BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN (CIP) AND PROFFERS REVIEW
DECEMBER 12, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – A work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Pamela Yeung, Chairman, at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, in the Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

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

Also in attendance were Randal Vosburg, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Julia Homes, Assistant Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

Dr. Yeung called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

WORK SESSION

FY2025-2034 Capital Improvement Program
Andrea Light, Chief Director of Financial Services, said that this was the first time they were examining the Fiscal Year 25–34 program and exploring its potential structure. She said that they would delve deeper into their proffers, discussing updated debt capacity, revenue options, and proffers. She said they would address projects and their implications. She said that the primary objective for this meeting was to ensure that the Board had a clearer understanding of the submitted projects, possible adjustments, and provide direction to staff. She said that they aimed to bring back the proposed CIP in February with more accurate modeling than initially anticipated.

Ms. Light said as they proceeded with their presentation, several documents would serve as references. She said that debt capacity was limited by their financial policies to three different measures: maintaining debt capacity below 2.75% of assessed values and ensuring a 65% payoff within 10 years. She said that their debt capacity was limited by 10% of expenditures, which had increased from last year to $13.4 million. She said that when they examined their plan, there was an almost $80 million debt capacity deficit in 2031 based on continuing with the same projects that the Board approved in the prior year's CIP.

Ms. Light said that some of these would have edits for consideration, some adjustments, and that was part of their discussion. She said that as part of their revenues, they planned a $16.2 million use of proffers in the 10-year period. She said that the plan included the sale of Cliff Farm Road and Moncure Elementary School, the old site, not the new school. She said that it also included the sale of the training center, which Fire and Rescue were currently using now. Furthermore, it anticipated an increase in the fire level from one and a half cents to three cents. She said that the three-cent increase, based on today's assessed value, would create approximately a $58 impact annually on a median home value.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to clarify a matter regarding the Cliff Road site. She said that after discussing with her counterpart from the School Board, it appeared they were unwilling to sell that property. She said that she recalled they had also requested its transfer to the County; however, they declined this proposal as well. She asked how it was included.

Ms. Light said that the sale of Cliff Farm Road had been in the CIP for approximately three years as a funding source for future school projects. She said they had a $1.9 billion request for all their projects this year. She said that they were looking to explore alternative revenue sources to help offset these costs. She said that if the information was not appropriate, they could remove it.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had considered the site as a possible data center location; however, it lacked water resources. She said that selling the site could lead to its transformation into a housing development. She said that if they examined the current proffers, the end result would cost them more money because they did not receive enough funds in proffers to support their schools. She said that they needed to have a conversation about the 180-acre property with the schools, as removing it from the CIP could attract developers to the site.

Dr. Yeung noted that it was on the agenda for Thursday.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to know about the source of the figures provided. She asked specifically if these amounts were obtained through an appraisal conducted to determine the associated costs.

Ms. Light said that the assessed values were derived solely from real estate assessments. She said that these figures might be lower than the actual values due to outdated information, as they had not been updated recently. She said that in regard to Cliff Farm Road, it was part of the plan for the first five years. She said that there was time to make a decision and potentially shift the revenue source as well.

Ms. Gary asked about the source of the transient occupancy tax for parks. She said that she was not necessarily against it, but the topic had previously been discussed in relation to the museum, which they were still considering. She said this led her to wonder why the transient occupancy tax was suggested for parks instead of the museum since it might generate more funds for the museum. She said it appeared to be more of a spending decision than an investment if they were to choose this option. She asked where the allocation came from.

Ms. Light said that the Board had recently discussed park projects and how to implement them. She said that staff had been examining various revenue sources that could be used for investing in parks. She said that transient occupancy tax was one such source, amounting to 1% in addition to 1% for the museum. She said that it was not necessary to choose between these options; they could select both or neither. She said that transient occupancy would provide approximately $420,000 annually at 1%. She said that they would discuss further what that could entail.

Ms. Light said that they would transition to reviewing proffers. She said that the Board had requested significant improvements, more information, and increased transparency regarding proffers. She said that with substantial assistance from the budget office and planning and zoning, they had compiled this information. She said that parks projects primarily relied on the available proffers. She said that significant proffer investments had been made in Musselman Park and for Patawomeck. She said that in previous fiscal years, the Town Center at Aquia was assigned to Potomac; however, the Board requested that they remove that proffer last year as they belonged to different districts.

Ms. Light said that upon examining these proposals, their initial approach was to utilize as many of them as possible and expedite their implementation for projects that they supported. She said that during the budget work sessions last year, they received feedback from the Board indicating a preference for using these proffers within their respective districts or more closely aligned with their districts. She said staff had endeavored to uphold this philosophy.

Dr. Yeung asked whether Winding Creek was partially in Rock Hill and partially in Garrisonville.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was half and half.

Dr. Yeung asked for specifics about Embrey Mill.

Ms. Light said that all of the proffers that were in the Garrisonville district were contained at the back of the Board's packet.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to revisit the decision regarding the Aquia town center. She said that she was not certain, but she believed that Supervisor Gary and she needed to discuss this matter because she did not recall the specific details of their agreement. She said that if half of the Harbor area had access to Patawomeck Park, it seemed reasonable that funds could be allocated for future park improvements. She said that she knew people from Aquia who visited Patawomeck Park.

Ms. Gary said that she briefly recalled the discussion, but they could discuss it further later.

Ms. Light said that they were seeking specific feedback regarding the proposed plan or the finalized one through this workshop or future guidance from the Board.

Ms. Bohmke said that regarding the Parks and Rec proffer slide, Fox Chase Commons was mentioned, and there had been some discussion about whether the money from Fox Chase had already been spent on Musselman Park. She said that she stated that she did not recall that, and on the sheet, it validated that it had not been spent.

Ms. Light said that was correct. She said that it was future available and could be found in the second column. She said that they had yet to receive the proffers regarding this matter, and they had not expended those funds.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they ever spent proffers before they were deposited.

Ms. Light said that they occasionally spent proffers, such as for their turf fields for schools, and the Board may allocate general fund balance for a specific period. She said that this amount would be reimbursed later when the proffers arrived.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to confirm if the general fund had been reimbursed for those projects.

Ms. Light said that they had.

Mr. English asked whether they should fund it or not. He said that the main issue was where to acquire the necessary funds. He asked for an update.

Ms. Light said that they would address it later in the presentation.

Mr. Coen said, to clarify, that regarding programs, when they considered either of the items in George Washington, it stated, "50,000 for the Stafford Nursing Home, programmed in the CIP, available funds, intended for Project Zero." He said that the funds were supposed to be allocated to Lake Mooney. He said that some clarification was required, to include a note at the bottom that explained the meaning of this allocation. He said the current impression suggested that the money was present but not accessible for the project; it was designated for another purpose. He said that providing such specification would be beneficial.

Ms. Light said that it may be beneficial to explain the meaning of the columns. She said that what is currently available indicated that they had the proffers in the bank, as they had been collected. She said that future available referred to availability up to approximately five years out. She said that anything beyond that was too uncertain for them to rely on. She said that if a proffer was programmed into the CIP, it appeared in the third column. She said that for instance, at the Griffis-Widewater Reserve at Woodstock, the first item had $514,000 available currently. She said that no future funding was expected from this project's proffer for any other CIP project.

Dr. Yeung said that she had a question. She asked if there was a specific date by which they must spend something or if there would be an opportunity for a column. She said that under development, years were listed. She asked if this meant that the project ended in 2031.

Ms. Light said that as they refined the presentation, such feedback was crucial. She said that regarding those dates, yes, they were the expiration dates, and that was why they added them. She said that the Rock Hill project expired in 2033.

Dr. Yeung said that if there is no expiration date yet, it meant that there was not one at present.

Ms. Light said that they had not yet obtained that information, and they were still working on refining their methods for gathering it. She said that they collaborated with planning and zoning departments to ensure cooperation and subsequently presented the findings to the Board.

Mr. Morris said that the future deliveries were uncertain, and they did not know when they would receive them, which prevented them from determining their expiration dates until they had collected one.

Mr. Vosburg said that he would like to reiterate one of Ms. Light's points so that the Board was fully transparent regarding its current direction. He said that Ms. Light referred to last year's approach, where staff adopted a County-wide strategy for applying proffers as they came up in the order of the CIP. He said the new approach involved utilizing those proffers within the respective districts. He said that this change might result in unintended consequences, such as projects earlier in the CIP being delayed or requiring general fund dollars or debt due to their location in a different district. He said he wanted to ensure that the Board was aware of this shift in direction.

Dr. Yeung said that it was true, except that there were conversations regarding discussing it openly. She said that if there is something on the horizon that required payment, they could handle that, and the Board could address it. She said that some of these proffers were specific to certain areas where they must be spent for future growth, which needed to be considered. She said that was the reason why they decided to proceed in that direction.

Mr. Vosburg said that they agreed because, as staff members, they did not recommend applying these criteria to a project unless it met the specific requirements being discussed. He said that historically, they had consistently considered those criteria.

Ms. Gary asked for additional information regarding the needs at Patawomeck. She said the information would be helpful to discuss proffers with Supervisor Allen.

Ms. Vanuch asked if staff was requesting a change in direction for the project, specifically to align it with the district where the funds would be allocated.

Mr. Vosburg said that he was not requesting that. He said that it was the direction they believed they received last year from the Board.

Ms. Vanuch said that she agreed. She asked if the question was whether the Board had changed its mind, or if that would be addressed later.

Mr. Vosburg said that in the example of Musselman Park in Hartwood District, they had been using Falmouth funds. He said that this was inconsistent with the new direction. He said that the decision was made by the Board prior to the new paradigm. He said that under the new approach, they would no longer allocate Falmouth money for Musselman Park. He said that this change would be implemented.

Ms. Vanuch asked if it had always been Falmouth or if it was based on the new district boundaries.

Mr. Vosburg said it had always been Falmouth. He said that an example could be found where, when discussing a regional asset, it would be acceptable to pool Hartwood and Rock Hill toward that regional asset.

Mr. English said that they should go back to the old way. He said that by focusing on CIP projects collectively rather than individualizing each district's needs, they could better serve their citizens. He said that although some may initially oppose this change, he believed it was the right course of action for addressing the necessary projects. He said that he did not think it should be a matter of district-by-district.

Ms. Gary said that it made sense to have specific proffers for the district so that they could discuss these matters appropriately on the Board. She said that if resources were available at Patawomeck, and there were needs, they could potentially address them. She said that instead of immediately distributing resources throughout the districts, it was reasonable and civil to honor the supervisor representing all those people and their decisions.

Ms. Bohmke said that in the case of Musselman, it was a bond issue which they put out to a vote of the voters. She said that this was not a CIP project initiated by the Board; rather, it was presented to the voters who approved it. She said that they needed to examine projects like Musselman and other transportation projects for the entire County's benefit. She said that regarding her district, the area near Musselman on Truslow Road South down to the creek remained within its boundaries. She said that her constituents would benefit from this change. She said that open discussions were essential; however, when considering bond issues initiated and supported by voters, they must approach them differently.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would request a comprehensive list of all parks that were included in the previously proposed bond. She said that the Board changed its direction and decided against funding the bond despite the constituents voting for it. She said that the decision was made approximately 19 years ago, and now they were revisiting the idea of funding those parks. She said that to ensure a holistic approach, she recommended examining the entire bond from a broader perspective. She said that she was unsure about the specific projects included in that bond. She said that by considering everything together from the bond's perspective, they could make informed decisions.

Ms. Vanuch said she agreed with Supervisor Bohmke's statement regarding focusing on areas such as transportation. She said that there were areas where proffers would be applied to those, regardless of the district they resided in. She said that they must also consider the impacted residents of residential subdivisions who agreed to such developments under the condition that a park would be built. She said that if these subdivisions had been completed and proffers established, the park must be constructed as part of the agreement. She said that this was also applicable to road improvements.

Ms. Vanuch said that by aligning the supervisor's requests with the proffers obtained and ensuring their proper allocation, they could address residents' concerns and avoid the appearance of circumventing public hearing participants' preferences regarding funding distribution. She said that the specific area would determine the nature of the project, and if the subdivision had not occurred or proffers were not received, it would be crucial to clarify the situation. She said that if they were promised a community center instead of a park but the subdivision never materialized, there would be no need to build the community center since the development did not take place.

Ms. Allen said that every facility they possessed benefited everyone in the County. She said that it was not a matter of each district with their own facilities; rather, it was all of the County's facilities. She said she agreed with Supervisor English regarding the need to build more facilities since everyone benefited from them. She said that if a site was unique to an electoral district, they should attempt to construct it or make necessary improvements in that area. She said that if there were two electoral districts that overlapped and shared facilities, such as Patawomeck Park, then that was something that they needed to examine. She said they should engage in discussions regarding whether Hartwood and Rock Hill had areas where they intersected, allowing proffers to benefit both electoral districts rather than solely focusing on one district. She said that combining resources allowed them to achieve more.

Mr. Coen said that some traditions must be maintained, and he believed they could achieve this goal. He said that in matters related to the proffer or the bond referendum, they should prioritize these aspects. He said that if a development involved the proffer going to X, then logic dictated that course of action. He said that other funds that were vaguely proffered or had ambiguous conditions could be allocated for the entire County since the benefits would extend to all residents. He said that he was confident in their competence to handle both tasks simultaneously.

Ms. Gary said one suggestion was to examine potential projects within a radius from where the proffers originate. She said that this approach would provide a guideline for determining whether a project fell within an appropriate area for proffer usage and should be presented to the Board for consideration.

Ms. Light said that as they approach the proposed CIP, they would continue to update and refine the information as necessary. She said that these were organized by department, with those by electoral district listed at the bottom. She said that moving into the projects area of what was requested, schools had asked for $1.1 billion more than what was adopted last year. She said that this represented an overall impact on the real estate tax rate without considering any other revenue increases or decreases.

Ms. Light said that at the end of 10 years, they would be at approximately a 45-cent tax rate. She said that the graph illustrated a cumulative impact. She said that the Board had discussed on their legislative agenda a 1% sales tax intended to support schools through this model. She said that their request involved generating $25 to $30 million annually. She said that it was evident that the increase in debt service exceeded $140 million by the end of 10 years, which indicated that the $25 to $30 million would not make a significant impact.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to request a graph illustrating the impact of a 1% approval by the state on their situation, in order to provide them with a clearer understanding.

Ms. Light said yes.

Mr. Coen said that he had previously requested the information during their legislative meeting. He said that they learned that the funding was a certain amount over a decade; however, it was challenging to determine the allocation for the first year, which he believed was $21 million, insufficient to fund an elementary school. He said that it would take approximately two years to fund an elementary school, four to five years for middle schools, and potentially a decade and a half with inflation to cover high schools. He said that they needed to consider this factor. He said that the possibility of economic downturns causing people to reduce their spending could lead to a decrease in funding, making it an unstable source of income.

Ms. Light said that the School Board had implemented significant changes for their previous year. She said that they prioritized Drew Middle School and Rising Star over the replacement of Hartwood Elementary School. She said that the School Board believed that constructing Drew Middle School and Rising Star together, through property swapping, was the best way to proceed. She said that they had incorporated various new categories of projects, including County joint projects, which encompassed an aquatic center, a fleet services facility, and the public day.

Dr. Yeung said that based on their previous CIP discussion, she had received inquiries regarding the budget. She said that when they proposed combining 18 and 19, stating that building them together would save $14 million by utilizing the same prototype, this did not occur as planned. She said that instead, the second elementary school would involve relocating the Brooke Point parking lot, moving tennis courts, and adjusting student parking lots. She said that no traffic study had been conducted in this area. She said that according to some School Board members, the price had increased. She said that she would like to know where the additional funding of $40 million mentioned on the sheet would be sourced from.

Ms. Light said that they requested an increase of over $40 million for elementary schools 18 and 19, bringing the total funding from approximately $55 million to $80 million each. She said that the timing remained unchanged; however, there had been some minor scope changes. She said that these changes involved expanding the projects slightly to improve pullout spaces and other features. She said that by Thursday, when the School Board met, they should be able to identify these changes.

Ms. Allen said that she was confused. She said that $40 million was stated as the cost for one elementary school. She said that she would like to understand how two schools could amount to an additional $40 million. She said that unfortunately, she could not attend the meeting on Thursday due to work commitments. She said it was essential for the entire Board to hear the information from the School Board themselves. She said she had numerous questions regarding this matter. She said she was concerned that an hour and 15 minutes may not be sufficient to address all concerns. She said that they should seriously consider rescheduling the meeting to ensure everyone's attendance.

Ms. Vanuch said that if the Board did not wish to change the meeting time, she could read a list of questions from Ms. Allen at the meeting.

Dr. Yeung said that the Chair could also read the questions for Ms. Allen.

Ms. Gary said that she would not be present at the meeting either. She said that she was driving down to attend her other son's graduation from boot camp. She said that she was quite upset about the cost increase. She said she strongly advocated for these projects to occur simultaneously in order to save money. She said she expressed her concerns to the School Board. She said she would prefer the meeting to be rescheduled.

Ms. Gary said she had numerous questions and concerns regarding their public schools. She said she was upset that those handling the resources were wasting so much. She said that the funding needed to be handled better. She said she requested that the rest of the Board consider rescheduling the meeting.

Mr. English said that he agreed to move the meeting because he thought it was important for Mr. Diggs to be present. He said that he was in favor of rescheduling it after the first of the year. He said that this would allow them to address any unexpected issues that may arise and ensure everyone's participation. He said that on Facebook, he had noticed they were preparing for their round-robin with all School Board members, visiting neighborhoods to discuss the budget.

Ms. Bohmke said that staff made significant efforts to ensure that as many attendees were present for the meeting. She said that this was the third time the meeting had been rescheduled and agreed that it was essential for all Board members to attend. She said she suggested moving forward with the current meeting and scheduling a follow-up session in January. She said that there would be numerous follow-up issues to address anyway.

Ms. Bohmke said they could gather as much information as possible from those present, incorporate Supervisor Allen and Supervisor Gary's comments, ask their questions, and take into account recent changes in George Washington. She said she did not foresee any issues with moving forward, as she wished to have as many meetings with the school division as possible.

Ms. Gary said she understood the logic behind it but also acknowledged that they were all present there because of their shared knowledge and involvement in various committees and meetings. She said it was essential for everyone to be present at the same time as they began this discussion, especially since a significant amount of money was involved. She said she would appreciate if the meeting was rescheduled.

Ms. Vanuch said she would support moving the meeting because sometimes work commitments cannot be altered, and they were essential for paying mortgages. She said that Supervisor Allen and Supervisor Gary voted to advertise a 40% tax increase due to schools. She said that having them present during discussions regarding these matters would provide valuable context and feedback. She said that she was unaware that both of them were unable to attend. She said they should be present at the meeting.

Dr. Yeung asked for a date to reschedule to meeting.

Ms. Krauss said that it would be helpful to have two dates to propose to the School Board.

Mr. Vosburg said that the current Board meeting schedule included a date for January 2, which was their organizational meeting. He said that the regular Board meeting for January would be held on January 16.

Ms. Bohmke recommended January 4 and January 10.

Ms. Krauss said that the 10th was the date for the Planning Commission meeting.

Dr. Yeung said they would settle on January 4.

Ms. Krauss confirmed that it would be at the same time, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Gary said that for clarity, she advertised the rate to understand public opinion. She said that she would continue to do so and consider feedback. She said she never wanted to simply throw money at schools without being responsible.

Ms. Bohmke asked, related to the CIP, if they had the necessary road improvements for High School #6.

Ms. Light said that the improvements on Truslow Road were not included. She said that as part of High School #6, they included any required road improvements by VDOT for opening the school. She said that additional road improvements in the Truslow Road area were not included.

Dr. Yeung said that there were $7 million intended for Truslow Road; however, they were currently located under elementary schools 18 and 19. She said she discovered that there was $7 million unaccounted for Truslow. She said she wanted to know if this amount would be allocated to Truslow Road.

Mr. Counsell said that he was not aware of the money being referred to. He said that when the schools conducted their traffic impact analysis, Truslow Road had adequate capacity, which indicated no data-driven impact from school traffic. He said that there were perceived safety issues on Truslow Road, many of them familiar—the road was narrow and winding, making it difficult to predict future safety concerns due to increased traffic, despite the likelihood of such problems arising. He said that the scope of work on Truslow Road remained undefined at this time.

Mr. Counsell said that they discussed potential improvements for Truslow Road a few months ago, including roundabouts and wedge widening, which would cost approximately $15 million. He said that at present, he had not identified any funding for this project, so it had not been suggested to be included in the CIP at this time. He said that as they proceed with this process, the Board will have the opportunity to request that these improvements be added to the CIP and for staff to explore potential funding sources.

Ms. Bohmke said that it should either be included in the Board's CIP or the School Board's. She said that she believed this matter should be addressed during the joint School Board meeting, as it involved significant funding.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to reiterate what Supervisor Bohmke mentioned on two occasions: the need for the $7 million dollars to be allocated toward Truslow Road. She said that it was not a line item specifying that this amount was for Truslow Road. She said she requested that they see how much money was being planned for this project and separate it from the elementary school budget, which was initially estimated at $56 million but had since increased to $90 million.

Mr. Coen asked if they ever receive clarification on incorporating the 17 service district to assist with any of that Truslow work. He said that if they lacked a definitive answer, it would be helpful to determine how they could avoid the repetition of Mountain View Road and Mountain View High School.

Dr. Yeung asked why they were unable to do the service district.

Ms. McClendon said that the issue primarily concerned the purposes of the service district, and there were boundary concerns. She said that establishing a new service district and changing the existing boundaries followed the same process. She said that they recommended proceeding with establishing new boundaries. She said that some of the concerns involved businesses far off 17 paying in, which would not be in proximity to Truslow. She said that creating a new service district appeared to be the more sustainable route rather than attempting to change the boundaries of the existing one.

Dr. Yeung asked what needed to be done to progress that.

Ms. McClendon said that ultimately, it needed to begin with Board direction. She said that to create a service district, staff would have to establish a boundary, and this required an ordinance and a public hearing, which could take a couple of months. She said that there were also project and scale considerations that need to be addressed regarding defining the project and its scope. She said that there were some tasks that must be completed beforehand. She said that to initiate the process, the Board had to authorize staff to undertake the work.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was uncertain about supporting that proposal. She said that they were essentially creating a service district for a high school that they all had responsibility for. She said that she did not know where the district boundaries would be for all the students attending it. She said that she believed this was premature and she would need much more information to make an informed decision.

Mr. English said that they should explore what a service district would entail.

Ms. Allen said that she had asked Ms. Light about information regarding alternative education bonds.

Dr. Yeung said that it appeared that there were four Board members supporting exploring the service district: Supervisor Cohen, Supervisor Allen, Supervisor English, and herself.

Ms. Vanuch said that exploring it was a good idea.

Ms. Gary said that she was curious about the amount of staff time that it would actually require.

Mr. Vosburg said that the research had been completed, and they discussed it during the committee meeting. He asked if the Board would agree to bring it forward at the second January meeting as a new business item for discussion. He said that they would present their work and potentially supplement it with additional information without requiring extensive staff time at this point.

Dr. Yeung said yes.

Ms. Light said that Ms. Allen had inquired about the availability of a funding mechanism for specific projects. She said that there was a program for debt funding by VRA, which was applicable to highly rated localities like Stafford due to its triple A rating. She said that this allowed road projects to be funded without resorting to general obligation debt. She said that as more projects were added to the CIP, it may become necessary to adjust or reduce their scope. She said that by 2031, the current debt capacity limitations suggested a $70 million overage. She said there were options to add revenue.

Dr. Yeung asked if they would not know what issues they might face with Truslow Road and how much it would cost to address them. She asked if they knew what the cost would be to ensure student safety.

Mr. Counsell said that when they were asked to provide a scope of work to the Board, which was in May or June before the summer recess, they presented three roundabouts: one at Enon Road, one at Berea Church Road, and one at the new High School's #6 entrances. He said they also proposed wedge widening all the way down to Poplar and some small intersection improvements there. He said that at that time, they estimated the cost at $15 million.

Mr. Counsell said that the service district conversation arose subsequently. He said that they ran a scenario with the existing taxable entities in the service district and another one with a tax rate and an amount. He said that they did not include anything later on in the CIP because there was no funding for it. He said that since then, Mr. Lehane had researched a program called Safe Streets for All. He said that it was an appropriate grant to apply for, possibly securing funding for Truslow Road. He said that the school's traffic impact analysis did not identify any capacity issues or existing safety concerns. He said that despite this, it absolutely was a viable project, but considering other priorities and funding limitations, they felt they could not arbitrarily add projects to the CIP at their discretion. He said that the Board had the ability to request that it be included, and staff would exhaustively search for funding, generate numerous ideas, and present them to the Board during their next opportunity.

Dr. Yeung asked if the School Board could put it on their CIP.

Mr. Counsell said that they could.

Ms. Allen said that when examining the impacts and all aspects of future years, she wondered how far ahead they considered the potential changes. She asked if in 10 or 15 years, with an increase in population, subdivisions, and other factors, did they take these future scenarios into account. She said that the reason for this question was to ensure that in 15 years, the Board did not face unexpected expenses for road widening or infrastructure improvements. She said it would be preferable to address infrastructure issues proactively and anticipate future needs before they arose.

Mr. Counsell said that the traffic impact analysis considered the current traffic situation and the additional traffic that the school would bring. He said this was the extent of their assessment. He said that their master plan, on the other hand, took into account future projections of growth and development and their impact on existing roads. He said that he was not certain if their master plan had specifically addressed the situation on Truslow Road at that point. He said that it had not identified any necessary projects for Truslow Road so far. He said that the master plan did align with the school's TIA in anticipating the school's traffic impact. He said that with the implementation of this master plan, the County would begin addressing many of the concerns mentioned, as they previously lacked a mechanism to do so.

Ms. Light said that she believed it was time to return their focus to examining the CIP projects. She said that the CIP projects were listed in accordance with the School Board's priorities. She said that the funding had been designated to align with what the Board adopted last year. She said that the timing of new or unfunded items was based solely on the School Board's request for the specific timing. She said that the projects were not included in the debt capacity. She said that if the Board wanted to move one of these projects, whether it was a school or County project, into the CIP, they would have to look at alternative revenue funding, revenue sources other than debt, or remove or reduce projects that were currently on their CIP.

Ms. Light said that the additional facilities included a fleet services facility and a North Stafford High School Fine Art Wing. She said that new this year was a Stafford Plaza bus parking facility. She said that schools found they were out of places to park the number of buses they had, as well as lacking a centralized driver check-in and check-out location. She said that this project would provide much more structure to those activities and a centralized place for them. She said that the indoor aquatics and activities center were also part of this proposal.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Rouse facility was on their agenda, and she did not recall discussing it previously and wanted clarification.

Ms. Light said that this had been requested by the schools, and they considered it a joint County and school priority. She said that to her knowledge, they had not received any direction from the Board regarding its importance as one of their priorities.

Ms. Bohmke said that she found the statement interesting and requested the data supporting it. She said that it was not included in the CIP. She said that if they were ever to consider any actions, they should think about establishing a YMCA near the old Mountain View location, next to Mountain View High School, where it was initially planned to be built many years ago.

Ms. Light said that the School Board anticipated rebuilding Ferry Farm, Stafford, Falmouth, and Grafton Village Elementary Schools within the next 10 years. She said that they had also identified the Alvin York Bandy Administrative Complex and North Stafford High School as future rebuild projects. She said that this information aimed to draw attention to the fact that these buildings were aging.

Mr. Vosburg said that part of the delay in their process involved the lack of a joint meeting between them and the School Board, where they could have discussed the justification behind some of these projects. He said that at this point, they had limited information to share about these specific projects. He said that their primary goal was to raise awareness and provide an overall picture regarding FY25–34 CIP. He said that they exceeded their debt capacity in those further out years, and these projects were not even included when considering that. He said that there were many questions surrounding these projects, as there should be; however, the timing of the joint meeting was causing difficulties for them to address them fully.

Dr. Yeung said she had concerns regarding Ferry Farm. She said that during her time on the School Board, the Board of Supervisors decided to give Ferry Farm a renewed look due to constituents' preferences for maintaining their existing school rather than building a new one. She said that they opted to preserve the current structure, similar to Falmouth. She said she did not understand why they continued to allocate significant funding to just one elementary school. She said that it appeared there was favoritism from a specific School Board member toward only one school. She said she wanted an account of every fund allocated to that school. She said she wanted to know why Drew Middle had not been prioritized.

Ms. Light said that the School Board did prioritize Drew Middle. She said that to quickly finish out these new projects and their groupings, there were a number of repair place mechanical systems. She said that these were listed as not funded, along with pavement replacement.

Mr. Coen said that firstly, several members on this Board expressed a desire to undertake the rebuild; however, they could not secure the fourth vote necessary to make it happen. He said that it was not that the community did not want it, but rather that they were unable to obtain the required vote. He said that secondly, as they examined all of this, he would like to emphasize something that he has consistently highlighted in the past. He said that there is a significant amount of vacant office space across the country, which some school divisions were utilizing for educational purposes. He said that if the issue is a need for seats, one might argue that it would be more creative to repurpose existing buildings and conduct renovations instead of waiting to construct $80 million schools.

Mr. Coen said that there was an allocation of federal funds intended for COVID-related air quality improvements. He said that previously, the County theoretically could not ask for it because they had bought filters that were still in classrooms today, although they were not being used. He said that it seemed inconceivable that billions of dollars were simply sitting there while they had needs for air conditioning and air quality improvements. He said that they should focus on using the federal funds.

Ms. Bohmke said that unless she had overlooked it, they had never received a comprehensive account of the expenses incurred on Ferry Farm. She said that the taxpayers were still unaware of what was spent on that school. She said that there needed to be full accountability from the entire Board and for the community to know that the funds allocated were indeed spent, whether there were any cost overruns and if so, by how much, and whether all list items were completed and which ones were not.

Ms. Light said that moving forward, they would discuss parks projects. She said that there were numerous parks projects in the CIP. She said that most of these projects had proffer funding. She said that they did have some cash funding for the Aquia parking area and for the Two Stone overlook. She said that these funds were unrestricted and could be adjusted as the Board directed. She said that the increase in transient occupancy tax by 1% would allow the Board to generate approximately $416,000 based on their projection for Fiscal Year 25. She said this would result in leveraging about $4.9 million in debt issuance.

Ms. Light said that considering the items under the Board's direction, several projects required debt funding, such as Belmont Ferry Farm Trail, the Carl Lewis Center, Mountain View property, and Musselman. She said that a new gymnastic center had been added. She said that this proposal was a new request but had been presented to the Board in several iterations before. She said that with the transient occupancy tax, the Board could still consider an additional 1% for a museum or regional transportation authority. She said that some of these options had been discussed in the past. She said that as they approached a proposed budget, they would ask the Board to address these issues.

Ms. Allen said she supported implementing the transient occupancy tax as it will improve their parks, thereby attracting more visitors to the area. She said that in turn, it will encourage people to rent their facilities and stay at their hotels. She said she had a question regarding the utilization of school facilities for parks and recreation purposes. She said that in some areas, there may be limitations, but she was curious as to why they were not utilizing more school facilities for this purpose. She said that during weekends, various coaches had expressed their desire for access to school gyms in order to conduct practices or volleyball sessions, among other activities. She said that one issue was that many of the schools they considered were located in more remote areas, which may make it challenging for some families to attend events. She said that it seemed that they were not fully utilizing this potential source of revenue by forming partnerships.

Mr. Morris said that he would like to point out that they currently had athletic complexes or fields at 22 of their schools, and they also utilized a number of elementary and middle school gymnasiums. He said that as a result, they already did quite a bit with the schools. He said that there may be additional opportunities to use these facilities more extensively. He said that schools had their own after-school programs which limited availability; however, he noted that there was potential for increased usage on weekends. He said that they occasionally scheduled rentals and coordinated through the schools for weekend basketball events.

Ms. Allen said that the coordination should not be temporary; rather, it should be a permanent arrangement. She said that growing up in New York City, she understood that access to school gyms and resources was granted due to city policies. She said that since they already paid for schools and their facilities, all schools should have open access to them. She said that this could provide an additional source of income for the schools, which they could use to fund their 3R projects. She said that many people would likely be interested in utilizing school facilities during weekends.

Dr. Yeung said that someone must coordinate this task, and subsequently, it was essential to ensure that the staff working in the schools for cleaning and other tasks were paid.

Ms. Vanuch said that they recommended that the park projects on the right side, which referred to the Board direction under TOT, involved utilizing funds from the TOT in the amount of money for those specific parks. She said that on the left side, either cash funding or proffers would be used to finance those projects.

Ms. Light said that was correct. She said that in the case of Musselman Park, there were proffers of $1 million dollars available for its development. She said that there were additional costs totaling $8.9 million identified to expand the park beyond what the one million dollars could accommodate.

She said that the Board had the opportunity to utilize the TOT or provide direction on debt funding for these remaining expenses.

Ms. Vanuch said that they provided the proffer list by Parks and Recreation. She said that Rock Hill had, under Shelton Woods and Shelton Knowles, $1.7 million worth of current available proffers dedicated to Mountain View properties, which was the park; however, she noted that it was not listed under the proffers.

Ms. Light said that was an error.

Ms. Vanuch asked what the $1 million were for the Musselman Park proffers. She said that currently, they were not available, and the Fox Chase Commons amounted to $1.17 million. She said that if it was presented as available when they did not have it yet, residents may wonder why their park was not being built.

Ms. Light said that it was an excellent point and they needed to consider it.

Ms. Gary asked what the total cost of the Carl Lewis project was.

Ms. Light said that the total cost of Carl Lewis was $4.7 million, and no ARPA dollars were dedicated to it. She said that there had been a discussion regarding this matter.

Mr. Vosburg said that he was planning to expand upon that point, as they were considering presenting it to the CEDC for discussion. He said that this decision was based on the architectural recommendations derived from their community meetings. He said that they did have funds available, which included insurance proceeds and proffer dollars. He said that these funds did not cover the full deficit, which was calculated according to the architect's recommendation. He said that they still required input from the Board regarding this overall project. He said that this topic would be presented before the committee for further deliberation on the project.

Ms. Gary said she supported the TOT.

Mr. English said that he would support cutting the Musselman project scope in half to get something completed. He said he suggested allocating $500,000 instead of a million dollars. He said that by doing so, they demonstrated good faith and showed that some action was being taken, which was preferable to no action at all.

Ms. Vanuch said that the funding was not available.

Mr. English said that if they could find half of the funding, then they should do it.

Ms. Bohmke said that they needed to do Musselman Park in phases. She said that the gymnastics center had been on their agenda since she joined the Board. She said she supported the TOT implementation. She clarified that in the proffer statement for Fox Chase, her former supervisor had negotiated that a significant portion of funds would be allocated to future parks, specifically off Truslow Road or Musselman Park. She asked if this allocation had been identified.

Ms. Light said that she would not have expected it to be that specific.

Ms. Bohmke asked how that happened.

Ms. Light said that staff examines all available proposals and projects, attempting to identify a suitable nexus for each. She said they presented their findings to both the planners and the County attorney for their assessment of whether these met the proffer requirements. She said they make any necessary adjustments.

Mr. Coen said he thought that Duff Green had been de-prioritized in favor of Musselman and other parks. He said that it had reappeared, but the funding could be used for other projects. He said that when they initially set their priorities, no one mentioned Duff as a top concern because other issues seemed more pressing.

Ms. Gary said that previously, they had discussed requesting staff to explore funding options for parks and potential activities within them. She said that they should be receiving the information regarding these options soon. She said she wanted to inquire about that since they were having this discussion.

Mr. Vosburg said that they were demonstrating additional funding opportunities beyond proffers. He said that the TOT was one example. He said that beyond that, it would involve examining the real estate general fund tax to support it.

Ms. Gary requested a comprehensive update on the options.

Dr. Yeung said that she seconded the motion regarding the 1% figure. She asked if it was possible for it to be higher. She said that she would like to know the plan and how to execute it. She said that in order to achieve this goal, she asked where they could secure the necessary funds. She said that while they discussed proposals on one side, she did not fully understand the situation presented on the other side.

Mr. Vosburg said that the TOT could be higher, but there had been discussions dedicating it to the museum. He said that if a penny was allocated for the museum by the Board, and another penny was considered for parks, it had also been discussed with the RTA. He said that the total could be three cents higher due to these allocations. He said that they could certainly demonstrate this alternative allocation; it was simply a matter of determining how the Board wished to allocate the revenue source.

Ms. Allen said that she was curious about their larger projects, particularly the gymnastic center, as to whether they had begun exploring opportunities for public-private partnerships. She said that in light of the experience with the Rouse Center, where they were able to build such a facility, she would like to emphasize that a $30 million project, especially one of this scale requiring significant time and resources, should prompt the Board to consider examining potential public-private partnerships.

Ms. Allen said that by entering into an agreement, they could secure the facility in the County, generate revenue, provide constituents with essential services, and encourage private businesses to invest in them while offering them access to a facility. She said she believed that this project, given its substantial scope, should be carefully considered for such a partnership. She said it was crucial to address the issue of underfunding public parks.

Ms. Bohmke suggested giving the project to the EDA.

Mr. Vosburg said that the gymnastics operation they currently had was very successful and there was a long waiting list for the program. He said that they were examining their fee structure because it was considerably lower than the private sector. He said that if the Board wished to provide direction for exploring a private-public partnership, staff would be pleased to investigate that option.

Dr. Yeung said that she supported exploring a public-private partnership along with the other Board members.

Ms. Light said that in an effort to address the remaining slides, transportation projects were in rather good shape. She said that they had programmed $50 million in bonds for these initiatives, expecting to draw down on them during fiscal years 27 and 28 to meet cash flow needs. She said that the assumed funding primarily pertained to the last five years, specifically split between Garrisonville Road phase one and phase two. She said that there have been some updates to the project costs, and a 5% annual contingency line had been added into the CIP, which was cash-funded from transportation funds to accommodate any fluctuations observed in transportation projects. She said that regarding court projects, the cost had been revised to $81.6 million and would be constructed between fiscal years 25 and 30. She said that the increase primarily resulted from the full completion of the court facilities, as they would require all of those courtrooms by the time construction was completed due to the absence of shelled courtrooms.

Ms. Light said that this included high-performance building standards that the Commonwealth now required, resulting in additional costs and an unfunded mandate. She said that this is a more precise projection based on increased inflation. She said that the courthouse annex was anticipated to have an increase of about $400,000 due primarily to construction bids exceeding the budget and electrical and water service issues not originally contemplated. She said that there would be another additional $1.3 million needed for JDR improvements. She said that both increases will be cash-funded out of fund balance if the Board approved.

Ms. Light said that they are working on future projects, with capital construction leading the efforts. She said the projects will be presented at a future CEDC meeting. She said a space need study had been completed that identified infrastructure improvements to house all existing and future staff. She said that from these discussions, the concept of a County support services complex developed, where various services and needs for different parts of the County could be housed in one central area. She said that some examples could be capital construction offices, which they currently rented. She said that the location for the fire rescue training facility, their fleet maintenance and logistics chair's department, fleet and equipment storage, had identified needs.

Ms. Light said that a centralized location would allow them to easily access different equipment and distribute it to the parks. She said they had begun discussing with schools, not necessarily the School Board, but school staff, and the School Board had identified that they needed a new fleet services facility. She said that this may be an area where this could come to fruition, as well as other school support facilities and central offices that they might require in the future. She said there was a front lobby renovation that was adopted as part of the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. She said that although it was not listed on their CIP, she wanted to bring this to the Board's attention that it was adopted as part of the FY 2024-2033 CIP. She said the funding was set aside, and the project was ready to move forward.

Ms. Allen said that the Board should remember that at any moment, the courts may require them to construct their facility. She said that they cannot continue to disregard their structural needs. She asked if it was feasible for them to examine the possibility of renovating the old Moncure site into offices instead of purchasing new land, clearing it, building a facility, and constructing parking to accommodate some of these support staff requirements.

Ms. Krauss said that the item would return to the CEDC. She said that she would like to ensure that they address one last important slide regarding fire facilities, as they all did approve a fire levy.

Ms. Light said that fire facilities costs had been updated based on a comparison with a recent rural fire station. She said that for Rock Hill, White Oak, and Brooke, the costs for these stations remained within three cents for the fire levy. She said that they had updated Aquia station, with the original estimate from Fiscal Year 2021. She said there had been discussion regarding land acquisition and potential challenges. She said that a new item in the fire facilities was a burn building proposal, as the County currently lacked a facility for training its young firefighters, and they must travel to Loudoun, Fauquier, or Prince William County to access suitable facilities. She said that it represented a $1.6 million increase.

Ms. Light said they were seeking the Board's direction. She said that they had received significant support for the TOT and incorporating this into their proposed CIP. She said that they had some information regarding proffer changes. She said that regarding the sale of property, they would receive feedback during the joint meeting. She said that they still needed to eliminate nearly $80 million worth of approved projects in the CIP. She said they would be seeking Board direction to either remove projects or change their scope. She said that there were numerous projects not funded in the CIP that, if the Board wished, could be added back.

Mr. Coen clarified that if the $15 million for Truslow was added, $95 million would have to be cut.

Ms. Light said that was correct.

Ms. Allen suggested using VRA bonds to fund Truslow Road improvements.

Ms. Light said that the VRA offered a bond or debt program for highly rated localities focused on transportation projects. She said that since Stafford County held a triple AAA rating, it was eligible to access such debt funding. She said that it would go against their debt capacity. She said if they add $15 million to their debt portfolio, they will have to withdraw $96 million from other projects.

Dr. Yeung asked whether they were discussing just one training center or multiple ones.

Ms. Light said that it was one center.

Dr. Yeung asked where it would be located.

Ms. Light said that it could be located at the central complex, but Fire and Rescue wanted a more centrally located facility.

Ms. Bohmke asked if there was not a proposal for a training facility near the jail in the Rouser Complex around five or six years ago.

Chief Grainger said that there was, as part of the facilities master plan involving discussing the possibility of placing the fire training center in the area where the animal shelter was situated behind the jail. He said that no progress had been made on that discussion at that point. He said it was merely a concept. He said that the topography made construction challenging.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2:48 p.m., Chairman Yeung adjourned the December 12, 2023 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Proffers Review budget work session.

Randy Vosburg

Randal E. Vosburg
County Administrator

Yeung

Dr. R. Pamela Yeung
Chairman