trend continued, the projection was conservative. She said those were the changes to all of the revenues.

Ms. Light addressed line 28. She said at the April 12 work session, it was discussed moving the government salary scale increase to midyear. She said because of changes to revenues and expenditures, the County was able to restore the government salary scale increase to a July 1 date for a pay raise, so all general government would have a pay raise of approximately 5%. She said it would be consistent with what was happening with the schools. She said the schools implemented their raises on July 1, and this year, the raises would be 5% for all employees, and between 5% and 19% for teachers on the teacher scale.

Ms. Bohmke said over the last two years with the changes to public safety, the County had looked at anniversary dates. She noted the schools on July 1, general government employees on July 1, and public safety staff would be on their anniversary date. She said the schools were a separate entity and the Board could not change their dates. She said from the Board's standpoint, while they tried to keep as much the same as they possibly could, she suggested the County implement the raises for its employees on anniversary dates as well.

Ms. Light said she would ask Shannon Wagner to speak to the possible difficulties of doing the raise on an anniversary date.

Ms. Wagner said the County could change to an anniversary date application. She said it had not been done for a couple of reasons. She said part of the reason was due to the performance evaluation process. She said in order to get the pay increase, the employee had to have a satisfactory performance evaluation which occurred between January and February of the year. She said the raise was scheduled to happen close to the date of the evaluation. She said from a workload perspective, it dramatically changed the effort required from staff to input the raises on an ongoing basis versus a onetime adjustment. She said there was no reason the County could not implement the raises on an anniversary basis.

Ms. Bohmke said if half of the staff for general government was hired in October, when would those employees receive a performance evaluation.

Ms. Wagner said all performance evaluations were done on a calendar year cycle. She said if an employee were hired after October 1, a performance evaluation was not required, but anyone who was hired from January 1 through October 1 would receive an evaluation on a calendar year basis during the January to February time frame, regardless of hire date.

Ms. Bohmke said for the people hired on July 1, they received an evaluation in January or February. She clarified all evaluations for all County employees had been completed for the year, except for those employees that were hired after October 1.

Ms. Wagner said there might be one or two minor exceptions, such as someone who had been on FMLA for a couple months. She said barring the exemptions, all County employee evaluations had been completed.

Ms. Vanuch said she understood the reasons that made it difficult to implement the raises on an anniversary basis. She asked if public safety employees went through the same performance evaluation process.

Ms. Wagner said they did.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the evaluations happened at the same time as County staff in January and February.

Ms. Wagner said that was correct.

Ms. Vanuch asked why it was a problem for County government but not an issue for public safety. She said the restriction was imposed on public safety, but it was difficult for the County government. She asked if more burden was being imposed on public safety.

Ms. Wagner responded when the public safety step scale was designed, it was designed primarily by public safety staff, and the procedure was their recommendation. She said the workload was increased, but it made sense to the public safety staff.

Ms. Vanuch asked who did the work for pay raises for the public safety staff.

Ms. Wagner said the HR staff did the work.

Ms. Vanuch clarified the staff did the work for the public safety employees. She asked what the other restriction was.

Ms. Wagner noted there would be increased workload on the HR staff. She said with a focal date increase, the system was able to be utilized, and if everyone received a 2% raise, the individuals who did not have a satisfactory performance evaluation could be excluded in one process. She said going to an anniversary date, separate transactions for each individual would be required.

Mr. Presley said the public safety salary step plan that was implemented was based upon the other plans in the region, and they were based on hire dates because the steps were based on years of service. He said it was implemented at the recommendation of Major Dembowski. He said the recommendation was seen as the best way to implement the step plan even though it caused other issues.

Ms. Vanuch said a scale adjustment and a salary increase for County government were being discussed. She said she would prefer parity with public safety. She said she did not like that public safety had to wait. She said the County had to find $800,000 to ensure public safety received raises on July 1, or County government would implement the raises on the employee's anniversary date. She said it made more sense because it created parity with the public safety employees.

Ms. Bohmke asked if public safety staff could address the Board to provide more clarity. She said it would be helpful if the public safety staff would indicate whether it was a big deal.

Ms. Vanuch said her point was not about changing the public safety schedule, her point was that there was inequity with County government.

Major Robert Dembowski said when there was a step in public safety, the step was guaranteed, so they would continue to earn that salary until the next anniversary date. He said for general County government, they received a percentage increase, so if they were hired in May, they would only receive the percentage increase in pay for part of the fiscal year. He said if someone started in July, they would receive the same benefit for the whole fiscal year. He said for public safety, he said that as long as the program was funded, there should be another step the following year. He said the same guarantee did not exist for general County government staff. He said having the percentage increase on July 1 would provide incentive for the entire fiscal year because the pay for the following year was unknown.

Ms. Vanuch said every year she had been on the Board, general government had gotten a raise, and there had been equal pay raises for the Board and public safety. She said the intent of the public safety pay scale was that the step increase would always be funded, even if a cost-of-living increase could not be afforded on the scale. She said a proposal had not been brought forward that stated County government would not receive at least a 3% raise, essentially a step increase. She said she understood the intent when the step program was adopted, but from a practicality standpoint, it was not what happened on the Board side. She said if public safety was given a step, County government is proposed to have a 3% increase.

Mr. English said that 5% was the cost of living across the board, so all employees received the 5% increase. He asked if he was correct.

Ms. Light confirmed that he was correct.

Mr. English said public safety did not have to wait for the 5% increase.

Ms. Vanuch explained public safety staff had to wait for the step increase. She said public safety staff had to wait for the scale enhancement. She said if an employee's anniversary was January 1, they received the cost-of-living increase on the current scale on July 1.

Mr. English said it was 1.5%.

Ms. Vanuch said the employee would then receive the step increase on the anniversary date. She said for County government employees, they received the whole 5% raise on July 1. She said it was not fair.

Mr. English said he was under the impression the employees would receive a 5% raise across the board on July 1.

Ms. Vanuch said it was not the case. She said at the last board meeting, it was made more equitable by changing the date to January 1 for the general government salary increase. She said the employees would receive a 3.5% raise on July 1, and they would receive the 1.5% raise on January 1. She said changing the date to January 1 saved $260,000 compared to July 1. She asked if the Board wanted to make it equitable with the public safety step program and make the 1.5% increase happen on January 1for general government, or did they want to spend the extra $260,000 and have the raise on July 1.

Ms. Bohmke asked if a change were made, would the Board need to determine if the change was permanent. She asked if the decision would have to be made every year.

Ms. Vanuch said she was not sure they could bind a future board.

Ms. Bohmke said the proposal seemed awkward.

Ms. Gary said she would keep listening.

Ms. Vanuch said the presentation should continue.

Ms. Light said on line 35, there was a Communication Officer III position. She said in discussions with the sheriff's department, it was considered moving the positions from four at the beginning of the year to four at mid-year. She said there were vacancies in that position, and the sheriff's department had the ability to overfill. She said the positions could be moved to mid-year and the sheriff's department was comfortable with the change.

Ms. Bohmke said when the justification for the positions was considered, the positions could not be delayed. She said the justifications for those positions stated there were not enough people. She said if some positions were vacant, then the positions would put the department where it needed to be. She asked how the sheriff's department was able to wait.

Major Dembowski said it was sheer timing. He said the challenges related to staffing, and the process the candidates had to undergo to be certified as a dispatcher and to progress through the hiring process took time, and with the number of vacancies that still needed to be processed and with the lack of qualified applicants, the department believed that processing the vacancies to raise the ceiling in January would still be processed up to that point. He said if they were lucky, the positions would be filled by January, but they had gone 10 years without raising the ceiling. He said they were okay with delaying the positions until mid-year as worked through the hiring process for the vacant positions.

Ms. Bohmke said if there were good candidates, then the positions would be filled. She said the desire would be to continue to fill more positions so there were better staffing options.

Major Dembowski said there were only so many people who were certified to train. He said if there were 9 or 10 new communication officers, there were only so many staff who were certified to train the new hires. He said it would alleviate work on the department because new hires could be released from training. He said department was trying to hire in an orderly fashion to not overburden the trainers.

Ms. Vanuch said if an application were opened and they received eligible candidates, and the department felt they over hired, they could still use the extra two positions if they fit with in the training constraints. She asked if they could be directed to come back before the Board, and if there was additional revenue or one-time funding to offset and allow the positions to be hired now. She said the Board wanted to provide flexibility to fit the positions into their needs.

Ms. Yeung said she did not have enough background information to make a decision. She said that coming from the School Board and hearing about step increases, she knew that teachers, parents, and school staff needed raises. She noted the necessary raises for public safety and other staff. She said it should be ensured the school would be funded because it continued to lose teachers. She said the teachers were the ones teaching the potential candidates for the job positions the County was trying to fill. She noted the school had its own autonomy, but it should be equitable across the board.

Ms. Vanuch said there was nothing on the table to remove any pay increase. She said the public watched the hearing, so she wanted to clarify the point. She said nobody had anticipated or proposed any changes to the school budget, or any raises to educators that were proposed in the budget. She said a resolution was requested to require the schools to propose the teacher compression pay scale that was proposed to the Board of a total of $23 million. She said the Board was not trying to change any pay raise for any educator.

Ms. Yeung said that was not what she was saying, and she believed the public understood what she was saying. She said constituents talked to her and stated that they did indeed receive raises, but when the raises were compared to those of County staff, they were different in terms of where they were and where they were today. She said there was no confusion that the Board was not taking anything off the table for the schools.

Ms. Vanuch said that outside of the public pay scale implementation, the school system had received equal pay raises. She said since she had been on the Board, she noted that the previous year teachers received a 5% pay increase, and the year prior they received a 3% raise. She asked Ms. Light to confirm the figures.

Ms. Light said it had been consistent with what the general government had received since she had been the Budget Director for six years. She said it had been consistent.

Ms. Yeung said it was still behind Prince William, Spotsylvania, and the other areas.

Ms. Gary said she was concerned with the number of mid-year positions. She said when those were considered along with the one-time funding, they were inquiring $2 million in expenses. She said there would be things that would continue to need to be funded, and while some expenses may be cut, the budget the following year would look different. She said the half year positions would become full-year positions that would need to be funded because the County created positions that it needed. She said she was open to other ideas to make it work. She said the plan worked for now, but she did not want people to be caught off guard with the budget increases the following year.

Ms. Vanuch asked Ms. Light if she knew the projected revenue to the County as far as an increase outside of personal property and residential tax increases—any of the additional developer fees, economic development, meals tax, and transient occupancy. She asked what those projected increases were for the following year. She said the answer could be given in percentages of the annual budget or in millions of dollars.

Ms. Light said for FY24, a 6.6% increase in revenue was anticipated. She said of that amount, the projected increase in real estate revenue, assuming the Board maintained an $0.83 tax rate, there would be a 2.2% increase, or a $7.7 million increase in revenue. She said of that, 9.7% would come from increase in real estate. She said there were significant decreases in the grants. She mentioned the ARPA grants that were not anticipated to carry over to the next year. She said there would only be about a 2.2% increase overall.

Ms. Vanuch asked about the 6.6% increase.

Ms. Light said she had misspoken because she had increasing projections for real estate. She explained that if the real estate tax rate were kept at $0.83 cents, she did not think it would be possible to keep the rate because there had to be increases for high school 6 and possibly for Hartwood, the CIP, and an elementary school. She said there would be an increase of about $4 million in debt service. She said Ms. Gary made a good point, that when these mid-year positions were considered, the cost could essentially be doubled for the next year. She said that the items that had been moved to one time funding, like the cyclical replacement, was something the County worked towards and they continued to gain ground every year. She said as long as things like equipment for the sheriff's department or fire and rescue could be procured, there did not need to be as much concern.

Ms. Gary said one of her bigger concerns regarding recurring costs outside of positions that were effectively going to double was the stormwater grant program. She said she foresaw the program increasing and requiring more funding because it was known there were a lot of issues. She said she wanted to bring the point up for discussion.

Ms. Yeung asked what the total value of one-time funding was.

Ms. Light responded that the total one-time funding included proffers, and if that was considered in the proposed budget, it was $14.6 million. She said some adjustments had been made in the ups and downs.

Ms. Yeung asked out of the $14.6 million in one-time funding, did it include the ARPA grant.

Ms. Light said the $14.6 million total did not include ARPA funding. She said it included funding such as the use of the fund balance, primarily for Rock Hill Fire Station, an all cash-funded project. She said there would be proffer funding.

Ms. Vanuch said Ms. Light was talking about all proffers, cash paying, and funding for the Rock Hill fire station along with other projects that had one-time funding. She said she assumed Ms. Yeung wanted to know what one-time funding would carry over to the next year's budget.

Ms. Yeung said she was about to ask that question once Ms. Light was finished speaking.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the two could be delineated.

Ms. Light said there would be things such as changes to sheriff's equipment, cyclical replacement in fire and rescue, and continuing to add vehicles to the sheriff's department. She said there was approximately $400,000 in that, but that did not mean that the carry-over cost for the following year would be $400,000. She said the cost could be integrated into the five-year plan, and there was usually a cyclical replacement integration within that. She said the one-time funding helped with the sheriff and fire rescue specifically so they could have the equipment and replacements when they needed them.

Ms. Yeung asked if any of the funding did not have to continue the next year.

Ms. Light said the County did not have to fund anything next year, but there would be increased needs for cyclical replacement of other items.

Ms. Bohmke noted line 97, which showed the items being funded on a one-time basis with one-time monies. She said some of those items would return for funding.

Ms. Bohmke said the line listed many of the one-time items that were funded, and they would likely return the following year.

Ms. Vanuch said it happened every year.

Ms. Light said on line 41, the transport units staffing, on the April 12 work session, it was discussed moving the staffing from two units, a north and a south, to just one unit. She said in a discussion with Deputy Chief Grainger, the Fire and Rescue department would prefer to have two positions at mid-year, and they could make the positions work with the training schedules while maintaining a north and a south unit.

Ms. Light said on line 62, it was discussed at the April 12 work session to use $2 million of year-end savings for transportation funding to reduce the toll on personal property. She said through savings and revenue increases, the amount had been reduced to $1 million. She said on line 64, there was another examination of vacancy savings and increased slightly. She said line 66, the County evaluated its health insurance. She said over the last few years there were healthy savings in the health insurance line. She said those savings typically went to fund other post-employment benefits (OPEB) per the Board's financial policy. She said in FY22, the County was already considering a $1.5 million savings. She said for the general fund, the County felt comfortable bringing the health insurance down $700,000 for FY23. She said the Board would be asked to maintain the health insurance reserve from FY22.

Ms. Vanuch said after people enrolled in the health care plan in May, there was a desire of the Board to look at bringing back to the agenda outside of the budget process the waiver of what employees would pay into the health insurance costs for the year. She said the change would not change the ability to be able to look at the waiver using the OPEB savings.

Ms. Light said that was correct. She said there was still 21 savings in the fund balance. She said those funds would be used to fund the waiver. She said the balance would be monitored through mid-year, and if the fund balance looked like it would not be sufficient, then they could bring the item back before the Board for additional strategies.

Ms. Vanuch asked at what meeting Ms. Light thought the item would be brought back before the Board.

Ms. Light said open enrollment would be completed at the end of May.

Ms. Vanuch asked if it would be the first meeting of June.

Ms. Light said she believed the first meeting of June would work, and options could be provided to the Board with approval at the second meeting in June.

Ms. Vanuch said that was perfect.

Ms. Light said on line 67, part of the analysis for the past few days was to examine the Clerk of the Circuit Court. She said the Clerk of the Circuit Court stood out because they had in the past received TTF funding from the state's Comp Board after the fact. She said because the money was unexpected, it was always ensured there was a sufficient budget for the Circuit Court Clerk. She said the Comp Board had changed the policy, so the clerk would receive the TTF funding, so the budget for the clerk could be reduced by about $75,000 and still provide the clerk with the same level of funding they had been spending.

Ms. Light said on line 68, the general insurance were able to reduce the budget by $50,000. She said on line 69, wayfinding signs were evaluated, and funding could be removed from those of about $5,000.

Ms. Vanuch asked if this impacted Mr. Spence's plans.

Ms. Light said on line 82, in the last work session, there were discussions with the Board regarding removing the development initiatives from County administration of about $82,000. She said that was the increase back to FY21. She said considering what the funds had been spent on and other strategies, it was recommended removing the entire $220,811 in funding. She said if the Board desired to have studies done or development projects in the future, one-time funding could be examined that aligned with the approvals of contracts.

Ms. Light said there were one-time funding changes. She said line 98 was a transfer to the schools of $1 million. She said the transfer supported the one-time funding request, and it was consistent with what the schools had requested in the past. She said it was not part of the proposed budget, so it needed to be added back to be consistent with what the superintendent had requested. She said it was consistent with FY21 and FY22.

Mr. English asked what the $1 million would be used for.

Ms. Light said the funds would be used for buses or other one-time items, such as maintenance.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the $1 million was part of the $8 million fund.

Ms. Light said the $1 million was in addition to the $8 million.

Ms. Vanuch said it would be a total of $9 million.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration Chris Fulmer said it was still an $8 million increase in the County transfer. He said the $1 million was a carryover from the FY22 budget. He said it was expected that there would be 1.5% to 3% in savings from the current fiscal year. He said the fund would rollover, and it was requested that the $1 million automatically rollover to the FY23 budget to help balance it.

Ms. Bohmke said she anticipated the money would be used for changes to the bus schedule that the School Board voted on.

Mr. Fulmer said one-time items were identified that the funds could be used for. He said for bus purchases, there were 12 budgeted buses in the FY23 budget.

Mr. Coen said the $1 million could be used for the supplies that were added on to help, if the School Board desired. He asked if it was up for the School Board to choose where the greatest need was.

Mr. Fulmer said the $1 million was not an increase from the FY22 to FY23 budget because the $1 million was built in as a carryover from the FY21 budget to the FY22 budget. He said if something were to be added, such as the adjustment to the school side allocation, there would need to be an additional $1 million. He said the subject $1 million was to keep the budget balanced as it was in FY22.

Ms. Gary said on the request for the additional three-hour funding and school supplies, the $1 million funding would not go to those aforementioned items. She asked if those requests could be explained.

Mr. Fulmer said it was a recurring item in the budget. He said the way funding was allocated to the school sites would be revisited. He said the funding went directly into the classroom to relieve pressure on teachers and parents for the purchasing of school supplies. He said they wanted to eliminate the need for a class supplies list, but in order to do so, more school site funding had to be provided directly. He said more money would be put in the hands of teachers for items and materials needed in the classroom to prevent teachers from relying on their own funds.

Ms. Gary said parents who could afford the supplies often bought more to cover the parents who could not afford the school supplies. She said teachers picked up the backend. She said if the classroom supplies were funded, it would streamline the process and let teachers focus on educating the children rather than how to acquire extra materials and supplies.

Ms. Yeung said in previous years, the $1 million had been passed on—when the full amount was not used, it was saved to be used the following year. She said in terms of funds for supplies, there were Title I schools receiving funds to pay for supplies. She said there were middle class families that may need assistance, and there were wealthy families that might buy more products, and there was the PTAs that planned to ensure all schools had funds across the board to help the schools with supplies.

Ms. Bohmke said she had a question not related to the schools. She said it was regarding line 85, the northern Virginia land conservation staff person through the MOU. She said she did not see a copy of the MOU. She said it appeared the County funded 50% of the position for one year. She asked what happened in the years after the first year.

Ms. Light responded that she had spoken with Ms. Baker, who said an MOU would be done for a certain set of time, whatever was decided by the Board, and that would be a set rate throughout the period. She said an example of the MOU would be shared with the County Attorney before coming back before the Board.

Ms. Bohmke said she did not want to take on additional expenses. She said for public perception, she was supportive of 50% funding, but not 100%.

Ms. Vanuch said once it was in there, it was set. She said it was only $15,000. She said at the last budget work session, her druthers would be that after the MOU was reviewed, and it was decided it was something the Board wanted to pursue, the Board could find $15,000 to pay for the position for at least a year. She said if 100% of the cost were to shift to the County the following year, it was a decision the Board had to determine. She said she understood Ms. Bohmke's perspective, and that was the risk. She said there was very little to prevent funding from going to the position.

Ms. Gary asked if it was funded for 50% because the County funded half the position. She clarified that it was not a mid-year position.

Ms. Vanuch said the County would fund half the position at a mid-year start. She said the County did not yet have the MOU. She suggested that the item be removed completely, but it could be added in. She said there was no MOU, so the County did not know if it would move forward with the agreement. She said to put an item in the budget that they did not even know would move forward seemed very silly. She said if they decided to vote against the MOU, then the County funded a position for the land conservation that they will not have. She asked the Board if the item should be removed or left in the budget.

Mr. English said he agreed that the position was needed, but it was dangerous not to have an MOU. He said he supported removing the item because it was easy to put back in. He said he was not against the position.

Ms. Gary said it was a minor amount to commit.

Ms. Vanuch said it was not the amount.

Ms. Gary said it was the amount because the County was trying to get a certain tax rate. She said the amount was trying to be reduced.

Ms. Vanuch said $15,000 would not change, it was about good budget management practice of hiring employees who worked for the County versus people who do not work for the County.

Ms. Gary said she believed the position was necessary for conservation. She said she was present at the meeting where the item was brought forth. She said she would like to move forward with the item.

Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning Kathy Baker clarified that the County would only fund 50% of the position funding each year. She said the MOU was coming back before the Board for the first with the CEDC in May. She said it was based upon whether the Board would fund the position and whether it would be built into the MOU. She said the plan was to have an employee for at least two years. She said the MOU was based on whether the position would be funded. She said there were still things that could be done as part of the partnership. She said the partnership was intended to include the position.

Mr. English clarified that the position would be half funded for at least two years.

Ms. Baker said if that was however long the Board decided. She said if the position lasted five years, there would still be a 50% split.

Mr. English said that answered his question.

Mr. Coen said if the MOU was not approved by the Board but the funding was approved, then the money would be carried over at the end of the year. He said it would not disappear and could be utilized the next year.

Ms. Yeung echoed Mr. Coen's comments. She asked if there was a way that the funding could be made contingent on the MOU being funded for a year.

Ms. Light said the funding could be put in a contingency fund. She said the County Administrator's office could then administer the funds if the MOU came back approved. She said the funding would be available and not hold up the process of getting the MOU approved.

Ms. Bohmke said she wanted to ensure the County had the ability to sign the MOU.

Ms. Vanuch said she believed contingency funds was a good middle ground. She asked if there were other items for Ms. Light to cover on the ups and downs.

Ms. Light said she had covered everything she needed to cover. She said it was up for the Board's input as to what they would like to see regarding changes to the budget and appropriations and the tax rate resolutions.

Ms. Vanuch said the proposal at the previous meeting was to leave the personal property at an equalized rate, not to increase the meals tax from 5% to 6%, and everything else stayed the same. She said the proposal at the previous work session was the tax rate at $0.85. She said this was point where it was identified whether or not there were any changes that needed to be proposed to get alignment and know what would happen with the tax rate.

Ms. Yeung noted the battalion chief. She said she thought it was discussed that the item would be brought back before the Board to discuss the three positions.

Ms. Light said the battalion chiefs were listed under line 40, and they were removed. She said they were included in the proposed budget at a mid-year request. She said fire and rescue would advocate returning the positions to the budget, but they were currently removed.

Ms. Yeung said it seemed to be a lot of money when considering the individuals working 24 hours at a time. She said the first month of being a supervisor in Garrisonville, she attended two house fires in one week. She said she knew the positions were needed. She said she was unsure why the Board did not examine closer the needs of constituents in total rather than just the position. She asked if a discussion could be had on the topic.

Ms. Bohmke said she would not be opposed. She said the Board needed to discuss the item along with another transport unit. She said she believed another medic transport unit was needed. She said the fire chief had agreed that the Board would fund two of those mid-year. She said she believed all three should be funded.

Ms. Vanuch asked if she meant the two transport units.

Ms. Bohmke asked whether three were proposed.

Ms. Vanuch said it had always been two. She said the half-year cost would be doubled. She said $719,000 would have to be added to the budget.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the people could be hired, or if they were better off waiting for mid-year.

Fire Chief Cardello said there was a recruit class that started in July, so they could make it until January. He said the proposal started mid-year. He said the recruit class hired in July would account for the people hired in January.

Ms. Vanuch said the positions were over hired, they went through the recruit academy, then they become effective.

Ms. Bohmke said if there was an immediate need for the positions, why were they not going out and hiring people from other places in the Commonwealth. She asked why the academy part had to be done. She wanted to know why the County could not hire the people immediately.

Fire Chief Cardello said everyone in the region, especially up north, were competing in the same labor market, and everyone was hiring. He said for the County to bring someone in, it was difficult for them to hire someone who was already certified, so they put new recruits through the academy.

He said one class would graduate in two weeks, 24 extra hires. He said 12 people were slated to go to Company II, and the rest would fill vacancies.

Ms. Bohmke clarified that the department could not get the work done currently.

Fire Chief Cardello confirmed the work could not be done before July 1.

Mr. English clarified that if the people who were certified were hired, they would likely require a higher pay rate because they were already trained.

Fire Chief Cardello said if the employees came from another organization and only had limited experience, they could be hired at a lower rate. He said if someone had six or seven years of experience, they would require a higher pay.

Ms. Gary asked how the quality of life for the battalion chiefs would be impacted if there were three more.

Fire Chief Cardello said there were 12 stations full of suppression and EMS staff supervised daily. He said nearly every day there was one volunteer unit. He said there were sometimes 16 different units of people in the County providing service, and one battalion chief had to supervise them. He said they ran the emergency calls, but they also planned and directed activities, were responsible for health and safety, and mentored and developed the employees. He said having one battalion chief was not working.

Ms. Gary said she was speaking more to the person in the job. She asked what their life looked like not having another three battalion chiefs.

Fire Chief Cardello said the battalion chiefs did an impossible amount of work. He said they felt significantly overwhelmed and could not get to all of the required work.

Ms. Gary asked what happened when someone got sick and required a day or two of sick leave.

Fire Chief Cardello said another person would have to be brought back on overtime, or someone needed to be promoted to captain.

Ms. Gary asked how often that occurred.

Fire Chief Cardello said it happened a couple times per week with annual leave, sick leave, and details out of training.

Ms. Yeung asked what would happen to the constituents who needed the support if one of the three employees were lost.

Fire Chief Cardello explained it was a position filled by three people. He clarified that the question was about if one employee left and there was a vacancy. He said someone who did not have the experience, knowledge, or background had to be brought up.

Ms. Yeung said there was a risk.

Fire Chief Cardello said it was a risk. He said to be able to split the County into two sections, where one battalion chief could focus on five or six stations at a time would be a game changer.

Ms. Yeung noted a new fire station was being built. She said she wanted the item back in the budget. She said she wanted to know how the Board would support the three positions.

Ms. Bohmke said she understood the battalion chief discussion and the complexity. She asked what about more boots on the ground. She said if there was a tradeoff between battalion chiefs and more crew, where were more career employees needed.

Fire Chief Cardello said there was a significant gap on the east side of the County, Brooke, Widewater, and White Oak.

Ms. Bohmke said that was discussed at the beginning of the budget season. She said the two ambulances were discussed. She said the ambulances were going to Berea and one other place.

Fire Chief Cardello said the other ambulance would go to Garrisonville. He said they would serve the North Suburban district and the South Suburban district.

Ms. Bohmke asked what stations they would go to.

Fire Chief Cardello said they would go to stations 12 and 14.

Ms. Bohmke asked where would the rest of the staff be located between Widewater, White Oak, and Brooke.

Fire Chief Cardello said there would not just be transport units. He said personnel would be included so that there could be transport units or a fire truck. He noted suppression staffing on the east side and that there were just ambulances in those areas.

Assistant Chief Joe Grainger said that the position request with the FY23 budget was broken down into three areas. He said the first area was the battalion chiefs to span a control challenge. He said there was one battalion chief responsible for 12 districts and about 60 people on duty every day. He said they could not effectively do their job, they were overworked, and anecdotally, the employees felt that they wanted a responsible battalion chief who could help them do better at their job.

Assistant Chief Joe Grainger said the second area was the two ground transport units. He said those were based off the standards of cover. He said call data from 2017 to 2019 was examined. He said it was demonstrated that there were two ambulances outside the unit area utilization. He said the ambulances, based on the data set from 2017 to 2019, were overworked, so two more units had to be added to distribute the call load.

Assistant Chief Joe Grainger said the third area was related to resource distribution and capacity. He said three areas were identified—Wide Water, Brooke, and White Oak. He said an ambulance was staffed in those areas. He said fire suppression services were not effectively delivered 24/7. He said the volunteers worked when available on staffing units. He said in the areas that were rural and there were few hydrants, the ability to get staff on fire engines to fires expeditiously was important. He said that was why increased staffing was requested for Widewater, Brooke, and White Oak. He said those were the three categories of the position request in FY23.

Ms. Gary said she would like to see career and volunteer relations strengthen. She said it would help the entire department. She asked if the requests would affect that by having people who were not stressed work on those items within the department.

Assistant Chief Joe Grainger asked if Ms. Gary referred to the Widewater, Brooke, and White Oaks staffing.

Ms. Gary said sure.

Assistant Chief Joe Grainger said it was a great way to strengthen the volunteer system. He said in 2019, career staff were placed at two stations in the County. He said one of the stations did not work out for various reasons. He said it worked at the other station and still worked to the day. He said it was because of the relationship—it removed pressure from the volunteer system at the station. He said there were firetrucks with volunteers and career staff onboard. He said the pressure was relieved from the volunteers because they did not feel as if they had to be there every night. He said career staff could help train the new volunteers. He said it was proven that it could work and did work.

Ms. Gary said she looked forward to continuing to see that happen.

Ms. Vanuch said a lot of time had been spent on the item. She said there were three items on the agenda. She noted the Board meeting started at 3 p.m. She said the discussion should be paused. She noted Ms. Yeung made a recommendation the battalion positions be added back. She said she did not think anyone disagreed that the staffing needs had to be addressed. She mentioned that over the last two years, 12 fire fighter positions had been added along with multiple other positions and other infrastructure with fire and rescue. She said fire and rescue had discussed moving forward a bond referendum to add additional fire stations outside of the CIP process—a significant investment into the community. She said for half a year, three battalion chiefs would cost $190,336.

Ms. Light said that the figure provided to Ms. Vanuch was the mid-year figure.

Ms. Vanuch said the question was whether there was $380,000 in the budget for the positions. She asked Ms. Light if she could provide the Board more context.

Ms. Bohmke said that at the beginning of the conversation, with the real estate appeals, they held the funding. She said there was $650,000.

Ms. Light said the $650,000 was included.

Mr. Coen said in the request for the $381,000, looking at an $0.85 tax rate, if the Board wanted to provide the three positions, how much of an increase to the tax rate would be required.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the item would be brought back before the Board later in the day for a decision.

Ms. Light said the item would come back before the Board at the 7 p.m. meeting. She said there would be a response before the meeting, so an email would be sent to the entire Board so they were all aware.

Ms. Vanuch asked if there were other proposed changes.

Mr. Coen noted that information had been received from the museum about the transient occupancy tax.

Ms. Vanuch said the topic was on the agenda.

Mr. Coen said that he was strongly in favor of the elderly relief. He said he did not think he had support for it. He said he would advocate for it in future budgets.

OTHER FUND CHANGES

Ms. Light said there would be a quick review of the other fund changes. She said to go back to the question regarding the three battalion chiefs, it was 0.002 pennies, so the tax rate would be $0.852 to fund those three battalion chiefs.

Ms. Light said there would be a quick update to the Board to let them know what other funds had changed since the proposed budget had been presented. She said there had not been enough time to discuss the items over the previous work sessions. She said because there was a projected increase in transient occupancy tax revenue, there would be an increase in the tourism fund for revenues and expenditures. She said there were some significant changes to transportation based on VDOT updated projections. She said Garrisonville would be moved out one year. She said increases to revenues and expenditures would be created.

Ms. Light said the capital projects fund would increase due to a dog park at Mountain View and included Hartwood Elementary School. She said two projects were removed in the Garrisonville service district—the Salisbury Drive and Flatford Road sidewalk projects because they did not receive any funding. She said it reduced the revenues and expenditures, but those were 80% to 20%, and the 20% was coming from fund balance, so there was no adjustment to the tax rate.

Ms. Vanuch asked before moving to agenda item 4, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), could the Board address agenda item 5, Stafford Museum Funding first. She said more time would be spent on the CIP, so she wanted to ensure there would be enough time for the Museum funding.

MUSEUM FUNDING

Ms. Light said a request had been brought before the Board at the public hearing from the museum to look at 1% of their transient occupancy tax to support museum operations. She said the 1% was about $400,000. She said the museum had about $640,000 in fund balance that was restricted for their use. She said the museum proposed to take fund balance to replenish that over the next year and a half. She said it would create a funding issue in FY24 if 1% of the transient occupancy tax were dedicated to the museum. She said another option the Board could consider was the remaining funds, funds in excess of the budget for transient occupancy, be dedicated in full to the museum to add to their fund balance for their future use. She said it did not provide a consistent revenue stream, but it would provide revenue for future use.

Ms. Vanuch said that the first option was that the money was held in reserve, so the museum could not spend it now. She said the museum proposed to adjust the policy to free up the funds. She said the request would not change anything in the general fund or what was available to the Board, it was essentially swapping funds.

Ms. Light said it would be swapping funds. She clarified the museum was allowed to spend the funds if they brought a resolution before the Board and the Board approved it. She said the entire fund balance could be drawn down for a purpose.

Ms. Vanuch said Mr. Mayausky had discussed the issue with her. She said she was under the impression the reserves could not be utilized. She said if the funds could be utilized with Board direction, she asked if Mr. Mayausky was satisfied with that. She said she did not see a need to change it if it were the case.

Mr. Mayausky said the reserves could be utilized. He said there was a handshake agreement, and the museum would come before the Board with a plan before requesting to draw down funds. He said as the museum construction was planned and programs and outreach were expanded, it was found that a dedicated revenue stream would assist in future planning as well as fundraising. He said the museum would be willing to exchange the pot of money for the dedicated funding stream. He said it was part of the Board's priorities as identified in the 2040 strategic plan, that a funding stream for the museum had to be identified.

Ms. Vanuch summarized that the museum would give the County its cash, and in turn, the County would provide the museum with a dedicated revenue stream. She said the Board would be at net zero until 2024.

Mr. Mayausky said the Board would be net zero through the budget, and they would have to plan accordingly the next budget cycle.

Ms. Vanuch asked the Board if they were clear on the issues. She said she needed direction because she felt a resolution should be proposed.

Ms. Bohmke noted there were two different numbers. She mentioned $640,000 in reserves and that the sheet had $688,000. She asked which one was correct.

Ms. Light said she would look the answer up as she asked her question.

Ms. Bohmke said the $640,000 or the $688,000 would be given to the County, and the funds would be added to the general fund. She continued that 1% of the transient occupancy tax would be collected for the next two years. She asked if there was a maximum of $235,000. She asked what happened in the transient occupancy tax was much lower. She asked what if they went into a pandemic again.

Mr. Mayausky said she might have older numbers, so he would work with Ms. Light to ensure the Board had the most up to date figures. He said the museum was not just looking for a revenue stream for the next two years, they were looking for one in perpetuity. He said if the transient occupancy tax were to dip, then the museum would have to budget accordingly. He said they were working on a fundraising plan. He said he distributed a packet that had a business plan which included a fundraising plan. He said the museum would have to rely on fundraising if the transient occupancy tax decreased. He said the plan would be revied every six months. He said a budget was developed annually.

Ms. Bohmke said she hated receiving last minute items. She said they were voting on the budget. She said she wished the information were available sooner.

Ms. Yeung said she reviewed the packet. She said she was interested why the request was last minute. She asked why it was not a straight pass through.

Mr. Mayausky asked Ms. Yeung to clarify her question.

Ms. Yeung meant the various back and forth process with the funds.

Mr. Mayausky explained in 2002, the Board created a museum committee appointed by the Board. He said at the time, 1% of the transient occupancy tax had been designated to fund the museum. He said during the Great Recession, the Board temporarily suspended the 1% transient occupancy tax. He said it was supposed to be returned when revenue settled out, but it was not. He said that was why the money was still sitting in the account, because at the time it was collected, the museum was an arm of the Board. He said it was no longer an arm of the Board. He explained the museum was now a 501(c)(3). He said it was a separate foundation, but the Board still held the money.

Ms. Yeung said that in addition to the money the County was holding, the museum requested the 1% of the transient occupancy tax that was originally promised.

Mr. Mayausky said the museum would like to have the 1% restored. He said in exchange, understanding the budget issues, the museum was willing to exchange the pot of money for the dedicated funding stream.

Ms. Yeung mentioned the museum's use of "our story." She said she wanted the real story to be told. She said she had lived in the County for 30 years. She mentioned the narrative that the County started "from tobacco." She said the real story should be told—that it came from the river and there were slaves in the County. She said if she did not see the change in the story she would not vote for the request.

Mr. Mayausky said the past two years had been focused on diversifying the committee. He said they were looking at partnerships with the NAACP and a number of community groups, among others. He said the museum did not want to tell the story from one perspective.

Ms. Yeung said they had Mr. Frank White. She said she could connect the museum to other people if necessary.

Mr. Mayausky said the museum recognized that it may have been a weakness in telling the story in the past. He said the museum wanted to correct that moving forward.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the proposal was understood. She asked what the Board had to vote on in order to implement the request. She asked the Board what its desire was.

Ms. Light said the Board would have to vote in its budget resolution to add 1% as dedication to the museum fund. She said to alleviate the burden through the use of their fund balance. She said it would be added to a resolution to have it prepared for the Board if they desired.

Ms. Vanuch mentioned the fund balance being transferred to the general fund. She said it was either $640,000 or $688,000. She asked if the transfer would be extra one-time additional funding that could be used on another budget item.

Ms. Light said it would have to backfill. She said the budget relied on the funding for the1%. She said the budget would have to be examined to look at the expenditures that could be considered one-time. She said vehicle replacement for the general fund or the County could be considered.

Ms. Vanuch said the request would have an impact to the budget. She said the County would have to find an additional $640,000 to backfill the budget.

Ms. Gary remarked that the request was not last minute. She said the Board had heard the item before. She said she did not know why it kept coming up. She said the conversation had been ongoing for a few weeks from her understanding. She said many people came in and spoke from the museum in support of the request. She said she was in support of the request. She said the request could potentially generate more revenue that what was currently available. She said she did not mind increasing the percentage.

Ms. Vanuch asked a percentage of what.

Ms. Gary said of the tax rate.

Ms. Vanuch asked if she meant of the real estate tax rate.

Ms. Gary said yes. She said she wanted the request approved. She said she did not understand the effect it would have with Ms. Vanuch's question, but her position was not changed. She said in response to Ms. Yeung's comments, there were people excited to work on the project. She said there was the diversity coalition that wanted to sit down and have conversations. She said for months she had been speaking with different people. She said the County needed something that highlighted who they were. She said a lot of groundwork had been accomplished. She said the request was not last minute.

Mr. Presley said for clarification to Ms. Light's statement, the County would not necessarily have to raise the tax rate in order to accomplish the request because the money that was coming from the reserve into the general fund could then backfill items that Ms. Light could evaluate for possible one-time funding.

Ms. Vanuch clarified that when she said there was new information, she meant the details being presented was new information. She said the first time they had heard about the proposal was at the public hearing for the tax rate. She said the request was not proposed at any of the budget work sessions. She said similar requests were proposed and followed through. She said she understood the public need. She said the details were finally provided. She said the information was last minute because they were trying to respond to the individuals who spoke before the Board. She said she was trying to prevent unintended consequences. She said she wanted to make it clear what was being voted on. She said new information at the last minute made it difficult to build a consensus.

Ms. Bohmke said the conversation regarding the museum was not last minute, it was the transient occupancy tax and the amount to be given to the museum. She said she did not have a problem with the proposal. She said the resolutions approved would have dollar amounts allocated for each County department. She said it was a lot of work for staff to figure out who would receive what fund of money. She said that was the last-minute element. She clarified that she was not against the request. She said she would have liked to have the conversation prior to the day.

Ms. Gary said her point was that the issue came up often, and she was hearing it from the public. She said the public believed they received items often last minute without information. She said there had been enough. She said there were detail that needed to be respected. She said she did not want people to think the Board received the request last minute and had to make complex decisions without the opportunity to ask questions.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Board desired to implement the change, how would the budget be reviewed to evaluate whether it was possible.

Ms. Light said a 1% increase in transient occupancy was about $400,000. She said within the budget, areas of one-time items would be identified that totaled $400,000. She said the County had $100,000 annually that replaced vehicles. She said it got the County about 2 and 1/4 vehicles every year. She said the sheriff had vehicles. She noted it would be difficult for either group to give up the money because it was recurring. She said that it was assumed the funds would be available for the programs when future planning took place.

Ms. Vanuch said the CIP had to be addressed and consensus on the rate brought by staff had to be reached.

Mr. English said he was confused. He noted the $600,000 from the museum would not affect the tax rate. He said the money was already there, it was just being transferred.

Ms. Light said one-time revenue could not be used for ongoing expenses. She said it was in the financial policy. She said the County did not want to break its financial policies. She said the one-time expenses had to be identified.

Ms. Vanuch asked if $650,000 in one-time expenses could be identified.

Ms. Light said it would only be about $400,000. She said the work could be done.

Mr. English asked if the request would affect the replacement vehicles.

Ms. Light said it might.

Mr. English said he was not against the museum, but he did not want to see the Board mess up the item.

Mr. Coen said he liked for dedicated funding sources. He said it put the museum at the whim of future Boards. He said he was empathetic. He said he was in favor of the dedicated funding source and he had faith staff would find the one-time funding items.

Ms. Yeung said she was supportive of items that brought future revenue to the County.

Ms. Bohmke said she was supportive of the request, but not at the expense of foregoing other items.

Ms. Vanuch said she was in the same position. She said she could not say she completely understood the impacts to the one-time expenses. She said she had a long conversation with Major Dembowski regarding car replacements. She said there seemed to be a 3-3 tie. She asked if the Board was allowed to make motions during work sessions. She confirmed that they could not make a motion. She said there was not support to move the item forward in the budget process.

Ms. Light said possibly the reverse of the request could be addressed. She said rather than dedicate the 1% to the museum, in FY23, the fund balance could be dedicated in FY23, and return at a five-year planning session with a business plan.

Ms. Vanuch said it was agreed the Board should move forward. She said the impacts were not understood.

Mr. Mayausky said the business plan was approved two weeks ago. He said he did not want the budget to be changed that would affect another group negatively. He said there was a middle ground. He said the discussion could be planned for a similar time the next year.

Ms. Vanuch said the proposal was to go ahead and transfer the one-time funding, and then to move forward.

Ms. Light said it was to budget and appropriate what would be equivalent to 1% of the transient occupancy tax with the FY23 budget. She said there would be an increase of one-time funding of approximately $440,000 to be transferred to the museum as a partner agency out of the reserves.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Board was ok with that proposal.

Ms. Gary clarified the Board would have to vote later to dedicate the 1%.

Ms. Vanuch said that would go through the budget process the next year. She said it had to be done when the tax rate was assigned.

Ms. Gary said the museum would be funded because they could utilize the money held by the County.

Ms. Vanuch said it would be helpful if a resolution was prepared with the information discussed for the evening's Board meeting.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Ms. Light said the Board was provided with the proposed changes to the CIP to ascertain the final direction. She said there would be a short overview of changes proposed and funding of elementary schools. She noted there was no change in the sheriff's department, general government, or judicial proposed CIP. She said fire rescue, parks, transportation, schools, a potential bond referendum, and any other changes would be discussed.

Ms. Light said the CIP as it stood totaled $808 million. She said 52% went to schools, which was consistent with previous programs. She said 26% went to transportation, and the rest went to general government. She said what was still included for fire rescue was the Aquia Station rebuild that started in 2022, the Rockhill Station rebuild, and the joint training center. She said what had been removed, to be considered as part of a bond referendum, was the White Oak Station, Brooke Station, and Embrey Mill.

Ms. Light said in Parks and Recreation, Patawomeck Park, Musslemen Park, the Carl Lewis Community Center, and anything funded by proffers were still included. She said there was a Mountainview dog park for $630,000. She said it was primarily funded with proffer funding. She said Mountainview Park and Duff Green Park had debt funding removed.

Ms. Light said that in transportation, significant changes in the escalation from VDOT were discussed. She said after the CIP was evaluated altogether along with cash flows, it was decided to present the Board with the idea of moving the Garrisonville road out one year. She said it would allow funding to not be spent on a project that was proposed to receive SMART scale funding. She said the funding would be unknown until the late winter. She said it would allow the Board about six months to get the best information available.

Ms. Yeung noted that all the projects moved out were in Garrisonville. She said next year, Garrisonville would have projects completed.

Ms. Vanuch said if it was just the Garrisonville SMART scale. She said Garrisonville Road impacted Griffis-Widewater, Garrisonville, and Rock Hill.

Ms. Light said the project would be moved out one year so that it was not spending money on a project where it might not receive a significant amount of SMART scale funding. She said Berea Church Road safety improvements had increased by $500,000, and Flatford Road and Salisbury Drive sidewalk projects were removed in the Garrisonville Service District. She said she would identify risks in the transportation proposal. She said there was about $69.7 million of assumed SMART scale and revenue sharing. She said it was about 33% of all of the funding was assumed for those projects. She said inflation projections and escalation did not provide additional state funding. She said if a project escalated, and there was a SMART scale fund of $1 million, and the project escalated $5 million, the County would eat the additional $5 million. She said there was concern with inflation.

Ms. Light said in education, there were no proposed changes to High School #6 or the offsite costs. She said the Hartwood Elementary rebuild would be $54.2 million and would begin FY23. She said Elementary School #18 and #19 would follow in FY27 and FY29, respectively. She said the sale of Clift Farm Roads property was included in the CIP. She said there was an assessment of $1.4 million from the Commissioner of the Revenue Office. She said the money was reprogrammed back into Elementary School #19. She said additional work would have to be done with the School Board in future years to bring that to fruition.

Ms. Vanuch noted the changes were significant to education. She said previously, there was only one high school and one elementary school in 2029. She asked Ms. Light to verify the date.

Ms. Light said the elementary school was out in 2030.

Ms. Vanuch said it had to be made clear what was previously proposed and what was changed for education when the information was later presented. She said the Hartwood Elementary rebuild was not even a proposal in the former CIP. She said it would now start in 2023. She said Elementary School #19 was not in the 10-year CIP, but now was slated to start in FY29. She said the changes needed to be made abundantly clear.

Ms. Bohmke asked whose decision it was to put the sale of the property in the CIP.

Ms. Light said County and School staff met together and discussed the item as a possibility. She said she did not know if the School Board had been briefed or was supportive. She said the school's hesitancy was that they did not want to give up a piece of property that they did not receive some reciprocal benefit. She said in the proposed CIP, the sale of Clift Farm Roads property was put back into Elementary School #19. She said it was the intent to use funding from the sale of school property to fund additional school infrastructure.

Ms. Bohmke said she believed the School Board should weigh in before it was in the CIP.

Mr. Presley said the County had requested the School Board to surplus the property so that it could be sold. He said the School Board had yet to take action because they were undecided on how to use the funds. He said the request was there and the conversations were ongoing.

Ms. Yeung said in the future, it was important that she know the information and remain up to date. She said as far as she knew, the elementary school was the top priority. She asked what happened to Drew Middle School. She noted it was removed. She said the fact of the matter was that people were being bussed and moved because they did not have a school building to go to. She said she did not agree with the decision. She said the proposed CIP looked like it was already decided. She said the changes should be shown side by side with the original proposal. She said there was land that the County wanted to sell, but when it ended up purchasing more land to build more schools, it ended up paying higher prices.

Ms. Vanuch said the Drew Middle School, Gari Melcher's Middle School, Middle School #9, and High School #7 were part of the school's request in the CIP—they were never part of the Board's CIP. She said it was a separate request from where the Board's CIP was compared to where it is now and the items the School Board had requested that did not make it into the list. She said there was a conversation that if the Board desired, that the items listed would be the ones for the bond referendum.

Mr. Presley said the last time the superintendent was before the Board, he proposed the preference would be to go the route—that Hartwood Elementary be the first priority and the other elementary schools because of the cost savings that could be realized by creating a standard elementary school and having one contract to build the schools in succession. He said it was also the superintendent's preference to go to bond referendum with the other items because it was felt there would be a strong response from the public.

Mr. Coen said the slide was confusing in so far as it listed the consideration for bond referendum and listed the schools such as High School #7. He said it was removed anyway because of the superintendent's new way of doing things.

Ms. Vanuch said the information should be made easy for the public to understand and read.

Ms. Gary said the slide was confusing to her as well. She said the superintendent was wonderful. She said if the superintendent was ok with the proposal, then she was ok with the proposal.

Ms. Light said the debt service would be approximately $0.081.

Ms. Light said not with looking at a high school and an elementary school coming in the next few years. She said the County was looking at $5 million in increased debt service in the upcoming years because of the schools.

Ms. Light said the Board was requested to provide any potential changes to the proposed CIP so that the final CIP resolution could be prepared for the evening.

Ms. Gary confirmed that the superintendent supported the items to be placed on the bond referendum for the schools.

Mr. Presley said Ms. Gary was correct. He said there was a meeting with Superintendent Taylor, Chris Fulmer, Andrea Light, and other staff where they discussed what they would like to see.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Superintendent Taylor would be at the meeting that night. She noted that Mr. Fulmer said yes. She said the superintendent would be able to speak to the item if the Board wished to call him up to speak through the school requests.

Ms. Yeung wanted to confirm that in addition to speaking with Superintendent Taylor, the School Board was aware of the changes and approved of them.

Mr. Fulmer said the School Board was not aware of the detailed changes. He said the School Board knew changes were coming, but he was not sure if they had reviewed the proposed changes in detail.

Ms. Yeung wanted to caution that the Superintendent reported to the School Board. She said she wanted to ensure the proposal was supported before publicly announcing the plan.

Ms. Bohmke said there was discussion around the rebuilding of Hartwood Elementary School. She said the school would be rebuilt, and it may be built on a site familiar to the Board. She noted that elementary school #18 and #19 were to be built. She asked where those two schools were proposed to be built.

Mr. Fulmer said there was no formally decided land. He said land was proffered in the Embrey Mill zone. He said with the added seats to Hartwood, within the 350 to 400 range, the County would still need more seats in the south and more seats in the central and north area. He said exact locations were unknown. He said the areas where additional seats were needed were known. He said the 400 additional seats would not address the problems with Rocky Run, Hartwood, Conway, and Falmouth areas.

Ms. Vanuch asked if there was consensus to move forward with the proposed CIP. She said there needed to be four supervisors who were in support.

Ms. Vanuch said all of the items on the agenda had been covered. She said she had been having one-on-one conversations with supervisors to get a consensus through the work session so staff could propose the resolutions. She said the consensus of the Board was for a $0.85 tax rate. She said the battalion chief positions had been discussed. She said they needed to figure out if there was a mechanism to fund the positions in the budget. She asked if there was an item on the budget that a supervisor would like to bring up to offset the cost of the battalion chiefs and fund the $380,000 cost.

Ms. Gary asked whether moving the pay increases for County staff to January would cover a significant portion of the cost.

Ms. Vanuch asked how much the County would save if the line item for general government raises was made equitable with public safety and made effective on January 1 for the 1.5% raise.

Ms. Light said it was approximately $269,000.

Ms. Vanuch asked how much more funding needed to be sourced.

Ms. Light said it was $288,000. She said if it were allowable by the Board, they could examine revenues for $80,000 to cover the remainder of the battalion chiefs without further removing items from the budget.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Board agreed with Ms. Light's suggestion.

Ms. Gary said she would like to keep the implementation date for the raises in July, but with what was being proposed, it would improve the quality of life for more people.

Ms. Bohmke said she was on the fence regarding the battalion chiefs. She said she wanted to know why the career firefighters did not believe they needed battalion chiefs. She said she did not understand why the department's own staff felt it did not need the battalion chiefs.

Fire Chief Cardello said that regarding the battalion chiefs not being needed, the chiefs were an additional layer of supervision, and saying this was a narrow view of the department. He said his job was to ensure there was a broad view, and he planned for the future, employee development, and safe outcomes. He said to be able to develop personnel properly and to properly perform the job duties, one person could not possibly do that. He said the employees who said the battalion chiefs were not needed possibly did not want more supervision. He said the chiefs were needed—the department was young and inexperienced. He said the extra layer of supervision was needed.

Ms. Bohmke said she thought about how a battalion chief would go from the south to the north of the County, including with traffic. She said she had talked with several people. She said some people stated the battalion chiefs were not needed. She said she would defer to his opinion.

Mr. English asked if the battalion chiefs were not provided, would the level of service decrease and would the County still be able to respond as usual to emergencies. He asked if the battalion chiefs could be delayed one more year or would that impact the response times.

Fire Chief Cardello said the County would still be able to provide service, however, the quality of the service would be impacted.

Mr. English clarified that if he had a heart attack, there would be a response with or without a battalion chief.

Ms. Bohmke said it was as if they were voting on raises. She said she was pushed over the fence because $8 million was being given to the schools. She said 50% of those teachers had five years of experience or less. She said there was no experience out there. She said she had flip flopped on each side of the battalion chief issue.

Mr. English said the fire and rescue services were top notch. He said pushing the battalion chiefs off another year would not make that big of a difference.

Ms. Gary said she would prefer the emergency responders had the chance to sleep and spend time with their families rather than being on a rotating 24-hour shift.

Ms. Vanuch said there was the direction needed to make the changes. She said staff would find the extra $80,000 in needed revenue.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2:43 p.m., Chairman Vanuch adjourned April 19, 2022 Stafford County Board of Supervisors Budget work session.

Michael Smith
for Frederick J. Presley
County Administrator

Crystal L. Vanuch
Chairman