BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – A regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 20, 2024 in Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

ROLL CALL – The following members were present: Meg Bohmke, Chairman; Tinesha O. Allen, Vice-Chair; Deuntay T. Diggs; Darrell E. English; Monica L. Gary; Crystal L. Vanuch; Dr. Pamela Yeung

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to allow Ms. Gary to participate in the meeting remotely. *(All of Ms. Gary's votes were counted and recorded as oral votes)*

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(7)	Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(0)	

Also, in attendance were Randal E. Vosburg, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Cheryl Giles, Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

CHAIR REMARKS

Ms. Bohmke said that she hoped everyone enjoyed the holiday yesterday. She said that Stafford County followed the state holiday schedule, so they also observed George Washington's Day. She said that if people did not know, George spent his childhood and his teenage years in Stafford County at Ferry Farm. She said that she encouraged people to visit this beautiful place to learn more about its history. She said that Ferry Farm was located down off of Route 3 and Ferry Road.

Ms. Bohmke said that she invited anyone seeking a summer job to attend the Stafford Parks Job Fair on Tuesday, March 6, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Rowser Building. She said that Stafford Park was situated off Route 1, just south of the Rappahannock Regional Jail. She said that they aimed to fill various positions at their two pools for their summer camps and to assist at their parks. She said that there was information about these job opportunities available in the jobs section of their website at www.staffordcountyva.gov. She said that they invited people to join their team for the summer.

Ms. Bohmke said that the County was currently soliciting proposals for the ownership or long-term lease and ownership of The Counting House in historic Falmouth in exchange for its rehabilitation as an office. She said that The Counting House, built in 1840, had been completely deconstructed down to the studs inside, providing a blank canvas for potential owners or lessees. She said that the deadline for submitting proposals electronically to procurement was 11:00 a.m. on February 27, 2024. She said that the County hoped that someone with a heart for preservation would answer this request for proposal and work with them to steward this incredible cultural asset.

PRESENTATIONS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION QUARTERLY REPORT

Residency Administrator Kyle Bates said that he was the resident engineer for the Fredericksburg residency. He said he would provide a brief overview of various projects throughout Stafford County and address any questions at the end. He said that he had another presentation related to Brooke Road that he would give later. He said that the first project he would discuss was the northbound Rappahannock River crossing. He said that this was the project that they had seen over the Rappahannock River, adding three additional local lanes over the river.

Mr. Bates said that the 95 traffic was in its final alignment. He said that they were working on adding the third left-turn lane if one was coming off of the local lanes northbound onto 17 northbound, as well as some widening on 17 northbound. He said that the project was expected to be completed by spring, and everything should be finished by then. He said that moving forward, the express lanes had mostly been completed, with remaining tasks being addressed during summer. He said that the next project was the Route 644 bridge replacement over Aquia Creek, which aimed to replace the temporary one-lane bridge.

Mr. Bates said that the public expressed interest in January, but no request for a public hearing was received. He said that the project was planned for construction from summer 2026 to spring 2027, which would involve a total closure during that time frame for efficient completion. He said that on Leland Road, the project involved widening Leland between Walnut and Julian streets and providing a two-way left-turn lane. He said that the sole outstanding item was seeking dedication of the shared use path for public use. He said that he had not received any feedback regarding that; however, as part of this project, they would be examining the possibility of installing a pedestrian crossing at Walnut Farms and Perth Drive.

Mr. Bates said that this construction was scheduled to begin in 2028. He said that they had the Route 648 Shelton Shop Road improvements planned, which would involve widening and reconstructing Shelton Shop Road between Garrisonville and Widening Creek. He said that this project was currently under review, and they aimed to reduce some scope and estimate in order to ensure its completion. He said that they were also working on smaller, yet impactful projects around Stafford County. He said that one of these was the wedge widening program that they had been working on for years.

Mr. Bates said that last year they completed Kellogg Mill, and this upcoming year, in conjunction with the resurfacing schedule, they would be looking at Brent Point. He said that both Kellogg Mill and Brent Point were part of the 2024 Cape Seal resurfacing contract, and they would also be looking to widen those routes during this time. He said that the modular roundabout project at Celebrate Virginia Parkway and Banks Ford Parkway would address the extensive pavement at that intersection and numerous conflict points. He said that the addition of a roundabout would improve safety in the area. He said that they held a public hearing on November 6, 2023 at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library.

Mr. Bates said that the current schedule for construction was for summer 2024. He said that at present, VDOT was working to order materials and procure them. He said that there was a small project at Forbes and Herald, essentially widening the radius for right turns from Herald onto Forbes. He said that they were collaborating with the County to acquire the right-of-way. He said that if everything proceeded smoothly, they should be ready for construction this summer. He said that some other small projects were being carried out in the area.

Mr. Bates said that New Hope Church Road had been completed, which was a rustic project that they had hard-surfaced in fall 2023. He said that Route 727, Monroe Farm Road, was another project underway. He said that this was another rural rustic project, and they had completed most of the work, except for the hard surfacing, which they planned to complete this summer. He said that some other small projects included the secondary six-year plan, which they would review in the next two or three months.

Mr. Bates said that the Lynhaven Lane rural addition involved some spot improvements on the shoulder. He said that the funding for Richard's Ferry should be available in July in full, allowing them to commence work. He said that Cedar Grove Road was an unpaved section and Heartwood Valley Court was a rural addition that was prioritized; however, funding was not available until Fiscal Year 2027. He said that they hoped to identify and program funding for various projects during this secondary six-year plan season, utilizing approximately $1.9 million.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Mr. Bates could discuss that Monroe, Forbes Street, and Lynhaven were all funded from SSYP funds.

Mr. Bates said that Forbes could be included in the list, possibly representing previous secondary six-year plan funds or County safety improvement funds. He said that it could also be various sources. He said that they reviewed every year for the secondary six-year plan. He said that the SSYP, essentially communication fees from companies paying the state to place their utilities within the right-of-way, was used to distribute funds to localities. He said that they prioritized projects for secondary roadways. He said that everything seen there and more was part of the secondary six-year plan.

Ms. Bohmke said that she remembered that Monroe Road in the George Washington District was part of the SSYP for quite some time. She said that they had to wait their turn to receive funding over the years.

Mr. Bates said that it was indeed a priority list. He said that much of what they had done previously in relation to the secondary six-year plan had been through the Rural Rustic Program. He said that this program essentially involved taking measures that aligned with Monroe Farms' objectives and principles. He said that hard surfacing some areas, reestablishing some ditches, possibly adding some pipes for drainage, and ensuring everything was in its proper place were some of the tasks they had undertaken. He said that moving forward, he acknowledged that maintenance tasks required attention.

Mr. Bates said that in January, they experienced significant rainfall, which led to flooding in certain areas. He said that this situation, however, had provided them with valuable insights into the necessary drainage improvements. He said that although there was a limit to what could be done when water rose from the river, they had identified a list of drainage concerns that they would address throughout spring and summer. He said that they had managed to open River Road within 24 hours after the storm, but this spring and summer, they would prioritize addressing drainage issues.

Mr. Bates said that another item worth mentioning was that they were in the final stages of finalizing the agreement for their manicure and mowing contract. He said that in the previous mowing season, they had added an agreement for more manicured mowing in specific corridors identified by all parties involved. He said that this change would significantly increase mowing frequency from their usual two to three times to up to ten times during the mowing season for operational and safety purposes. He said that the contract for this additional service had been awarded, and they were currently working on finalizing an agreement with Stafford County for funding. He said that this enhanced mowing would greatly improve aesthetics and was looking forward to its implementation in March, April, and May.

Ms. Bohmke said that this topic came up during a VACO meeting when she spoke with Jeff McKay, who was the chairman of Fairfax's County Board and served alongside her on the Executive Board. She said that she asked him how Fairfax County keeps its roadways so clean and pristine compared to their efforts with VDOT. She said that he informed her that they pay for additional mowing services beyond what VDOT offers. She said that she then approached Mr. Vosburg to explore this option and its associated costs. She said that many community members cared about the appearance of their area, and she appreciated their collaboration with staff in addressing this issue. She said that she believed this initiative would be worth the investment, as it would significantly improve their surroundings without a substantial financial burden.

Mr. Bates said that certainly, in some areas, work would be carried out under permit where the County hired its own contractor to complete the tasks. He said that however, they could likely secure better pricing based on the quantities they had. He said that consequently, with the agreement in place, VDOT could administer the work and receive funding from them to execute additional cycles in the specified areas.

Mr. English asked if inmates continued to do work along Route 3.

Mr. Bates said that he believed that many inmates had been working on tasks for the Parks and Recreation department. He said that as part of this arrangement, they had been completing these tasks under permit in the Route 3 area. He said that if they could secure better deals in the future, they might not need to rely solely on inmate labor for these tasks. He said that these inmates could still be utilized for other tasks that had not been addressed yet.

Mr. Bates said that as part of this manicure mowing service, they had identified specific routes for this task. He said that although he did not have the list in front of him at that moment, one example was Route 3. He said that prior to manicure mowing, they collected litter along these routes. He said that this was an integral part of this contract. He said that if they wished to apply this approach elsewhere in the County or utilize their workforce and contracts for this purpose, that option was available.

Dr. Yeung asked if lawn edging was a part of this mowing service.

Mr. Bates said that as part of that service, they would weed-eat around signs and other objects. He said that however, they do not go out into the gutter pan to remove items such as sand. He said that they would manicure or weed-eat around specific objects but would not enter the gutter pan for tasks like that. He said that he understood that this had been a concern for the County in the past. He said that they had already started sweeping this year, which was earlier than usual due to the large amount of sand on the roads. He said that this would be a priority during the upcoming season as well.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to ensure that there were some volunteers in the community who took initiative on their own. She said that she would like to acknowledge Carl and Ann Klein for their efforts. She said that she wanted to make sure that when people noticed that her road portion was cut, they did not assume that it was done professionally. She said that they should please verify that it was properly edged and neatly finished, as people frequently visited that area.

Mr. Bates said that the County was paying them to complete the task, and thus their monitors would ensure that they fulfilled their responsibilities. He said that moving on to the topic of resurfacing, this was a significant issue. He said that they should have the full report in their Board packet. He said that they had begun working on the 2024 routes. He said that over the past year or two, they had focused heavily on high volume secondaries, which remained their primary focus. He said that they had made substantial progress in this area.

Mr. Bates said that for instance, almost the entire 610 area had been resurfaced from the County line to the west, almost up to 95. He said that they had more projects coming up; one such project involved Route 1 between Potomac Creek and Hospital Center Boulevard. He said that another project involved 17 southbound from the Fauquier County line to Route 723, which was approximately 11 miles of resurfacing that was urgently required. He said that in the Primer House area, Morton, Lay Hill, Forbes, and other locations had experienced significant resurfacing work.

Mr. Bates said that they were considering Courthouse Road east of Route 1 for potential improvements, along with Town and Country in Northampton and Poplar Road for upgrades. He said that however, they had concerns regarding the pipes on Poplar Road, which may require nighttime closures for several weeks. He said that they would release a press statement regarding this matter. He said that they did not want to install new asphalt over failed pipes, which would be counterproductive. He said that additionally, they had Augustine North in their plans.

Mr. Bates said that in total, they had nearly 100 lane miles of resurfacing work, specifically 96.19 lane miles in Stafford County. He said that this represented a significant investment in infrastructure improvements. He said that they had already begun working on the 2025 projects. He said that he had mentioned only one subdivision but had previously discussed some of the priorities and categories that VDOT uses for funding allocation.

Mr. Bates said that he had mentioned high volume secondaries as a focus. He said that some early numbers for 2025 indicated that they may have an opportunity to complete more low-volume secondary projects. He said that this was indeed good news. He said that he was aware that Ms.

Vanuch mentioned several subdivisions during the last Board meeting, and some of those based on ratings were being considered. He said that he would share future details as they arrived regarding which specific subdivisions met that threshold.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to ask a question regarding Telegraph Road. She said that although it was not an immediate or near-future issue, she was curious about how they could include Telegraph Road in the repaving schedule since a significant portion of it required repaving. She said that she was unsure of how their team would prioritize repaving it based on its issues related to curvatures and spacing.

Mr. Bates said that the curvature and spacing do not have a significant impact; it was the vehicles per day that matter. He said that this figure is substantial. He said that one was in competition not only with other routes in Stafford but also with those across the region. He said that he could confirm that Telegraph Road was one route they would be examining for the 2025 season.

Ms. Allen said that in the spring season, approaching early summer, mosquitoes and drainage issues became prevalent concerns. She asked if VDOT could provide information that could be shared with the public, enabling them to report their concerns about drainage problems in neighborhoods that frequently faced such challenges.

Mr. Bates said that the primary method involved utilizing their online system, as this information did not reach the downtown central office; instead, it directly went to his superintendent in North Stafford. He said that this superintendent examined these submissions and prioritized tasks accordingly. He said that in a subdivision setting, if an issue did not affect road safety, they may not address it immediately the following week. He said that however, when the superintendent visited the subdivision next, they reviewed the work order system and consolidated complaints within a specific radius of their location.

Mr. Bates said that they could handle quick and easy tasks, such as unclogging pipes, or more extensive tasks like grading, provided they incorporated them into their plan and prioritized them. He said that when communicating with their constituents, he recommended directing them to 1-800-4-ROAD. He said that they should ensure that they input the Report A Road Problem data into the online system on the VDOT website. He said that this allowed them to identify numerous problem areas, particularly in low-volume secondary roadways. He said that regarding commuter lot maintenance, they had completed resurfacing for Route 17 commuter lot and Mine Road lot.

Mr. Bates said that the Stafford Borough lot would be restriped this season. He said that they were exploring alternative options for replacing bus shelters and aimed to complete this project during summer. He said that additionally, construction work would commence at the back side of Route

17 lot due to increased lane capacity on I-95. He said that consequently, they required more salt for these additional lanes. He said that the back section of the 17-lot property was being converted for salt storage, similar to the facility at 118 in Thornburg. He said that this would significantly increase their capacity for salt during larger storm events.

Mr. Bates said that he would finally address a few outstanding items. He said that at the previous meeting, they had discussed the striping on 610. He said that upon inspection, everything was installed according to specifications, featuring some of the best pavement markings achievable using thermoplastic materials. He said that however, they subsequently installed inlaid markers for added reflectivity. He said that the subdivisions were discussed, and they had consistently been examining ratings for the Board's resurfacing program. He said that there was a significant demand for addressing low-volume secondary roads.

Mr. Bates said that complaints and issues from constituents should be relayed through the 1-800-4-ROAD system. He said that this helped them maintain awareness of their concerns. He said that at the end of the day, they continuously reviewed ratings and identified needs regarding low-volume secondary roads. He said that they had been assessing Mountain View Road speed reduction and planned to decrease the speed limit from 45 to 40 in a specific section. He said that he promised to provide more details about this .8 mile stretch shortly. He said that he had received a couple of messages regarding the lights. He said that thy were now back up and running at the commuter lot.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to bring up the topic of traffic mitigation regarding the lights on 610. She said that she and her colleagues had discussed examining signal alignment from Washington Drive all the way to Shelton Shop, along with major secondary roads such as Mine Road and Eustis that intersect with 610. She said that often, these signals were not in sync, causing backups during rush hours, particularly off 95 when approaching 610 going west. She said that the first light and second line were never in harmony, leading to bottlenecking traffic from Washington Drive up to Eustis.

Ms. Allen said that after Eustis, there was a brief respite due to the absence of a light, but from Park Ridge to Shelton Shop, there was another issue with those second lights. She said that last year, they discussed implementing measures to address this issue, and people continued to obstruct the box despite being informed. She said that they should have been aware of the consequences but persisted in doing so, causing significant problems. She said that this situation not only affected safety but also hampered the efficiency of fire and rescue services and sheriffs during rush hours when they must navigate through chaos.

Mr. Bates said that he would provide an example regarding these signals, which was to imagine a pie with each movement at that signal taking a piece of it. He said that one point he mentioned was that many people who blocked the box might be either going straight through and encountering a red light or making a left turn and getting stopped while attempting to proceed. He said that in areas close to 95, capacity issues arise due to providing more green time to 610 for the main line westbound during rush hour.

Mr. Bates said that they give as much green time as possible during these peak times, but if they increase it further, they must synchronize with the next light. He said that this creates a significant amount of traffic coming from side streets as well. He said that it was nowhere what they had on 610, understandably, but they had a queue of traffic waiting to go, and then dumped that onto 610. He said that if they had nowhere to go because of a capacity issue, they were essentially dumping traffic into a stopped queue, which then caused further issues for 610.

Mr. Bates said that it was essential to balance this situation, considering side streets. He said that their priority was to move westbound traffic in the afternoon, which was why it received all the green time. He said that they could not hold side streets for extended periods because at a certain point, they created a larger queue that was dumped onto the network. He said that they had considered this issue and added a little more green time at the intersection coming off of 95 to the west. He said that they were concerned about adding any additional green time there due to the significant volume coming from those side streets.

Mr. Bates said that it was a balancing act, and unfortunately, when there was a capacity issue at peak times, there was only so much that could be funneled through a small funnel. He said that this was similar to pouring a bag of rice into a funnel; it became blocked at the bottom. He said that he would discuss this issue with their signal timing specialists and determine what changes they made. He said that he would then provide them with that information. He said that if there was room for improvement, they would strive to keep people moving through 610, which was a crucial corridor for the northern part of Stafford, but they must also address the capacity issue simultaneously.

Ms. Vanuch said that any connections she could establish for CTB or SmartScale or for her superiors to provide additional funding for widening 610 would be greatly appreciated. She said that last year, SmartScale funding was denied; however, they hoped to resubmit the proposal this year. She said that the County had set aside over $50 million in bonds for this project. She said that in the past, they had provided matching funds, which would be beneficial. She said that she requested that she discuss this matter with the relevant decision-makers.

Mr. Bates said that he had never said no to projects in that area, so he would offer his support.

Ms. Vanuch said that she hoped Marcy was listening to this discussion. She said that regarding what Ms. Allen discussed and her previous email about this topic, she wanted to bring attention to the left-hand turn off of Shelton Shop onto 610. She said that there was only one turn lane available, and the light had been increasingly congested every day, particularly during rush hour. She said that she understood the green light timing for east and westbound 610 but would like to know if they could reassess this situation.

Ms. Vanuch said that the last time they looked into it was over the summertime. She said that she would suggest that they examine this issue during school hours or rush hour to identify potential improvements, especially in the evening when congestion seemed to be at its peak. She said that she had experienced waiting at this light four or five times just to make a left turn onto 610, which resulted in being stuck there for 10 to 15 minutes. She said that the site plan for Chick-Fil-A had just been submitted, which would likely result in more people needing to go straight through.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed that the left-turn lane was currently only for left and straight turns. She said that however, there were two lanes that could make a right turn. She said that when she sent an email before, she suggested considering whether one of those right turn lanes could be transformed into another left-turn lane. She said that at that time, she was unsure if there was sufficient capacity for this change. She said that she wanted a more thorough study to be conducted to determine the number of people making left turns versus going straight versus making right turns. She said that this study should also project the expected traffic patterns when Chick-Fil-A opened.

Mr. Bates said that Chick-Fil-A should be doing that analysis.

Ms. Vanuch said that she understood, but would request that Mr. Bates make it part of the review plan when Chick-Fil-A approached him, because VDOT had much more power than the County in terms of transportation impacts.

Mr. Diggs said that his first question was regarding the salt barn. He said that he had received communications from constituents expressing environmental concerns about potential runoff into streams, waterways, and other related issues. He asked if Mr. Bates could address that matter.

Mr. Bates said yes, they captured all that through their basins, so none of that would make its way out into the world until treated. He said that therefore, that should not be a concern.

Mr. Diggs said that another concern regarding Belle Plains had been raised involving flooding issues. He asked if there had been any resolution or mitigation measures implemented.

Mr. Bates said that he would verify with their area headquarters. He said that they regularly visited Belle Plains, which was a low-lying area prone to frequent flooding. He said that he would consult with the area headquarters regarding their schedule and inform them of their plans.

Mr. English said that regarding Stony Hill Road, there were potholes that had been marked, so he would request that VDOT inspect those. He said that regarding his statement about checking Mountain View for speed, he would ask that Mr. Bates consider adding rumble strips or other measures around that curve to slow down vehicles. He said that he would suggest they investigate this further because the nearby business was concerned about their safety when backing out due to traffic. He said that they were worried about getting hit, so he would inquire if installing a flashing light or another warning system might be beneficial for slowing down vehicles around that corner.

Mr. Bates said that he knew that they had discussed similar topics in the past. He said that they had considered rumble strips, flashing lights, and other measures for severe cases where there was a significant issue. He said that he was not suggesting that they wait for problems to implement these solutions, but in reality, they had areas now that had those issues. He said that they risked becoming numb to them; if they had rumble strips at every turn, people would simply ignore them all the time.

Mr. English said that the other issue he would like to raise was that they should examine the traffic light at Courthouse that controlled the flow to eastbound. He said that this light allowed only four or five vehicles to pass through in the evening and head westbound at the courthouse intersection.

Ms. Vanuch said that without intending to detract from Mr. English's credit, she would inform them that the traffic light at Courthouse was causing delays. She said that it was actually the northbound light that was taking longer to change. She said that this change in the traffic light from Courthouse affected the crossing of Route 1, impacting both northbound and southbound Route 1 traffic. She said that the light was notably longer than before.

Mr. Bates said that he would take a look at it. He said that they wanted to ensure that they provided ample time for both northbound and southbound traffic. He said that a lot of time from Courthouse had been taken, and the goal was to have a widened capacity intersection that they had discussed earlier. He asked if Ms. Vanuch was referring to the red phase.

Ms. Vanuch said yes. She said that there seemed to be a lack of synchronization between the hospital, Old Courthouse, and Hope Road. She said that she believed the lights in this area were out of sync.

Dr. Yeung said that she received a copy of a traffic calming study. She asked if they received something for Box Elder.

Mr. Bates said not that he was aware of.

Dr. Yeung asked if Mr. Bates would receive that at some point.

Mr. Bates said that typically they would review the information and determine if it met the traffic calming criteria for the next step.

Dr. Yeung asked if the racing that was occurring on Box Elder would be investigated.

Mr. Bates said that he would suggest that they examine the data from the traffic calming perspective. He said that clearly, he could not rectify any bad behaviors occurring on the road.

Dr. Yeung said that she shared the information with Sheriff Decatur, who was investigating the matter further to identify the person in question. She said that they discussed Garrisonville Road and Mine Road, which had become increasingly congested due to ongoing construction. She said that an assisted living home was being built on Mine Road at the corner, causing one lane to close and resulting in heavy traffic backups all the way to 95. She said that installing traffic lights may not be effective due to the high volume of traffic. She said that the challenge was finding ways to manage traffic flow in this area. She said that there had been studies conducted regarding this issue; however, she was unsure of their results or the next steps being taken.

Mr. Bates asked if Dr. Yeung was discussing the section within the projects that Ms. Vanuch mentioned.

Dr. Yeung said that she was unsure if it was the same one. She said that she was unsure if the study from Route 1 and that specific area were separate investigations.

Mr. Bates said that he was not certain at the moment about the specific details regarding improvements required at certain intersections due to increased traffic. He said that they had numerous developers who examined specific intersections to determine if there were any improvements required, but he was not familiar with the details off the top of his head.

Dr. Yeung said that she would find out about that. She said that she noticed that there were many more people crossing that bridge. She said that she was unsure if he was also considering this factor. She said that it appeared to be a risk for accidents.

Ms. Bohmke said that last week she attended a community group meeting at Falls Run where participants discussed numerous potholes along Enon Road, extending all the way to Truslow. She said that although she did not frequently travel that route, she recommended investigating this issue in early spring.

Mr. Bates said that that area was scheduled to be resurfaced this year.

Ms. Bohmke asked if it would be happening in the spring.

Mr. Bates said that the schedule had not yet been received, but work would be continuing from the spring through the fall. He said that they would have to hold it over by patching potholes until it was completely resurfaced.

Mr. Bates said that he would address Brooke Road as his final point. He said that in January, they experienced heavy rainfall, which led to increased traffic on Brooke Road. He said that Brooke Road was a two-lane secondary route, with eight to nine-foot lanes and one to two-foot shoulders. He said that the daily traffic volume in both directions is approximately 3,500 vehicles. He said that Brooke Road serves as the sole access point for residents living east of Andrew Chapel. He said that the red line in the provided image represented the Crow's Nest area preserve and Accokeek Creek.

Mr. Bates said that the contour lines showcased the elevation differences between the high area and the Crow's Nest location near Accokeek Creek, where the road was situated. He said that the road runs parallel to Accokeek Creek, which was the primary tributary of Potomac Creek. He said that it was located in a mapped floodplain with minimal elevation for draining water from the roadway into tail ditches and out to the creek. He said that replacing pipes did not solve the issue if they remained underwater. He said that on the slide were older photographs showing flooding within the S-curve prior to April 2022.

Mr. Bates said that although it may appear like a rainy day in the pictures, no rain fell that day. He said that water backed up through some pipes and ponded in the low area of Brooke Road, causing silt buildup and preventing water from draining out of the low area on that side of the S-curve. He said that road closures occurred in 2018, with four instances; in 2020 and 2021, there were eight and five closures respectively. He said that emergency response concerns included rescuing a woman who drove past barricades and became stranded in the water in 2020, and two vehicles that became stranded in floodwaters during road closures in December 2020.

Mr. Bates said that the significant amount of rainfall during this period led to discussions regarding Brooke Road in 2018. He said that the Stafford County Board approved a study by Stantec for an engineer report and hydraulic analysis in December 2019. He said that the Infrastructure Committee presented options for replacing culverts, realigning the road, and elevating the road in December 2019. He said that however, replacing culverts underwater did not resolve the issue.

Mr. Bates said that in December 2020, VDOT collaborated with the USDA to remove 15 beaver dams and 35 beavers until March 2021. He said that in February 2021, VDOT and Stafford County discussed the emergency access road connecting Windermere to Crest Lane, leading VDOT to commit $1.5 million to Stafford County for this project. He said that Windermere was a private subdivision, so Stafford County had to consider a rural addition, which would involve bringing the area up to state standards. He said that in April 2021, VDOT installed a portable traffic camera in the S-curve area of Virginia 511.

Mr. Bates said that they also placed water level delineators in the area. He said that the camera allowed users to view the conditions of Brooke Road daily through the VDOT 511 app. He said that in October through December of 2021, DCR removed about 110 trees from the Crow's Nest area along Brooke Road due to the emerald ash borer infestation. He said that in April 2022, they replaced drainage pipes in the S-curve, the road elevation was raised in some areas to restore it to its original level, which was between six and eight inches, and they installed a water pump in a well on one side of the road to help drain water from low areas.

Mr. Bates said that this had effectively stopped day-to-day flooding in that location. He said that as part of that, the Stafford County Infrastructure Committee decided to hold off on the emergency access road that VDOT had committed $1.5 million for. He said that other projects included soil nail stabilization for $519,000 and pipe replacements and well installation for $70,000. He said that maintenance details included periodic tail ditch maintenance every three or four years.

Mr. Bates said that VDOT would continue to put abrasives down for traction during moist periods. He said that they planned to install a permanent traffic camera and lighting in the area in spring 2024. He said that Stafford County had a locally administered project worth $7.5 million that was expected to go to construction in 2026. He said that another section of Brooke Road required soil nail stabilization for $885,000 due to a slope that was starting to give way. He said that VDOT would also review beaver dams with DCR and the USDA in March. He said that the tail ditch work would be completed at the end of winter or spring months.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated Mr. Bates coming out and sharing this information because the presentation was much more in-depth than she could have explained herself. She said that she understood that this was an ongoing problem and that during their previous meeting, they had discussed revenue sharing as a potential option for funding. She said that they had been applying for various grants for this purpose and would like to know if they could address that as a possible solution for at least mitigating some costs related to the S-curve projects in their budget.

Mr. Bates said that Stafford County applied for projects in Onville and Garrisonville during the recent 2023 round of revenue sharing, which occurred in odd years. He said that in 2025, there was an option to utilize the approximately $7 million currently invested in the project and apply for revenue sharing. He said that the state would match up to 10 million dollars for a single project or $5 million per year. He said that by applying in 2025, the project could receive an additional $5 million on top of the existing $7 million. He said that this option was eligible for revenue sharing but was not applied for in the previous round.

Ms. Gary asked if Mr. Vosburg could provide some numbers regarding the potential savings they would experience if they pursued that option and were able to secure revenue sharing.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this would be if they went through Smart Scale for this project.

Ms. Gary said that this program did not qualify.

Mr. Bates said that the project did not qualify for SmartScale because it did not meet the V-Trans requirements or safety standards. He said that revenue sharing would be available in odd years, while SmartScale applications were prioritized in even years, such as 2024. He said that in 2025, revenue sharing would be available. He said that the state provided approximately $100 million annually for matching funds. He said that over the lifespan of the project, up to $10 million could be obtained, with $5 million in a single year for this specific case, which was Brooke Road.

Dr. Yeung asked if this could be addressed in their next work session in order to review the numbers associated with this item.

Mr. Vosburg said that they would be glad to include it in their next work session addressing this topic.

Mr. Diggs asked what happened to the beavers that they removed.

Mr. Bates said that he did not have the answer but would provide the contact information for the USDA communications team so Mr. Diggs could ask them.

REAL ESTATE REASSESSMENT UPDATE

Scott Mayausky, Commissioner of the Revenue, said that he was joined by Bart Stevenson, County Assessor, who would delve further into the numbers of the reassessment. He said that the reason for this reassessment was that Virginia was unique in having its Constitution stipulate that property was assessed at 100% fair market value, which was not common among other states in the country. The reassessments became effective on January 1, specifically January 1, 2024.

Mr. Mayausky said that this meant they considered sales that occurred in 2022 but primarily focused on those that took place in 2023 leading up to that date. He said that the Code of Virginia mandated that they held at least 15 days' worth of hearings. He said that they strived not to turn anyone away. He said that they aimed for people to feel comfortable with their decisions, so they encourage them to attend even after the hearings have concluded. He said that Virginia was known as a truth in taxation state.

Mr. Mayausky said that this code also referred to something called the effective tax rate, which was essentially the rate required to offset the increased reassessment value. He said that in this context, the system could be thought of as a scale: when values rise, the rate decreases. He said that the prior year's rate did not carry forward to the new tax year. He said that consequently, when voting on the rate, they were not basing their decision on the 94.5 rate but rather the $0.84 effective rate. He said that they reassessed every two years, as per the request of the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Vanuch asked if $0.84 was the effective rate to the 94.5.

Mr. Mayausky said that 94.5 was last year’s rate.

Ms. Vanuch asked if that encompassed 93 plus 1.5 for the fire levy.

Mr. Mayausky said yes, he included the fire levy in that because that was the overall rate for the taxpayers.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they were referring to just the real estate property rate, it was currently at $0.93, so the effective rate would be 82.5.

Mr. Mayausky said that it was in that ballpark. He said that Ms. Light would provide that number in her presentation.

Ms. Vanuch said that the Board had previously been informed that the rate was 84 and the fire levy was separate. She said that she wanted to clarify that important point.
Mr. Mayausky said that he would send the information to the Board members after this presentation.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the fourth bullet point on the slide was all based on legislation passed last year.

Mr. Mayausky said no. He said that the effective rate had always been required to be calculated and advertised in a newspaper alongside the budget. He said that this amendment did not create a new requirement; instead, it extended the existing requirement to reassessment notices. He said that the thought process behind this change was that newspaper circulation had significantly decreased, causing taxpayers to be unaware of the rate. He said that consequently, the General Assembly intended for taxpayers to be informed about this rate.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had never seen him display the actual effective tax rate in his slides before.

Mr. Mayausky said he had been doing so for 20 years.

Mr. English asked if Mr. Mayausky could better explain the effective rate for the taxpayers. He said that the videos online were somewhat helpful but could use some further clarification.

Mr. Mayausky said that he would do so. He said that he had a new video he could post this afternoon. He said that it was essentially a taxpayer transparency initiative created by the General Assembly. He said that the General Assembly took accurate property assessment very seriously indeed. He said that failure to maintain an assessment accuracy of at least 70% may result in the suspension of certain state funding streams. He said that typically, Stafford achieved 92% of market value in their assessments, which was their target. He said that they aimed to avoid over-assessing a large percentage of their County. He said that this meant that most properties fell within a range between 100% and 86%.

Mr. Mayausky said that a 92% ratio was their goal, which they had achieved this time. He said that this ratio was also linked to State Corporation Commission revenues. He said that the state assessed properties like Columbia Gas and CSX, applied their tax rate, and ensured that they taxed these large state corporation properties at the same ratio as homeowners. He said that it was crucial that they ensured equitability in their assessments. He said that if significant inequities arise between neighborhoods or classes of property, either the Board of Equalization or the Circuit Court may invalidate the entire reassessment process, which had recently occurred in a local jurisdiction. He said that they must avoid such situations.

Mr. Mayausky said that if the reassessment did not generate additional revenue, some may wonder why they did it. He said that their responsibility was to fairly distribute the tax burden based on property values, which could change annually. He said that some years, certain neighborhoods or classes of property may be more desirable than others. He said that they adjusted the tax burden distribution accordingly based on real estate market trends. He said that therefore, taxpayers paid varying percentages of the tax burden they contributed.

Bart Stevenson, County Assessor, said that he and his team were responsible for processing all these figures and generating the assessments that everyone appreciated so much. He said that the first slide provided an overall summary of various property types within the County. He said that residential properties experienced an increase of approximately 13%. He said that in their office, they had noticed that there was still low inventory available in the market. He said that there was not much for sale. He said that there was continued demand in the market, which kept prices at elevated levels, similar to those of the past couple of years.

Mr. Stevenson said that the commercial segment, if examined closely, increased by 23% and surpassed residential growth for the first time in as long as he could recall. He said that one factor contributing to this was the growing demand for industrial properties. He said that the value of industrial land had increased significantly, as had new land projects for data centers, which Mr. Mayausky would discuss later. He said that the value of these projects had also risen dramatically. He said that this was what went into the commercial, outpacing the residential.

Mr. Stevenson said that residential remained the primary driver behind the County due to its large percentage. He said that the commercial sector had experienced significant growth this time around. He said that the displayed pie chart represented the overall composition of the County. He said that residential constituted 83% of the County. He said that the 17% represented the commercial makeup in its entirety and had actually grown since last year. He said that the figures fluctuated slightly as residential values changed, but that was what they were examining for the 2024 reassessment.

Mr. Stevenson said that the next chart compared the residential figures at the top line with the commercial figures at the bottom line over the past 20 years. He said that the top line demonstrated the volatility in peaks and valleys. He said that the first peak represented the housing bubble between 2004, 2005, and 2006, followed by the subsequent drop during 2008 through 2010 when the economy burst. He said that comparing this line with the commercial line at the bottom revealed the steady base of commercial properties, contrasting with the volatility of residential properties. He said that the increase in values since COVID-19 in the last four years was evident in the graph.

Mr. Stevenson said that the commercial line represented a stable base throughout the County's historical makeup, which had shifted from 87-13 in 2004 to 83-17 today. He said that examining where the bubble burst and property values dropped highlighted this change in the County's composition. He said that the residential property value dropped significantly to 81%, while commercial properties increased to 19% of the County during the 2008-2010 period when residential properties experienced a decline. He said that he would like to provide an overview of how commercial and residential properties have responded to market fluctuations.

Mr. Stevenson said that over the past six years, the commercial property base had averaged between 16% and 18% of the County. He said that the next graph illustrated the last six assessment cycles in their entirety, encompassing both commercial and residential properties. He said that the most substantial increases had occurred over the past four years. He said that the County experienced a 24% rise from 20% to 22%, followed by another 13% increase this time. He said that from 2014 to 2017, the first four years were relatively stable, with between 5% to 8% increases.

Mr. Stevenson said that COVID-19 hit, causing prices to rise significantly, which led to a large demand for homes and an increase in property values as well. He said that this was the first time that the County had been valued at over $27 billion in its entire history. He said that to provide more detail about the reassessment timeline, their appraisers considered all sales in every neighborhood and every sale in this County until the end of 2023.

Mr. Stevenson said that this was how they arrived at their assessed values. He said that the notices were mailed last Thursday, February 15. He said that some people received them on Saturday due to early deliveries, while others would receive them this afternoon or tomorrow. He said that if anyone had concerns, they should encourage them to contact their appraisers, as they were currently accepting appeals.

Dr. Yeung asked if Mr. Stevenson could clarify the relationship of the reassessments and the tax rate.

Mr. Stevenson said that the County conducted a biannual reassessment cycle in even years. He said that this process was completed in 2020 and 2022. He said that they were currently at 2024. He said that the next reassessment would occur in 2026. He said that it involved a reexamination of the real estate market and property values.

Dr. Yeung said that sometimes when they sent out that notice, recipients may not realize that they could question it; they simply thought they were being provided with information.

Mr. Stevenson said that at the bottom of the notice, there were instructions for appealing. He said that the information included their phone number and website. He said that there were several options available for appealing. He said that one could call them and discuss their case with an appraiser over the phone, another option was to make an appointment to visit them in person and consult with an appraiser, or one could access their website, where there was a banner that led to an online fillable form. He said that this form allowed users to conduct research and submit their assessment of the property's value. He said that once submitted, this information would be sent directly to his email, initiating the appeal process if they deemed it necessary due to non-uniformity or injustice.

Dr. Yeung said that she hoped people took advantage of the opportunities presented.

Mr. Stevenson said that their deadline was March 8, and they encouraged everyone to submit all appeals by this date. He said that this was 15 business days, which was required by law. He said that they would never turn away anyone with concerns about any assessment. He said that they would always sit down and listen to someone, regardless of the time of year. He said that once the appeals process was complete, the focus would shift to all of them in order to set the tax rate, followed by bills being mailed out and the first half bills being due on June 1.

Mr. Mayausky said that he wanted to discuss a slide that presented the percentage of change per class code of property. He said that this slide focused on converting the percentage change into a dollar amount and breaking out a subset for data centers due to their high-profile status in the County. He said that out of the identified projects, which he believed numbered five, they increased the land value by 429%. He said that fortunately, there were numerous sales in December in the region, providing them with reliable data for their assessment.

Mr. Mayausky said that as a result, they were able to be aggressive but also confident in their valuation of the data centers. He said that this increase in land value amounted to almost a million extra tax dollars at the $0.84 rate. He said that the budget director Ms. Light and he had discussed over the years how their two cycles did not align, making it challenging for staff to perform their job using projected numbers until the tax rate was set. He said that taxes were based on a calendar year rather than a fiscal year, which would help make sense of what to expect as these data centers were being built out.

Mr. Mayausky said that in Calendar Year 24, the value they would receive was the land change, as demonstrated earlier. He said that if a reassessment or rezoning occurred in 2024, they could not address the new land value until January 1, 2025. He said that he anticipated that some individuals from Civic Stafford may question him when there was a significant rezoning and the value did not change; however, this was due to legal restrictions that prevented them from changing the value until January 1, 2025. He said that the good news was that this fell within the County’s FY25 fiscal year.

Mr. Mayausky said that the increased value would be effective from January 1, 2025. He said that any partially constructed buildings at that time would also be valued, and the benefit would be reflected in the next year's budget. He said that they anticipated that the significant tax revenue for the County would arise from January 1, 2026. He said that by this time, they hoped that numerous rezonings would be completed, and buildings would be fully constructed and filled with computer equipment. He said that computer equipment generated substantial tax revenue.

Mr. Mayausky said that a 250,000 square foot building was expected to contain over $1 billion of taxable property. He said that the full benefit of these data centers in terms of tax revenue would be experienced from January 1, 2026. He said that as Mr. Stevenson mentioned, they encouraged individuals to appeal their assessments. He said that Dr. Yeung's question was timely; they absolutely encouraged people to do so.

Mr. Mayausky said that if someone simply wanted to understand their process, they were happy to explain it. He said that most people, once they comprehended what they did, whether they agreed or disagreed, they accepted it. He said that when people trusted the system, it benefited everyone. He said that he would ask anyone with questions or concerns to reach out to Mr. Stevenson or the address provided on the notice.

ADDITIONS – DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

Mr. Vosburg said that there were no additions or deletions to the agenda, but there were a few handouts provided. He said that the first handout was related to the presentation by Mr. Bates, which he had mentioned earlier. He said that the remaining information in their folders was a response from the School Board regarding Elementary School 19 and the questions they had sent over. He said that the School Board had provided links with some of their answers, so staff followed up by printing out some of the information contained in those links for their convenience in paper form.

Mr. Diggs motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to approve the agenda as amended.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(7)	Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(0)	

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC – I (3 MINUTES EACH)

1. Mary Hanson, 20 Havenwoods Way, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406, said that she was opposed to any significant tax increases. She said that some people lived on fixed incomes,

worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, or had unfortunately lost a job due to layoffs. She said that in this economic environment, everyone had developed a budget to try to live within their means. She said that events happen and then they reprioritized items in order to stay within this budget. She said that her parents were on a fixed income.

Ms. Hanson said that Medicare costs increased by 5.9%, while Social Security benefits had only increased by 3.2%. She said that this created a deficit for them. She said that her mother was in the late stage of Alzheimer's disease and requires constant care. She said that she no longer had outside employment so that she could assist in taking care of her. She said that as her condition worsened, the hours and costs of her home care nurse would increase.

Ms. Hanson said that home care was not inexpensive. She said that every time an expenditure increased, they had to reprioritize items in her monthly budget. She said that her 22-year-old niece had passed away yesterday afternoon. She said that she was there because she would like them to please consider her family and others like them when making any financial decisions in the months ahead that would impact their personal finances.

2. Jeff Adams, Kellogg Mill Road, said that two weeks ago, he found it amazing that the School Board could ask for $30 million for school buses, and it was possible to provide them $30 million which could be handed out as raises, and there was nothing more they could do. He said that if an individual were to visit the bank downtown requesting a $50,000 loan for constructing a barn and subsequently embarking on a six-week cruise after receiving the funds, their banker on Williams Street would likely not appreciate such actions.
   Mr. Adams said that he did not concur with this action and believed that there must be a solution, although he was uncertain of its nature; perhaps approving their pay cycle monthly would ensure they complete their tasks. He said that they must hold them accountable for their actions. He said that the news featured numerous stories yesterday regarding the identity of the first President, and some of the responses were quite absurd. He said that to provide some insight, the first five presidents of the United States, four were born in what was now known as Virginia: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe.

   Mr. Adams said that there was another individual with the same name as his, and some claimed they were related; however, he was uncertain. He said that of these five presidents, five of them passed away on the 4th of July, two in the same year. He said that two other presidents from Virginia, neighbors south of the James River, had also been elected. He said that one was born on Berkeley Plantation, the other on Shirley Plantation. He said that two men from Virginia held the positions of the ninth and tenth presidents of the United States. He said that their vice president then became the tenth President of the United States.

Mr. Adams said that subsequently, they could discuss military academies. He said that two of their presidents attended West Point, while one attended the Naval Academy. He said that in fact, if Jimmy Carter lived until October 1, he would celebrate his 100th birthday, which was quite an accomplishment. He said that regarding the tax rate, it was unclear how any farm in this County that was in a conservation easement with the County could possibly experience a 14% increase, as there were no comparable properties.

3. Alan Watkins, England Run Lane, (comments attached)

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Gary – said that she would postpone her reports until the next meeting.

Ms. Vanuch – reported that in the Rock Hill District, the site plan had been submitted approximately one week ago for the Chick-Fil-A located at the intersection of Garrisonville Road and Shelton Shop Road. She said that regarding the point that Mr. Bates made earlier about VDOT, if a neighborhood required a study for paving, she asked constituents to please contact her, and she would forward those neighborhoods to him for VDOT to determine their ranking status in order to potentially include them on the VDOT paving schedule. She said that she had assisted many homeowners' presidents in getting their neighborhoods listed and ranked by him. She asked people to contact her at cvanuch@staffordcountyva.gov to get on that.

Ms. Vanuch said that lastly, they had heard a little from Mr. Mayausky and would hear more from Mr. Vosburg regarding taxes later that day. She said that many of them observed with the assessments that if they owned a residential property, their average assessment had increased by approximately 13%. She said that consequently, their property tax bill would increase by approximately 13% unless the Board took action to vote for a lower rate. She said that therefore, a couple of important dates for people to remember included March 5, 2024, which was the date they voted to advertise the tax rate.

Ms. Vanuch said that this was when they advertised a rate that they cannot exceed while they set the rate later on. She said that they did not need to determine the exact rate for implementation; however, they could not exceed that rate. She said that this decision would occur on March 5. She said that last year, on this same date, many of her colleagues advocated for a 40% advertised tax rate, which alarmed numerous homeowners. She said that she would like to ensure that they did not delay in sharing their thoughts regarding the advertised rate until March 5. She said that another crucial date is April 2, which was when they established the actual tax rate. She asked the public to submit their feedback prior to April 2, 2024.

Dr. Yeung – reported that on February 7, 2024, she attended the North Nation high school game with Dr. Taylor and some School Board members to support the Salvation Army basketball game. She said that the following day, Ms. Vanuch and she discussed their legislative team's efforts. She said that last year, this committee embarked on a trip to Richmond to meet with the Governor's Education Secretary regarding COCA and its negative impact on Stafford. She said that they continued these two initiatives into 2022 and the subsequent year, 2023. She said that she confirmed that these initiatives remained focused on COCA and the 1% sales tax.

Dr. Yeung said that on Valentine's Day, she participated in the Regional Housing Assembly at GWRC, focusing on housing attainability. She said that in December of last year, they discussed the housing framework outline and strategies during the Executive Housing Committee meeting that occurred last week on Wednesday. She said that during their meeting, they thoroughly discussed strategies and priorities, elaborated on the action plan, and reviewed timelines and responsible parties for execution. She said that the next meeting was scheduled for March 13.

Dr. Yeung said that she and her colleague, Mr. Diggs, attended the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance Board meeting, which marked the beginning of the year with new positions being filled and existing positions continuing. She said that the agenda included reviewing Q2 2024 budget and expense reports. She said that the budget for investor relations was initially set at 46 but was exceeded due to an investor campaign. She said that the explanation provided was that there would be no issues in recouping the additional funding throughout the year. She said that otherwise, she had no further information to share.

Ms. Allen – stated that she had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Diggs – reported that he attended the soft opening of a Black Rifle Coffee located on Warrington Road. He said that the event had a remarkable turnout, and he would like to express his gratitude to the staff, the County Administrator, Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, and anyone else he may have inadvertently omitted. He said that the management team praised the opening process and the zoning process in Stafford, mentioning that they had not experienced such support in other locations. He said that he would like to extend his appreciation to the staff for making them feel welcomed and appreciated.

Mr. Diggs said that secondly, since it was Black History Month, he would like to read a quote by Coretta Scott King: "Hate is too great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than it injures the hated." He said that he chose this quote because it emphasized the importance of showing each other grace and working together to achieve their shared goals there. He said that he wanted people to remember that they were all part of the same team. He said that another point he wished to address was that representation matters. He said that he had a former military colleague who was stationed in an Asian country.

Mr. Diggs said that as they discussed Black culture and history, his colleague said that he did not understand the significance of cultural representation until he was stationed in an Asian country where the depiction of God, Santa Claus, and other cultural elements were Asian. He said that his colleague did not see himself represented in that culture when he got stationed there. He said that this realization made more sense to him regarding some of the challenges they faced in their country. He said that this was a time for them to engage in conversations and learn from each other. He said that he encouraged everyone to take advantage of this opportunity by visiting the Rowser Building and learning about Stafford County's Black history.

<u>Mr. English</u> – reported that he would like to thank Phil Hancock and his team at the R-Board for consistently providing assistance and resolving another issue for him near Celebrate Virginia. He said that he commended their efforts. He said that secondly, he regretfully shared some sad news. He said that one of his constituents, who was a volunteer for Mountain View and Stafford Rescue Squad, had passed away recently. He said that Charlotte Stevens had served for many years and was a life member at both Mountain View and Stafford. He said that his thoughts and prayers went out to her husband and family. He said that she made significant s contribution and she would be greatly missed.

<u>Ms. Bohmke</u> – reported that she and Ms. Gary had attended a VRE Board meeting, and their ridership continued to increase but still at a very slow pace due to widespread teleworking. She said that they had a finance meeting afterwards during which they engaged in extensive discussions about the vision and future of VRE. She said that they still had approximately $100 million that they would be spending based on current operations, which would be expended by the middle of Fiscal Year 28. She said that she wanted to remind everyone that there was a year when the state created the mass transit funds account, and VRE did receive some of those funds.

Ms. Bohmke said that they must indeed consider transportation holistically in the state. She said that WMATA up north faced numerous financial challenges due to the financial cliff they were approaching. She said that they took the VRE into consideration, and their Board was having some challenging discussions regarding where VRE was heading because increasing fares and attempting to recoup them was not sustainable in the long term. She said that they would not have any riders in that case. She said that she wanted to mention that Ms. Gary and she would share information regarding their jurisdictional subsidy at that point in time.

Ms. Bohmke said that this jurisdictional subsidy was based on the subsidy from 2018. She said that they had reduced it since their ridership was down. She said that their Board could adjust this subsidy as part of their budget process, so they would have more conversations about that. She said that she would like to request pulling Consent Agenda Item 6 for discussion.

Ms. Bohmke asked if there was consensus among the Board members to direct the County Attorney to FOIA the State of Virginia, the Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services to determine the status of the Concerted Care Group application located on Butler Road. She said that as there appeared to be no issues raised from Board members, there was consensus from the Board to direct the County Attorney's Office to move forward with that.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Ms. McClendon said that she had no report at this time.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Vosburg stated that the February 2024 Legislative Committee Action Lists and the Monthly Expenditure Listing Report were included in the agenda packet for the Board's information.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED FY2025 BUDGET
Mr. Vosburg said that in the past year, they had achieved numerous accomplishments. He said that their 41st consecutive year had seen them receive the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting. He said that they had also completed or almost completed their Transportation Master Plan. He said that another significant achievement was having criteria put in for solar facilities and data centers. He said that they were awarded first place nationally in the County category of the Annual Government Experience Awards. He said that additionally, Stafford had updated its Citizens Academy to an online virtual Blues Academy.

Mr. Vosburg said that their County profile continued to show impressive growth in various areas. He said that the unemployment rate remained stable, while the median home market price for Stafford was now $499,900. He said that the median income had experienced an increase, which was now at approximately $128,000. He said that the median assessed home value was approximately $458,000. He said that the population was slightly above 165,100. He said that the unemployment rate was 2.8%. He said that they were proud of their veterans percentage of County population, which was approaching 20%.

Ms. Vosburg said that they ranked 12th in Virginia in terms of population and first in military population in Virginia. He said that they ranked 19th in the nation for median household income and third in Virginia for the fastest growing County. He said these were some impressive figures for them. He said that he would next delve into the budget drivers. He said that these drivers could

be seen as puzzle pieces that contributed to their overall budget. He said that he had mentioned this briefly in the previous slide but would put it into context with their comparables and some in their region.
Mr. Vosburg said that there was an 8% growth in median income from 2022 to 2023. He said that Stafford was clearly ahead in their region with its $128,000 median income, even surpassing Prince William, which was their closest competitor. He said that when examining median income in their region and comparables, it was not a competition. He said that Stafford was the third fastest growing jurisdiction in Virginia, with a growth rate of 16.1% anticipated between 2020 and 2030. He said that when considering this compounded growth rate, realtors would describe December 2013 through 2019 as a favorable period for inventory in the area.

Mr. Vosburg said that starting in October 2019 through the present, Stafford's inventory had reached a significantly low level. He said that consequently, high incomes and low housing inventory had led to very high home prices reflected in property values. He said that examining education growth impacts from school presentations and town hall meetings, they had heard a lot about this topic in the schools' town hall meetings. He said that examining the period from 2010 to 2019, one could observe the dark green area, which represented Northern Virginia. He said that the dark green and light green areas indicated a 10% increase in student population during that period.

Mr. Vosburg said that in the future projections for 2023 to 2028, Stafford remained in green, though the percentages changed, the growth for Stafford was anticipated to be more than 3%, which was significant when looking at the Northern Virginia region. He said that regarding the population of veterans in Stafford County, they also had the highest number of veterans per capita and the largest financial impact on tax rates in the Commonwealth compared to any other jurisdiction. He said that they would like some assistance from the state, and that had been one of the Board's talking points for years.

Mr. Vosburg said that the projected number for 2025 was almost $17 million in tax relief for veterans, which was a 75% increase from 2022 to 2025. He said that in terms of tax rate, this equated to nearly a $0.07 increase. He said that if they considered that they currently stood at $0.93 in tax rate, and subtracted the $17 million from the total, they would be around $0.86 with that rate. He said that this represented a significant amount of money, almost $17 million. He said that the following graph illustrated their history of assessed value and tax rates, starting in 2013. He said that at that time, they had $13.3 billion in real property value and a tax rate of $1.07.

Mr. Vosburg said that since then, they had experienced a decline in tax rates while property values had increased. He said that their current assessed value stood at $24.1 billion, which was expected to continue growing, particularly as data centers came into play. He said that the projection for

Fiscal Year 2024 was around $27.4 billion. He said that this information was due to the two-year reassessments. He said that typically, in the second year, one could determine if there would be an increase in tax rates, followed by a decline in tax rates during the reassessment year due to rising assessments. He said that this chart was essential for further study.

Mr. Vosburg said that the proposed budget overview encompassed all funds, and the significant number was displayed at the bottom left-hand side. He said that for the first time ever, Stafford County had reached $1 billion in funding - $1,006,659,515. He said that this was a remarkable achievement. He said that the all fund expenditures displayed the largest portion, 62%, allocated for schools, debt service, and capital. He said that the next largest piece in expenditures was 21% for general government. He said that on the revenue side, property taxes remained the most significant portion, followed closely by state revenue. He said that this analysis focused on the general fund, not all funds.

Mr. Vosburg said that the current tax rate was $0.93. He said that in their proposed budget, they had set the rate at $0.9175. He said that regarding the fire levy, they received input from the Board during the retreat. He said that the initial plan was a $0.03 fire levy for the current year. He said that they split that in half and proposed $0.015 instead. He said that this year, they were planning to propose $0.015 for a total of $0.03. He said that however, after receiving feedback from the Board, they decided to reassess their proposal. He said that concerning capital improvements, they have split that once again in half. He said that the $0.015 will now contribute to $0.75, the total proposed fire levy was $0.225.

Mr. Vosburg said that a 13% assessment increase mentioned by Mr. Mayausky earlier was not fully received by them due to some exonerations and tax relief. He said that this resulted in an 11.3% property tax revenue increase. He said that they had experienced a 9% increase in tax relief overall. He said that their consumption tax revenue, comprised of various items such as had tax, sales tax, and cigarette tax, had increased by 0.5%. He said that this decline in sales tax has affected the budget, but other sources have compensated for this loss, so the category remained relatively stable.

Mr. Vosburg said that the median assessed home value was $434,400, resulting in a tax bill of $3,985. He said that this represented an increase of approximately $395 compared to the previous average tax bill, or around $32 more per month. He said that about $15 of this increase could be attributed to educational funding. He said that the overall general fund had increased by 9.9%, while the school fund had experienced a 10.1% increase. He said that major items included education funding increase of $19.6 million, general government support increase of $9.3 million, and public safety increase of $7.2 million, and transportation increase $2.8 million.

Mr. Vosburg said that in creating the proposed budget priorities, they focused on ensuring core resources and vital services were in place while also addressing the community's needs and implementing strategic initiatives from their plan. He said that they were able to make approximately $1.7 million in budget savings. He said that these funds were broken down on the slide, including some ongoing cost reductions. He said that their IT department played a significant role. He said that they absorbed the total cost of transitioning into Microsoft 365, which amounted to $442,000.

Mr. Vosburg said that they reprioritized funding within their department to achieve this, marking a significant change for them and their IT future moving forward. He said that department savings amounted to another $280,000. He said that vacancy savings were realized, some of which were intentional and some not. He said that in total, this amounted to $760,000. He said that regarding community commitments and service obligations, they requested a $2.4M increase for community partners, which was equivalent to approximately $0.01 on the tax rate. He said that for service obligations, it was equivalent to about $0.015 on the tax rate or $3.6M.

Mr. Vosburg said that combined, it was $6M or $0.03 on the tax rate. He said that regarding vital services, they must continue to retain and recruit employees. He said that in the general government pay, he proposed a 3% scale adjustment or COLA and 2% merit for a total of 5% potential. He said that for public safety pay, they had funded the step program at 2.75% and a scale adjustment of 2.25%, which matched the general government pay. He said that they were unable to implement 100% of the market study and must do it in phases, so for this budget they proposed providing 75% of market implementation.

Mr. Vosburg said that regarding mandatory increases, $2.66 million or $0.01 on the tax rate was due to FLSA overtime, Virginia Retirement Services, minimum wage law adjustments, and health insurance increases. He said that regarding strategic education investments, they had $2.9M to transfer to the schools for debt service and capital projects. He said that they were providing additional $1.7M to meet the unfunded Children Services Act mandates and a $15 million increase for teacher pay and school programs. He said that this fully funded the superintendent’s budget request.

Mr. Vosburg said that for strategic planning investments, they were in the early stages of implementing the strategic plan, and as they worked through the plans for each initiative, they would identify funding sources. He said that regarding service and resource investments, they were able to budget about one-third of the positions requested. He said that compliance positions included the voter registrar position, which was the second one requested by the Electoral Board. He said that the next two were Network Analyst 1 and Security Analyst. He said that in their upcoming discussion, they would further explore these positions as they related to cybersecurity and initiatives being accomplished in that area.

Mr. Vosburg said that while he would not cover every position, he would confirm that the Board expressed interest in code compliance positions. He said that as a result, they had created an additional codes position. He said that they had introduced the Commissioner Business Compliance Officer role in the Commissioner of the Revenues Office. He said that this position would serve as a dedicated resource for data centers as they come online and required assessment. He said that the Board continued to prioritize public safety, as demonstrated by the results of the Citizen Survey.

Mr. Vosburg said that they had proposed positions for officer roles that would now have administrative support for their functions. He said that this year, they had shifted focus from proposing a new fire rescue crew to concentrating on ambulance crews instead. He said that for capacity positions, they had added family services specialists, which were 85% reimbursed by the state, HR specialists, and land use and long-range planners. He said that during the retreat presentation, they had explored potential opportunities for position restructuring. He said that they were currently seeking positions for land use and long-range planners.

Mr. Vosburg said that they had some accounting positions being added to their finance department that had not had an addition to the department in 14 years. He said that there was a recreation programmer added specifically for their gymnastics program, which had a wait list. He said that the final position was the building maintenance mechanic, which was deemed necessary as they cared for their aging buildings and facilities. He said that he would next discuss their capital program for FY2025. He said that there was an $80M investment in school facilities in 2025.

Mr. Vosburg said that next, they had Mountain View Park and Aquia Landing Park, which was $180,000 in total. He said that the next items were the replacement for the Carl Lewis Building and Musselman Park construction, which would be funded with $12.4M from the transient occupancy tax, which he was proposing in this budget to be increased by $0.02. He said that the next focus was on fire stations at Rock Hill, Embrey Mill, and Aquia. He said that this budget allocated an additional $3.5 million for these facilities, in addition to existing funds. He said that the final focus was the courthouse expansion, which began in the current year with minor funds dedicated.

Mr. Vosburg said they were conducting a study to determine the optimal location for this expansion, currently programmed for the back corner of their government center parking lot. He said that some had suggested that this may not be the best option, so they had the option to review the location. He said that in the next budget, they would be investing $3.6M into that project. Mr.

Vosburg said that for the transportation fund, they were awaiting some of the data as it related to personal property tax, so they would return to the Board once it was available to discuss any necessary updates.

Mr. Vosburg said that they anticipated increasing the transfer from personal property tax to the transportation fund by $211,000. He said that this information was displayed in the middle of the slide. He said that this information was subject to any new information they found out regarding the data. He said that bond-funded projects were numerous underway in the current fiscal year. He said that they would add an additional $7 million to the budget for those bond-funded projects, primarily for Onville Road widening.

Mr. Vosburg said that new and continuing projects included Stafford Mountain View, Berea Church Road, safety improvements, Courthouse Road, Route 1, Route 1 and Telegraph, and Brooke Road reconstruction. He said that these projects totaled $18 million in transportation funding. He said that for the Utilities Fund, it was the second year of their planned rate increase of 6.5%. He said that the total fund was $107 million. He said that there were capital improvements for water and wastewater, and of significant note was that the Stafford Utilities System assets had surpassed $1 billion in value.

Mr. Vosburg said that consultants would be assisting in mapping out all of those assets. He said that in looking at the budget summary, they prioritized funding the community's most pressing needs and priorities while reinforcing the efficiency and effectiveness of government services. He said that these were their guiding principles as they prioritized. He said that they believed that investment in their community would contribute to their economy and create a more vibrant economy. He said that they would tackle growth to mitigate its effects on their citizens.

Mr. Vosburg said that at the local government level, they were required to have a balanced budget, and it was a balance of priorities as well. He said staff had continuously strived to form a tax rate as they refined the data and tried to keep in mind the balance between what their community needed and what they can afford as a community. He said that Ms. Vanuch referred to some of the key dates that were approaching in their process, and these were listed on the slide.

Mr. Vosburg said that the two relevant dates were March 5 and April 2. He said that March 5 was when they advertised the tax rate, and April 2 was when they adopted it. He said that there were several meetings in between, on March 19 at 7:00 p.m., there would be a public hearing. He said that for the budget process, they aimed for transparency. He said that all of the information they had presented there and the budget would be available on OpenGov. He said the website was www.staffordcountyva.gov/budget.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Bohmke noted that Items 2 and 6 were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

ITEM 1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; FEBRUARY 6, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES.

ITEM 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE JANUARY 23, 2024 JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND SCHOOL BAORD BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Vanuch would like to address Item 2.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to abstain from voting on Item 2 since she was not in attendance of the meeting it pertained to.

Mr. Diggs motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Joint Board of Supervisors and School Board budget work session minutes.

Ms. Bohmke said that on page 13, in the second paragraph, the minutes stated that “Ms. Bohmke said that provided to everyone…” and she would ask that it be corrected to “Ms. Bohmke said that everyone was provided with a summary document.”

Dr. Yeung said that she did not know if she had sent that email yet, but she had a lot of comments against what was written. She said that there were statements in there that came out as if she said it but she did not. She said that she did not want to approve that.

Ms. Allen made a substitute motion, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to defer the item.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

ITEM 3. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPOINT MR. MICHAEL BRADSHAW TO REPRESENT THE ROCK HILL DISTRICT ON THE AGRICULTURAL AND LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE FOR A TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2027.

ITEM 4. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; RESOLUTION R24-07; ACCEPT A VIRGINIA OPIOID ABATEMENT AUTHORITY COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM AWARD FOR MOBILE MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT AND CRISIS STABILIZATION FOR OPIOID ABATEMENT AND BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE AWARDED GRANT FUNDS.

ITEM 5. FIRE AND RESCUE; RESOLUTION R24-58; RATIFY CONTRACT AND APPROVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH R.K. CHEVROLET, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF PUBLIC SAFETY SUPPORT VEHICLES.

ITEM 6. FIRE AND RESCUE; RESOLUTION R24-59; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH LAAKE ENTERPRISES, INC. D.B.A. FESCO EMERGENCY SALES TO PURCHASE THREE AMBULANCES.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would next discuss Item 6, which was a Proposed Resolution 24-59, to authorize the County Administrator to execute a contract with Laake Enterprises for the purchase of three ambulances.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve Resolution 24-59.

Ms. Bohmke said that in 2019, one ambulance was $278,000 including everything needed inside of it. She said that in Fiscal Year 21, it went up to $318,000, and this year, it was $437,000 for one ambulance. She said that this was a 57% increase in price over five years and 37% from three years ago.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

ITEM 7. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; RESOLUTION R24-83; AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH EXPRESS TECHNOLOGIES, INC. FOR CABLING AND FIBER DEPLOYMENT FOR THE COUNTY.

ITEM 8. PLANNING AND ZONING; RECEIVE AND ACCEPT THE PLANNING COMMISSION 2023 ANNUAL REPORT.

ITEM 9. UTILITIES; RESOLUTION R24-72; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT FOR THE LAGOON DE-WATERING AND CLEANING AT SMITH LAKE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY.

CLOSED MEETING

At 5:12 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to adopt Resolution CM24-04 to authorize closed session.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

Resolution CM24-04 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for (1) consultation with legal counsel pertaining to Aquia Office LLC v. Stafford County, where such consultation or briefings in open meeting would adversely affect the litigating posture of the Board, and (2) discussion and consideration of a certain Board appointment; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A)(1) and (A)(7) such discussions may occur in Closed Meeting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 20th day of February, 2024, that it be and hereby does authorize discussion of the above matters in Closed Meeting.

CERTIFY CLOSED MEETING - SEC. 2.2-3711 (A)

At 5:30 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt Resolution CM24-04(C) to certify the Closed Meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

Resolution CM24-04 (C) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED MEETING ON FEBRUARY 20, 2024

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 20th day of February, 2024, adjourned into a Closed Meeting in accordance with a formal vote of the Board and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act provides for certification that such Closed Meeting was conducted in conformity with the law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors does hereby certify, on this the 20th day of February, 2024, that to the best of each member's knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to approve Resolution R24-93, a Resolution authorizing the County Administrator and the County Attorney to execute any and all documents necessary to settle and resolve the case between Aquia Office LLC and the County of Stafford, Virginia.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to appoint Mr. Henry Thomassen to the IDA of Stafford for a term expiring June 30, 2026.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

RECESS

At 5:35 p.m., the Board recessed its meeting.

At 7:00 p.m. Chairman Bohmke called the evening session to order.

Ms. Bohmke said that in honor of Black History Month and the historical significance of Black churches in Stafford County, they had invited Bishop Ron Willis of Vision Community Church to deliver the invocation tonight. She said that this would be followed by Ms. Allen leading them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bishop Ron Willis of Vision Community Church gave the invocation. Ms. Allen led the Board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION HONORING AND RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Bohmke said that there would be a short video presentation about Carter G. Woodson, a very influential African American from Virginia. She said that Mr. Woodson was born in New Canton, Virginia, and his parents were former illiterate slaves. She said that she wanted to emphasize that it was crucial that they acknowledge this remarkable Virginian's role in creating such a significant tribute to Black history.

After the video clip presentation, Ms. Bohmke invited Bishop Ron Willis and his wife Denise of Vision Community Church, Pastor Herman Gladney of Emanuel AME Church in Chatham, and Pastor Nelson Sneed of Little Forest Baptist Church in North Stafford to join them this evening to accept the proclamation recognizing Black History Month. She said that she would read the proclamation and each pastor would have a copy to return to their respective church.

Reverend Herman L. Gladney said that he would like to thank the Board of Supervisors for this recognition. He said that he was the founding pastor of the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Chatham, Virginia. He said that he was originally from a small town called Blair in South Carolina. He said that he attended the University of South Carolina State for his undergraduate studies and later graduated from Clark Atlanta University. He said that after completing his education, he joined the United States Army where he served for 20 years. He said that he was a Gulf War veteran.

Reverend Gladney said that upon receiving the invitation to attend this event tonight, he reflected on his life, which had primarily been dedicated to serving others, and his role as a pastor of a local congregation meant that his mission was to address the needs of their growing community and uplift mankind. He said that this week marked the 234th anniversary of the Connectional African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Bishop Richard Allen, and the 27th anniversary of

Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. He said that he could not believe that it was 27 years ago when he came to Stafford with his wife and his family, and they had been happy to serve.

Reverend Gladney said that they recognized that the church emerges from the community, and without the community, the church cannot exist. He said that the African Methodist Episcopal Church was essentially a service organization. He said that they were a church, and the spiritual aspect was very important; however, they also acknowledged the need to serve people, address their needs in their physical, intellectual, social, and environmental aspects as well.

Reverend Gladney said that he would like to thank them once more for this presentation. He said that he had attempted to get his wife to join him on stage, but Sister Sabrina Gladney remained in the audience. He said that they were simply proud and he wanted them to know that he had been saved twice. He said that the Lord Jesus Christ saved him the first time, and Dr. Yeung saved him the second time when he found himself unconscious. He said that he wanted to thank her very much for being there in his time of need.

Pastor Nelson Sneed said that he served at the Little Forest Baptist Church in North Stafford, which he mentioned earlier. He said that his church had been in existence for 120 years, and he was serving as its eighth pastor, entering his 22nd year. He said that they were grateful to be partners in their community. He said that they also served as a moderator for the Northern Virginia Baptist Association, which spanned from North Loudoun County down through Fairfax, Prince William, and Stafford.

Pastor Sneed said that they were grateful for this opportunity to serve. He said that they operated under the mantra from Ephesians 4, which emphasized spirit-led unity. He said that it was crucial that they not just be a church in name but a body of Christ working together, led by the Spirit, to make a difference and help people grow spiritually. He said that spiritual maturation was the second priority they emphasized. He said that they marched under the mantra: they were stronger, bolder, and better together. He said that this was their approach as a community.

Pastor Sneed said that their focus at Little Forest was primarily priestly; they tended to the souls of the people. He said that it was also prophetic, seeking justice for all. He said that they collaborated with Sheriff Decatur and others in the community to create a safe and just environment for everyone. He said that they were grateful for the opportunity to serve together in various capacities, such as feeding those in need and engaging the community through events like those at The Brisben Center in Fredericksburg and Falls Run. He said that they had also served at the Rappahannock Regional Jail. He said that as partners in the community, they strived to make a positive impact together.

Bishop Ron Willis said that he was from Vision Community Church, located at 410 Deacon Road in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He said that with him was his wife, Denise. He said that first of all, to the Board of Supervisors, he thanked them for recognizing them tonight. He said that one of the things that they were truly blessed with was that they started this church almost 17 years ago. He said that when God led him to Stafford, he did not know anything about Stafford; however, he knew that this was the place where God had planted them.

Bishop Willis said that he was so grateful and so thankful for being in such an awesome community. He said that this community had been not only a community but also a united community. He said that serving alongside these co-laborers in this community meant so much. He said that Vision Community Church empowered people to fulfill their destiny because everyone had a purpose and a destiny. He said that when individuals understood their destiny and purpose and walked in them, they would be amazed at how far they would go.

Bishop Willis said that he would like to share that on October 22, 2022, Vision Community Church had a church vision but also had a broader vision. He said that they were blessed to open up a mental health counseling center that served their community now. He said that this ministry was not only for the church; it was for the community, for people experiencing depression, anxiety, and other challenges. He said that Denise was the director of the center, and God had opened doors for those in need in their community.

Bishop Willis said that God led them to open this place where people can come and receive healing. He said that they acknowledged that everyone faces various challenges but emphasized that they could no longer be silent because many people suffered in silence. He said that if someone knows someone needs help, they should refer them to their center because they were there for their community. He said that on behalf of Vision Community Church, he thanked the Board, these pastors, and all of them tonight.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Connie Smith, 201 Larkspur Lane, Stafford VA, said that she resided in Embrey Mill. She said that she had relocated to Stafford County three years ago from Fairfax County where her husband and she had raised their two children. She said that she did not have any children currently attending Stafford County schools nor would she in the future. She said that however, after much discussion in her neighborhood regarding the location of school number 19, she attended the last Board of Supervisors meeting and the recent School Board meeting. She said that this was what brought her back there that night.

Ms. Smith said that based on the volume of homes in Stafford and the continued growth, it was evident that Stafford County was many years behind in much-needed infrastructure. She said that for those who had listened to the School Board, it was clear that at least one member was adamant that when the School Board made a decision, especially specific to school number 19, that Stafford County residents should not challenge it. She said that she found that not only interesting but alarming.

Ms. Smith said that it was communicated by School Board members that some of the Supervisors did not take their calls and would not work with them. She said that this too was interesting and alarming. She said that they were talking about the betterment of Stafford County in general. She said that she would leave them with the thought of why the lack of accountability was even an option, regardless of which side one was on.

Ms. Smith said that perhaps her next statement should be directed more toward the School Board, however, she had to find why an elected official should be able to oversee matters in Stafford County when they could potentially have a personal financial interest in such matters. She asked if Stafford County have an ethics committee, and if not, perhaps one was needed to ensure that one's personal financial interest and gains did not become comingled in things like voting for matters that impacted the residents of Stafford County.

Ms. Smith said that lastly, when considering the upcoming School Board budget, she believed it was paramount that support staff receive what they deserved, which was a pay increase. She said that it was understood that everyone needed a raise, but for the staff to not even be able to afford a pizza after they paid their bills on payday was quite ridiculous. She said that it was time that they collectively come together, understand constituents' desires, and focus on what was best for the taxpayers of Stafford. She said that they should move forward, break barriers, and make Stafford County an even stronger place to live and work.

2. Molly Denham, 232 Holly Berry Road, Fredericksburg VA, said that she was a resident of the Hartwood District. She said that as she mentioned last month, she too was disappointed in the School Board’s decision to place Elementary 19 at the Brooke Point site. She said that she was dismayed at the lack of transparency prior to this decision and the lack of information following this decision. She said that however, it was not the Supervisors’ role to oversee the School Board.

   Ms. Denham said that the Supervisors’ role was to fund its needs, period, full stop. She said that this Board was in no way within the operational decision-making process of the County school system. She said that as holders of the County bank account, they were simply an administrative function within their budget process. She said that she urged them not to let their frustration boil over into making decisions that were not within the authority of this Board.

Ms. Denham said she was very certain they would not take it too kindly if the governor or the legislator came into the County and second-guessed their every decision, demanding they change the strategic planning to suit someone else's ideals of what Stafford County should be. She said that she asked the Board of Supervisors to be the responsible entity and act accordingly. She said that she requested that they ask the School Board for information that she, as a private citizen, had yet been able to obtain. She said she would like to know what prompted this decision.

Ms. Denham said that she had been questioning the School Board's process since May of last year and had yet to receive a proper response. She said that she had attended School Board meetings, emailed representatives, and attended any open session she could to learn why Brooke Point was selected over every other alternative. She said that she believed that their efforts would be better served trying to obtain answers for the community instead of attempting to do the School Board's job for them. She said that she had been in meetings where School Board members had alluded to easement issues being a problem with the Embrey Mill site; however, no one had been able to accurately describe what those issues were or how they would be resolved prior to Elementary 20.

Ms. Denham said that she had heard that population studies had shown Brooke Point areas where the most need would be; however, she had yet to see any studies or evidence from the School Board demonstrating countywide population growth by school zoning areas in relation to school capacity. She said that she had heard that the reason was because it would improve bus routing and reduce the time children spent on buses traveling to and from school; nevertheless, she had not encountered any traffic study or bus pattern study to substantiate this claim.

Ms. Denham said that she had heard that this would enable students to attend a school within their voting district. She said that she would wager that only a small percentage of parents knew which district they resided in, let alone if it aligned with their child's school district. She said that she would like to see the facts. She said that the public sought a coherent explanation for why this site was best for the County.

Ms. Denham said that she was not omniscient, and perhaps Brooke Point was the optimal site; she just had not seen evidence from the school supporting this assertion. She said that she mentioned earlier that the Board of Supervisors' role was to distribute funds, not make decisions for the School Board. She said that she understood their fiduciary responsibility for the funds they dispersed. She said that they should perform that duty and assist in obtaining answers for a decision that had already been made. She said that she merely requested answers, not a road block.

3. Matthew Pruitt said that he was a resident of the Garrisonville District. He said that he was there to request that they carefully consider funding for Elementary School 19 and ensure its location aligned with the best interests of Stafford County. He said that his concern was regarding the apparent lack of oversight regarding the Board of Supervisors' apparent approval of unlimited funds for school construction. He said that this had led to a $39M overspend on Elementary School 18 and 19 based on the Fiscal Year 24 and 25 Capital Improvement Program documents found on their website.

   Mr. Pruitt said that the question of oversight became more pressing as further complications were likely to drive the cost even higher. He said that the fundamental question he posed to this Board was where was the accountability to taxpayers. He said that his fear was that they may be on the verge of a $79M dollar mistake if they placed a school in an area that would already benefit indirectly from Elementary School 18's overcrowding relief in the southeast.

   Mr. Pruitt said that it appeared that bias and preconceived notions regarding the optimal location for schools in Stafford County had replaced logical and data-driven decision-making processes. He said that he would like to propose Embrey Mill as an alternative site that addresses their previously expressed concerns and ensures financial prudence. He said that Embrey Mill's existing infrastructure can accommodate the addition of a school more effectively than the proposed Elementary School 19 location, which faced challenges related to increased traffic and emergency response planning.

   Mr. Pruitt said that building in Embrey Mill did not necessitate the destruction and replacement of community resources, leading to increased cost savings. He said that Embrey Mill offered a more cost-efficient design option, avoiding the need for a three-story elementary school design like the one proposed at Brooke Point. He said that commercial multi-level construction differed significantly from residential construction in terms of costs.

   Mr. Pruitt said that the developer of Embrey Mill had proffered funds for school construction, reducing costs by approximately $5 million to $7 million dollars. He said that regarding those proffered funds, there had been talk of using them at the Brooke Point site; however, they should remain within the Embrey Mill community for school construction within that community.

   Mr. Pruitt said that choosing Embrey Mill avoided building an elementary school where the future rebuild of Brooke Point was intended, potentially saving tens of millions of dollars on future land acquisition costs for a high school rebuild. He said that he urged the Board to consider these factors and make the fiscally responsible decision that aligned with the best interest of their County.

4. Megan Boresky said that she was a resident of the Garrisonville District. She said that she was present with her daughters, who were currently in 2nd grade and next year would be their last year they would get to learn in a classroom. She said that for the last two years of her daughters' elementary school education, she and her classmates would be forced to learn in a trailer, lacking basic amenities such as running water and bathrooms. She said that this unacceptable situation was a result of the severe overcrowding in the Garrisonville District.

   Ms. Boresky said that she strongly believed that building a school in Embrey Mill was the most viable solution to alleviate the overcrowding in their district. She said that this would not only provide a proper learning environment for their children but also pave the way for a brighter future for their community as a whole. She said that Embrey Mill was a logical and necessary choice for the location of a new school. She said that she did not speak now solely for her children but also for future generations of students, including her two younger children who had not yet entered the school system.

   Ms. Boresky said that she refused to accept the possibility of them facing the same inadequate learning conditions as their siblings. She said that it was their responsibility to ensure that they had access to a safe, conducive, and productive educational environment. She said that she urged them to consider the long-term impacts of this decision and prioritize the future of their children by reconsidering the allocation of funds for Elementary School 19 at the Brooke Point location. She said that their children deserved the best, and it was within their power to provide for them.

   Hannah Boresky said that her brother and sister should not be in a trailer.

5. Jessica Pierce, 360 Pepperidge Drive, Stafford VA 22554 said that she was a member of the Embrey Mill neighborhood. She said that she did not take notes today, so she would speak to everyone directly. She said that she had attended several meetings here and at the School Board. She said that in every meeting she had heard, there was consensus that Brooke Point should not be the site for the new elementary school. She said that however, there was also a sense of urgency that a school was needed immediately. She said that the possibility of building at Brooke Point might be faster due to this urgency.

   Ms. Pierce said that today, the deed for the Embrey Mill site was recorded, making it officially owned by the County. She said that this site was prepared for construction; it had water, sewer, all necessary infrastructure in place, trees cleared, and rough grading completed. She said that she was struggling to understand how this discussion began, which likely started in 2018. She said that she had read a lot of minutes recently, utilizing every free moment away from her family. She said that she had five children at home and worked full-time, and in her spare time she had been reading Board minutes, watching videos, and attempting to comprehend how this situation had arisen.

Ms. Pierce said that she served in the Air Force for 20 years and held various leadership positions. She said that she was also a criminal law paralegal and struggled to understand why certain actions were allowed to occur without proper intervention. She said that all elected officials held roles and positions within the County. She said that she could not imagine if a military member served without completing their assigned tasks or fulfilling their responsibilities.

Ms. Pierce said that they would not be protecting their nation, they would not be performing their job; she wondered what kind of world this would be. She said that her husband and she built a house in this County, expecting the school to be placed in Embrey Mill. She said that she acknowledged that the promise was made by the developer, but she said that the situation still made sense. She said that they placed it there for a reason. She said that there were 562 elementary students within a one-mile radius of the Embrey Mill site.

Ms. Pierce said that they could walk there. She said that she was having difficulty understanding the financial aspects. She said that regarding Brooke Point, they could all read the news and see all of the issues they have experienced recently. She said that there were assaults and lockdowns occurring at the high school. She said that asked them to imagine little children attending a school and having to deal with those situations right across the way.

Ms. Pierce said that there was a School Board member who had stated that there was another high school located near an elementary school that had no issues. She said that for one thing, there was a road in between, but in the case of Brooke Point, she could throw a rock and hit the place where they wanted to build the elementary school. She said that as a parent, she would never want her children to attend a school so close to a high school.

Ms. Pierce said that it was not a good use of their facilities. She said that she was asking them to reconsider funding the school. She said that she understood that they needed a school urgently, but they had been dealing with this issue for years. She said that no decision had been made yet, so they should take a few more months to determine the best solution. She said that they should allocate the funding to Elementary School 19 only if it goes in Embrey Mill.

6. Nicole Perry, 350 Pepperidge Drive, Stafford VA, 22554, said that she was a resident of Embrey Mill. She said that she was there to discuss the significant importance of integrity and transparency. She said that she believed that there should be an elementary school built in their community because that was what was promised to homeowners when they purchased their homes. She said that these were statements made by the developer. She said that the funds

provided by the homeowners in the community should be allocated for a community school, and the voice of the homeowners should be considered and taken into account before making a final decision regarding the location of the elementary school.

7. Morgan Everitt, 49 Melanie Hollow Lane, Fredericksburg, VA, said that she was a daily building substitute at Brooke Point and did numerous other things for their school that her job did not require but that she did because she was a team player. She said that she showed up at work at 7:00 a.m., and they were short-staffed throughout the day. She said that she went to coach Brooke Point Girls Lacrosse. She said that they had tryouts that day, which had the highest turnout in their entire history at Brooke Point, so she was thrilled about it.

   Ms. Everitt said that after that, she had a meeting, and now she was there. She said that she needed to decide when she could go home and which soup she could afford to have. She said that after an entire day, that was her great plan for tonight. She asked the Board to support their support staff, and those present in the audience were those people, showing their faces. She said that the Board made numerous financial decisions every year, and although these line items may sometimes appear as mere figures, they represented real faces with real people who had important jobs to do.

   Ms. Everitt said that they wanted to continue doing their jobs without being forced out due to lack of financial backing. She said that they understood that the promises made were not by themselves but rather by others, and that their role was to write the check for their School Board. She said that they requested additional funds in that check because once again, they had been overlooked. She said that as Wendy Knight recently stated, although teachers may run classrooms, support staff ran schools for them. She said that they consistently put in the work week in and week out.

   Ms. Everitt said that she would like to spend some time addressing the Embrey Mill project. She said that she had told her players that they were planning to put an elementary school at the Brooke Point site, and the feedback she received from her students was quite alarming. She said that five students expressed their concerns, stating that they perceived their school as a potential target due to its proximity to other educational institutions.

   Ms. Everitt said that with an elementary school, high school, and middle school all within less than 100 yards of each other, it could make their location unsafe. She said that this concern was not about their personal academic performance or successes; rather, they questioned their safety in light of the new elementary school being built nearby. She said that she appreciated the Board taking the time to listen to the community's concerns.

8. Julia Lewis, 40 Air Park Boulevard, Fredericksburg, VA 22405, said that she was there to discuss the Clift Farm development. She said that although it was stated that it would be a 55-plus community, they were referring to it as a senior community when communicating with VDOT, the Planning Commission, and themselves. She said that in reality, it would be a working community instead. She said that AARP did not suggest that an ideal location was less than a mile from the VRE for retirement purposes; rather, it was for commuting to work.

   Ms. Lewis said that these people would be working-class individuals. She said that Stafford County was a bedroom community that housed commuters who lived there and worked in Northern Virginia or D.C., where salaries were higher. She said that teachers also resided in this area and commuted to work in Northern Virginia for better pay. She said that they had Quantico, which would attract younger people with children in the area who would require schools, similar to what they were discussing that night.

   Ms. Lewis said that she would like to bring attention to the fact that Mr. English, being a former member of the Planning Commission, was aware of the vast amount of information received by the Commission and how it was narrowed down for the Board. She said that the neighbors had been diligent in recent years, thoroughly examining the comprehensive plan to provide the Board with evidence of issues related to this development. She said that she would like to point out that there was a problem with the road layout design.

   Ms. Lewis said that the developer's communication with VDOT seemed to downplay the issue, stating that there was nothing to see as the residents would be retirees that did not travel much. She said that as people continued to work longer in their lives, they had examples such as their President, who was 81 years old, and Madam Chairman, who was in her 70s. She said that she admired their dedication and that of others working in similar situations. She said that even Canadians recognized that this was a commuting area because they extended the express lanes. She asked the Board to please vote against this development, as it was not a 55-plus community.

9. Baheshta Raufi, 309 Smokebush Drive, said that she was a resident of Embrey Mill. She said that she stood before them not only as a concerned parent but also as a representative of their vibrant community, home to families who envision a bright, inclusive, and accessible future for their children. She said that she was a mother of two amazing kids, one who was one year old and another who was nearly four, and one of whom had special needs. She said that she had quit her job to be at home and accompany her eldest as she underwent intense Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy to prepare her for school.

   Ms. Raufi said that this distinction in her family had opened her eyes to the diverse needs of children with special needs. She said that she was there to plead with them to cut back the funding for Elementary School 19 unless the School Board voted to put the school in Embrey Mill. She said that children with special needs often required additional morning preparation and transportation accommodations, which could be complex and emotionally challenging for both the parent and child. She said that having a school close by eased these burdens for families like hers, offering their children a smoother start to the day, which was crucial for their learning and social development.

Ms. Raufi said that studies consistently demonstrated that children with special needs, particularly those on the autism spectrum, thrived on routine and benefited greatly from familiar surroundings. She said that she respectfully urged them to address this matter. She said that she had dedicated years to creating an environment for her child that mirrored, as closely as possible, the experiences of a neurotypical child. She said that placing the school in a different neighborhood and necessitating a bus ride for her would undermine all the hard work and progress they had made.

Ms. Raufi said that establishing Elementary School 19 in Embrey Mill would enable Park Ridge students to reclaim their school, thereby reducing transportation expenses and overcrowding in nearby schools. She said that as Embrey Mill children could walk to their neighborhood schools and Park Ridge children could walk to their neighborhood schools, this solution was both practical and beneficial for all parties involved. She said that they needed a neighborhood school, and they needed it now.

10. Juliet Schweizer said that she was present to urge the Board to build Elementary 19 at Brooke Point to shift their schools back. She said that approximately 1,900 students resided in the Aquia District, and they had 650 seats for them. She said that by constructing Elementary 19 in that area, students who lived at Park Ridge, could return to their neighborhood schools. She said that the remaining students would also be able to shift back. She said that the issue was that residents of Acquia were occupying spaces intended for students living in Park Ridge.

    Ms. Schweizer said that if they built the school, they could accommodate students within their respective areas and relocate others back to their original districts. She said that addressing traffic concerns would be crucial in this process. She said that traffic was a constant issue in Stafford, regardless of where one traveled within the area. She said that Stafford Road experienced congestion due to people coming from across the street, but if they were coming across Route 1, they would not hit Stafford Road.

    Ms. Schweizer said that building new schools could improve property values; however, she emphasized that it was essential not to delay construction. She said that the community required a school immediately and could not wait much longer. She said that last year, bacon was priced at $6.50; this year, it had increased to $7.50. She said that it was evident that prices would continue to rise. She said that she strongly recommended constructing the school in the Aquia District, specifically at Brooke Point, and urged them to do so this year.

11. Peter Ryan said that he lived at 85 Clift Farm Road. He said that he believed that this was an auspicious occasion, particularly during Black History Month and with these esteemed preachers receiving these plaques or awards. He said that at the intersection of Morton Road and Leland Road, there was a former “colored school” that had been decommissioned and now lay in ruins, owned by a private citizen. He said that he suggested that they should explore renovating it or placing a plaque there. He said that Clift Farm Road, as Julia Lewis mentioned, was proposed for a new 141-home subdivision.

    Mr. Ryan said that despite being designated by federal law as a 55 and older community, this development would still have a percentage of households with children. He said that almost certainly, according to Kristen Barnes and others, there would be other households where they would ignore the rules. He said that they would help their divorced daughter and two children move in because they needed a place to live out of the goodness of their hearts. He said that the Board members had pointed out that this would result in grandparents having children who needed to be in the school system.

    Mr. Ryan said that this highly concentrated development did not fit the Stafford County Comprehensive Plan, which was an extremely important and extensive document that was created. He said that this would lead to a highly concentrated development with more children in the local school systems requiring assistance. He said that it would also result in more crowded roads and approximately $8 million in County money that would need to be spent. He said that this development would be in a poor location for those who were working, particularly individuals 55 years old and above.

    Mr. Ryan said that his parents worked well into their 50s, early 60s, and 70s. He said that this meant they would have to go north, taking cars because the VRE took approximately one hour and 45 minutes if one wished to reach D.C., as connections must be made. He said that he requested that, considering these factors, when the Planning Commission reviewed this proposal, if they forwarded it to the Board, that they please deny the rezoning application for the Clift Farm development. He said that it was not suitable for their area and not suitable for the people.

12. Bob Rowlette said that his name was Bob Rowlette said that he resided at 76 Clift Farm Road in the Falmouth District. He said that next week, the Planning Commission would hold its second public hearing on the rezoning and conditional use permit application from Gerald Properties to build a 141-home age-restricted community on Clift Farm Road. He said that after three and a half years and two application extensions, they now knew less about the

specific impacts of the development than they did even six weeks ago at the first public hearing. He said that he would discuss what they did know.

Mr. Rowlette said that the developer was requesting in the proffer agreement for the County to execute condemnation proceedings against existing residents if they could not obtain necessary sewer easements and rights-of-way, even though they did not yet know which properties this may impact. He said that upon approval and rezoning of the conditional use permit, the developer would ask the County at the site plan stage to define the requirements for an on-site pump station and execute a pro-rata agreement. He said that these requirements applied to the school property situated on Clift Farm Road.

Mr. Rowlette said that after 17 years and a CIP that did not identify a use for this property through FY33, he asked how will these requirements be determined. He said that it was similar to writing a blank check to the developer. He said that after the initial three and a half years after submitting their initial application, JPI had finally agreed to conduct a phase one archaeology study. He said that however, this study would not be completed and its impacts known until after the application comes up for a vote. He said that the location of the proposed age-restricted community was outside of the growth areas defined in the comprehensive plan and in an area lacking in the necessary public and commercial services needed to support it.

Mr. Rowlette said that staff completely empathized with the Flippo family and the owners of the property and their need to sell their land. He said that however, the ability to sell their land was taken away from them when the County and all the properties along Clift Farm Road were added to the urban services area to support a school that was never built. He said that it was time to say no to this development and address the problem that the County had created, not only for the Flippos but for all the residents in the Clift Farm area.

Mr. Rowlette said that building a highly dense compact age-restricted community in the middle of rural zoned properties and on the same road as the school property was not the appropriate solution for the residents nor for the County. He said that he requested the Board's support when they said no to this development and when the time came to vote on the rezoning and the CUP. He said that they asked for further transparency and public involvement in the comprehensive planning necessary for the development in the future of this area.

13. Speaker did not provide his name – said that there was no requirement for him to forfeit his Fourth Amendment protections in order to exercise his First Amendment protections. He said that he stood not only as a concerned member of their community but also as an advocate for the foundational principles that underpin their democracy. He said that under the First Amendment, he was afforded the right to free speech and the additional right to petition his government for registered grievances. He said that given the complexity and significance of

the issue at hand, he understood that adhering to this arbitrary three-minute time limit would not allow for a comprehensive discussion.

He said that therefore, he would exercise his rights to ensure that what needed to be said was said in its entirety without conforming to this restriction. He said that his presence before them for the fourth time since this incident that had deeply affected their community was a testament not to the love of repetition but to a relentless pursuit of justice, transparency, and accountability. He said that his comments that night centered not on a permit denied but on an attempt to influence its denial as a retaliatory act based on personal political views rather than an objective analysis or the merits of the application itself.

He said that in the previous year, during a crucial vote regarding whether or not to grant the business a necessary permit for their establishment, a revealing moment occurred. He said that despite the majority's eventual issuance of a permit, the attempt by one of their Board members to block this approval based on the protected free speech of the company's owners had cast a long shadow over their proceedings. He said that this effort to make public statements and recordings darkly highlighted the profound issue within their decision-making framework. He said that the core problem lay not in the outcome but in the intent and rationale behind one member's stance.

He said that it brought to light the critical need for their decision-making process to be guarded against personal biases, ensuring that every application was weighed on a fair, consistent, objective, and legal basis. He said that such actions, even in minority, threatened the foundation of trust and integrity they strove to build within their community. He said that there were significant concerns about potential for bias to infiltrate decisions that should be made in the interest of the public welfare. He said that he was exercising his First Amendment right to free speech in a traditional public forum addressing grievances against the government. He said that their policy did not override the United States Constitution or his First Amendment rights.

RECESS

At 7:54 p.m., the Board recessed its meeting.

At 8:00 p.m., the Board meeting reconvened.

14. David Fauth, 18 Antietam Loop in Stafford, Virginia, said that he resided in the Aquia District. He said that regarding Elementary School 19, they had heard numerous perspectives. He said that in his school district alone, there were people residing near his house or across the street who attended schools in different districts. He said that he agreed that constructing Elementary

School 19 in Aquia would be advantageous in minimizing travel distances. He said that during discussions, various suggestions had been presented, such as the idea that everyone in Embrey Mills would walk to school.

Mr. Fauth said that while this notion may have sounded appealing, it was rather impractical, considering that one would not typically see a grandmother attempting to transport her elementary school children in 20-degree rainy weather. He said that he understood where they needed to build schools due to busing. He asked the Board to consider this carefully. He said that a gentleman today mentioned infrastructure, resources, and high attendance as factors. He said that if their precedent was to build schools where infrastructure, resources, and water availability existed, he was unsure when Hartwood Elementary would be rebuilt.

Mr. Fauth said that they needed the school and required the seats. He said that he acknowledged that this was a challenging task and not an easy decision. He said that he understood that Elementary School 19 was not the sole issue at hand. He said that he hoped that perhaps if there was property where High School 6 was located on Route 17, those students may be better than his Brooke Point students who attended there previously. He said that in this case, they could also build an elementary school at that location. He said that this set a precedent, and their actions would be referenced by citizens like himself in future discussions if this was what they decided.

15. Wendy Knight said that she felt compelled to speak. She said that she had no intention of speaking tonight; however, she wished to express her gratitude to the Board. She said that managing the allocation of millions or trillions of dollars was no easy feat. She said that everyone seemed to require assistance, and there was simply not enough to go around. She said that she would like to thank them for their efforts. She said that she understood that her property values had increased in order for her to receive her raise. She said that this was the price she must pay since they all required raises.

    Ms. Knight said that service staff members needed raises too. She said that they could not live solely on soup. She said that she must be able to afford gas to commute to work daily. She said that she was there two weeks ago when the Board advised throwing the issue back to the School Board. She said that she attended the School Board meeting where they advised her to refer the matter back to the Board of Supervisors. She said that they found themselves playing tennis.

    Ms. Knight said that she had heard that much of this situation was out of their control until the budget was cleared at various levels, such as state and federal. She said that she requested that the Supervisors strive for transparency in their decision-making process. She said that it appeared that the same community members continued to address the same issues, which may lead them to feel unheard. She said that they simply wanted to know if the Board was listening and understanding their requests. She asked the Supervisors to please keep in mind that they worked for the public and not for themselves.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM 14. PARKS, RECREATION, FACILITIES AND TOURISM; RESOLUTION R24-46; CONSIDER GRANTING EASEMENTS ON COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY AT CURTIS MEMORIAL PARK TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY TO MONITOR GROUNDWATER.

Brion Southall, Director of Parks, Recreation, Facilities, and Tourism, said that he was presenting this proposal to grant permission for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to install, maintain, and monitor a groundwater well at Curtis Park. He said that this was part of their groundwater characterization program, which assists in collecting data regarding ground conditions and quality.

Mr. Southall said that the attached document showed an overlay of the easement, where the Black area represented the permanent easement and the gray area denoted a temporary easement for construction purposes. He said that the proposed location was just past Shelter 7, up from the graveyard. He said that the installation would consist of a wellhead and solar monitoring device, which would collect data that would be made available on the County's website for public viewing. He said that he was accompanied by Mr. White from DEQ, who could address any questions regarding this proposal.

Mr. English asked if there was any cost to the County.

Mr. White said no.

Mr. English asked what the purpose of this proposal was.

Mr. White said that the primary purpose was to establish a long-term monitoring point for groundwater levels. He said that the goal was to accumulate a record of data over time so that current groundwater levels could be compared to historical trends.

Mr. English asked if this could be accessed online so that people could verify the varying levels of groundwater at different locations.

Mr. White said yes. He said he was not certain if any of them had seen the stream flow gauges online, but it was a similar idea to that.

Ms. Bohmke asked when this would be in place.

Mr. White said that he expected the drill crew to begin in April or May of this year.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they were planning on drilling more than once. She asked if a description could be given of what this would look like over time in the park.

Mr. White said that the air rotary drill rig would be set up, measuring approximately 30-40 feet in length. He said that there would also be additional support trucks present for this one-time operation. He said that the drilling process typically took three to four days or up to a week, depending on the conditions. He said that the well-being drilled was similar to a residential well, with a diameter of six inches.

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing. She asked if there were any members of the public who wished to address this item. Seeing none, she closed the public hearing and the matter rested with the Board.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-46.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 10. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; RESOLUTION R24-63; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH SAGRES CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BEREA CHURCH ROAD PROJECT.

Khapel Akbari, Project Manager in Capital Projects said that he oversaw the Berea Church Road project. He said that he was there to discuss Resolution R24-63, which authorized the County Administrator to sign a contract with Sagres for the construction of the Barrier Church Road project at a cost of $8.8 million. He said that he would provide a brief overview of the project. He said that the project was approved in the FY 2015 Capital Improvement Plan. He said that it was

primarily a safety improvement project that brought the roadway up to VDOT standards, eliminated some of the curves, and improved sight distance.
Mr. Akbari said that in addition to safety improvements, it also upgraded the existing waterline for the entire length of the project. He said that on presented on the screen were 3D renderings of the project's appearance. He said these showed the existing and proposed conditions, with the improved sight distance looking east from Barrier Knowles Drive, and then looking east near 58 Berea Church Road.

Mr. Akbari said that the County advertised the project in November 2023 and bids were opened in January. He said that they received a total of five bids, with Sagres being the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. He said that the project was fully funded. He said that the available funding in the FY 2014 CIP was $12.4 million, which included funds encumbered in prior years for preliminary engineering and right-of-way phases of the project.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. English, to deem the item time-sensitive.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to adopt Resolution R24-63.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay: (0)

ITEM 11. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN DRAFT.

Bryon Counsell, Chief Director for Infrastructure, said that tonight marked the genuine commencement of the approval process for both the impact fee and the master plan. He said that tonight they would receive details regarding the master plan that had not been previously disclosed in their draft form and summary form of the draft. He said that this information would establish the foundational elements necessary for the impact fees by identifying projects relevant to areas experiencing growth and those affected by growth.

Mr. Counsell said that these projects would subsequently be incorporated into the impact fee list. He said that before handing over the presentation to Mr. Lehane, he wanted to emphasize that tonight was crucial for their understanding of extensive information and potential decision-making regarding the selection of projects and establishment of the advisory committee at the next presentation.

Mr. Lehane said that in 2022, the Board of Supervisors advanced work on a master plan based on their vision. He said that the goal was to create a blueprint for transportation planning, focusing on multimodal infrastructure development and enhancing community level of service, fluid access, variety of alternatives, and multimodal paths. He said that the draft plan consists of three phases, phase one is the existing Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is currently being implemented ang generally flowed through FY29 in the CIP with completion of several projects; phase two includes short-term roadway projects and multimodal projects; phase three encompasses long-term vision plan projects extending to FY40 and beyond.

Mr. Lehane said that regarding phase one, he presented a similar slide during the previous transportation work session in October. He said that as they had just discussed, Berea Church Road required some updates. He said that bids had been received but had not yet been approved. He said that once approved, they would award the contract. He said that they were also working on Route 1 and Telegraph and Woodstock improvements along with Route 1 and Courthouse Road. He said that they were at the 90% design phase for Staffordboro sidewalk, and 50% design for Brooke Road, Enon Road, Onville Road, Shelton Shop Road, and US-17 Business at RV Parkway.

Mr. Lehane said that he would like to clarify that he mistakenly switched the public hearing schedules. He said that Enon was scheduled for March 13, 2024, while Onville was scheduled for March 27, 2024. He said that additionally, they had Stefaniga and Mountain View Roundabout, Route 1 and Layhill, and Leland Road. He said that Stefaniga had already commenced and the other two projects should begin this year. He said that they also had projects that had not started, such as Garrison Road widening, sidewalk construction on US-17, and Route 1 at American Legion.

Mr. Lehane said that in addition, they had safety wedge widening projects underway. He said that in FY24, as previously mentioned by Mr. Bates earlier this afternoon, Decatur and Brent Point, and FY25 funding for Stefaniga. He said that future plans would be determined by the Board at a later date when they discussed the secondary six-year plan at a future Board meeting in March. He said that phase two encompassed short-term roadway projects, including SmartScale, Revenue Sharing, CMAQ, and SDBG. He said that many of these projects already had funding applications in progress.

Mr. Lehane said that additional studies would be conducted for roadways not initially identified, such as Garrison Road, Warrenton Road, and several major intersections on Route 1. He said that moreover, bike-ped projects in North Stafford, South Stafford, North-South County Trail, Stafford Heritage Trail, connecting cultural destinations, and the transit plan were a part of their phase two roadway projects. He said that for phase two of the multimodal plan, focusing on sidewalk and trail improvements throughout the County, was divided into several focus areas due to previous studies supported by grants.

Mr. Lehane said that they had the Stafford Heritage Trail, which received Board support for a grant application in 2022 for a heritage trail study that was currently underway and 100% grant funded. He said that the study aimed to explore a general North-South Trail connecting cultural destinations. He said that regarding transit, there were over 400,000 riders in FY23, recovering from COVID-19 impacts, and no specific recommendations at this time. He said that future discussions with the Board would address potential recommendations. He said that phase three represented Stafford County's long-term vision plan, and there would be localized and regional community next steps as they looked to move forward. He said that regional mitigation, outer connector, bypass study, and regional corridors were being considered as they progressed.

Mr. Lehane said that localized mitigation measures, such as those discussed regarding the western network and localized widenings, were part of several scenarios previously discussed at the work session. He said that these projects could potentially be developed through SmartScale or alternative funding methods like land use changes and developer contributions. He said that for next steps, they had three documents, which were the master plan, blueprint study, and impact fees. He said that that the master plan included $1 billion in improvements, and they were now looking at how to fund these as they moved forward.

Dr. Yeung said that she appreciated that Mr. Vosburg mentioned the items related to their strategic plan during today's budget discussion. She said that she was curious if they could overlay their comprehensive plan, strategic plan, and Transportation Master Plan at some point in time to demonstrate how they were meeting their strategic plan objectives. She said that she believed this would be valuable for their constituents to see the progress they had made during their work sessions and the time they had invested in discussing these plans.

Ms. Allen said that she agreed with Dr. Yeung’s request. She said that as they proceeded through these work sessions, if possible, she believed that it would be beneficial for the public to follow along as well. She said that after health and wellness, transportation had been the most frequent feedback they had received. She said that as they analyzed and discussed the plan that Mr. Lehane’s team had developed over the past couple of years, they could identify areas of connection and discrepancies from both strategic and communication perspectives.
Ms. Allen said that when they reached the comprehensive plan review in 2025, they may be able to start seeing if there were aspects in their comprehensive plan that they needed to address, which

their master plan had highlighted for them. She said that if they had already begun addressing these issues, that was commendable. She said that as they progressed through their work session, addressing these issues would greatly assist them. She said that they could then refer to that small book Andrew provided them and check off in their strategic plan where these items fit in. She said that they could utilize numerous graphs and diagrams for better understanding.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board would discuss this item again in two weeks. She said that she would like to clarify that the public hearing for Enon Road was scheduled for March 13, 2024.

ITEM 12. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; CONSIDER APPROVAL OF TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROJECT LIST AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Mr. Counsell said that he would provide some information about the origin and basis for the impact fee ordinance. He said that established in 2003, there was initially one service area, while the second service area was established in 2005. He said that in 2013, the impact fee service area was replaced. He said that currently, impact fees were paid on residential uses by developers, while the Board decided to pay commercial impact fees from the general fund. He said that over the past year and a half, the Board had requested a review of the impact fees.

Mr. Counsell said that through the master plan process, they had created a list of eligible projects for which fees could be calculated based on the projects presented earlier tonight. He said that they were actually phase two of the Transportation Master Plan. He said that the list encompassed, as Mr. Lehane previously mentioned, $1 billion of improvements from all three phases of the Transportation Master Plan. He said that this was a project list for the northern service area, which primarily focused on Courthouse Road North.

Mr. Counsell said that many familiar roads and intersections were featured in this list. He said that this list was created based on the anticipated growth that would impact these roads and intersections in the northern part of the County. He said that conversely, in the southern part of the County, these were the proposed projects for the impact fee development. He said that in his opening remarks, he had mentioned a few things coming forward. He said that the roadway improvement plan project list approval was Resolution 24-82. He said that the Board could approve this tonight if deemed appropriate or continue discussing it further while gathering more information. He said that the pace of this process was determined by the Board.

Mr. Counsell said they had prepared those resolutions for their consideration. He said that if they wished to discuss this matter tonight, gather more information, and ultimately vote on it, it was at their discretion. He said that the second proposal was to establish an advisory committee. He said that this did not appoint any individuals to the committee; rather, it created the committee through a resolution. He said that the committee's formation could be determined at a future Board meeting or multiple Board meetings.

Mr. Counsell said that presented to the Board was a schedule that Mr. Lehane had prepared. He said that he had discussed in one-on-one conversations with some of them about all the transportation-related matters that would be presented to them over the coming months. He said that it was a detailed plan of that. He said that they were currently in February, and March involved staff work. He said that then, in April, May, June, and August, there would be numerous meetings in the Planning Commission and Board actions required for setting both the master plan approval and the impact fee rate.

Ms. Allen asked if there was an opportunity for Telegraph Road to be included on the list.

Mr. Counsell said that the master plan could be established according to the Board's preferences. He said that they could prioritize roads based on specific criteria such as traffic count, designated zones, safety standards, or capacity requirements. He said that impact fees could only be determined as development occurred. He said that by examining growth trends in various areas of the County, they identified regions where significant growth was anticipated. He said that if a particular area did not exhibit substantial growth, the corresponding project or road was unlikely to be incorporated into the impact fee structure.

Mr. Counsell said that however, if circumstances changed in the future, they could reassess the fees in a few years and potentially include that project if growth patterns shifted. He said that the Board could establish the guidelines for projects included in the master plan. He said that the information they discussed earlier regarding impact fees was currently based on data that did not indicate Telegraph Road was affected by growth due to its focus on traffic counts and growth patterns.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to know when traffic counts were conducted due to summertime constraints that prevented her from leaving her house at certain hours of the day. She said that she could look out her window and see that Telegraph became congested during rush hour or when there was traffic on Route 1 because it served as a secondary artery for people traveling from the north to the south.

Ms. Allen said that this situation was due to the growth occurring in the area. She said that she was unsure about when traffic counts were conducted but expressed interest in seeing that data because she, along with others living on Telegraph, found it challenging to imagine that during traffic,

accidents, or adverse weather conditions, Telegraph became the preferred road for people to bypass Route 1 until they could get as close as possible to 610.
Mr. Counsell said that staff agreed. He said that he believed that many of them recognized this situation. He said that they would be pleased to do one of two things: either present some data during their next appearance before the Board or arrange for individual meetings to discuss this matter in detail before reporting back to the full Board. He said that they would accommodate their preference.

Ms. Allen said that she would conduct one-on-one sessions to ensure others did not have to sit through that experience. She said that regarding the committee, she would like some background information. She said that she assumed that legal counsel would ensure that whatever decisions or recommendations the committee made would be valid from a legal standpoint throughout the process.

Mr. Counsell said that the committee, which Ms. McClendon could confirm if he was incorrect, was established and monitored according to state code. He said that the process involved the Board creating the committee first, followed by appointing its members. He said that once established, they could utilize the committee's advice and recommendations during the impact fee process, specifically regarding rate determination and setting.

Ms. Allen said that she was concerned about ensuring that the rate was fair so that they did not face legal issues due to being deemed unreasonable.

Ms. McClendon said that she would like to provide additional information regarding this matter. She said that the list that the Board would review tonight will serve as a basis for the consultant to establish a fee that is justified by the data and methodology. She said that upon receiving this information, the Board will determine what to submit to the committee and request their feedback and recommendation. She said that consequently, the committee's feedback is based solely on what the Board sends them and asks them to assess. She said that to clarify, the committee did not set the fee.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had a question regarding the advisory committee. She said that she understood that state code established its boundaries. She asked if state code also determined the threshold for developers, requiring a minimum of 40% of appointed members.

Ms. McClendon said that was correct. She said that the Resolution R-2485 included parameters directly taken from state code.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had received questions on social media regarding the appointment of developers and real estate professionals to assess fees for their industry. She said that this raised some interest, which may warrant a legislative change request for next year's legislative committee. She asked if they could limit the percentage to no more than 40%.

Ms. McClendon said that it should be at least for 40%.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they could stipulate that it be no more than 40.0001%.

Ms. McClendon said that ultimately, the committee must have between five and ten members. She said that consequently, depending on the total number of members chosen, 40% of that total represented the minimum requirement.

Ms. Vanuch said that while she had read that portion of the language, she was seeking this information for the public's perspective because she found it absurd that they assessed fees and the developers who subsequently sued them could sit on these committees.

Dr. Yeung asked if anything they were doing regarding this item would improve the dashboard's color scheme and get them from red and yellow to green.

Mr. Counsell said that no, tonight's efforts would not affect the dashboard.

Ms. Bohmke said that they would discuss this item again at the March meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

DISCUSSION ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL #19.

Ms. Bohmke said that this item was new business at the previous Board meeting and thus returned as unfinished business. She said that they had sent numerous questions to Dr. Taylor through Mr. Vosburg, and all the information was in their folders. She said that Dr. Taylor had responded to all questions along with detailed data from their Muny financial system that they provided them. She said that she thanked them and was very appreciative for the comprehensive information. She said that they would like to have a conversation about Elementary School 19.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would summarize what she heard at the last meeting two weeks ago regarding the Board members' opinions about Brooke Point as a location for the school. She said that the majority of Board members did not believe that Brooke Point was a suitable location for various reasons. She said that it was widely acknowledged that an elementary school was needed on the other side of the interstate.

Ms. Bohmke said that personally, she did not think it was a good location on top of the high school for many reasons shared tonight by a number of public speakers. She said that she hoped the School Board would revisit this vote on this elementary school and move it to Embrey Mill and consider Elementary School 20 for some other site in the Brooke Point area.

Ms. Gary said that her primary concern was securing seats as soon as possible, which was their first priority. She said that she did not want to waste money. She said that she wanted to understand for those who preferred moving the school and pressuring the School Board to do so, what was the plan to cover the increased costs. She said that the price tag was substantial, and they must discuss how they would pay for it. She said that she would appreciate hearing this information, which may help her better understand the situation.

Dr. Yeung said that she had been thoroughly reading and researching the documentation provided by Dr. Taylor. She said that one sheet displayed $1,900,000 while another showed $990,000; thus, she was uncertain which figure represented the correct pricing for their incurred costs so far. She said that she had a question regarding the documentation, which stated that if they did not build at Embrey Mill, they would be losing $5 million at that point in time. She said that at no time was this factor considered as a cost in their calculations.

Dr. Yeung said that furthermore, when they voted for elementary schools 18 and 19 together, the plan was to achieve savings of $14 million. She said that she had not seen this factor considered in their current $8 million cost discussion. She said that the documentation mentioned having two designs; during the seven-on-seven discussions, she consistently inquired about the prototype's flexibility for relocation when necessary. She said that she was examining two distinct designs, one for 18 and one for 19, for a cost she could not recall at the moment.

Dr. Yeung said that they had two designs because they were attempting to fit a different design in an area where it was not suitable. She said that her concern was regarding a Resolution R19-183, dated June 4, 2019. She said that the purpose of this resolution was for the new school planning policy for the development of the CIP, which contained the Board of Supervisors' direction for the development and planning of new schools for Stafford County Public Schools.

Dr. Yeung said that the resolution also provided requirements and standardized timelines to ensure that fiscal resources were used judiciously for the betterment of Stafford County. She said that this did not happen. She said that the working team would provide the Board of Supervisors and the School Board with communication and report any changes in the CIP or location. She said that the

Board of Supervisors and the School Board would discuss the continued ownership of any land already acquired and any land to be acquired in the future.

Dr. Yeung said that the Board of Supervisors would only recognize changes to design capacity that had been voted on and approved by the School Board. She said that this did not happen according to School Board member Dr. Sarah Chase during one of their seven-on-seven meetings. She said that they were not following the established process. She said that increasing the size and funding for these schools did not mean they should simply accept any changes without proper approval.

Dr. Yeung said that the School Board had opportunities to inform the joint Board during three-on-three meetings. She said that Mr. English and she were present at a meeting where she specifically asked about the location of Elementary School 19. She said that prior to that, all mapping showed Embrey Mill as the location for the school, so when she voted for elementary schools 18 and 19, her assumption was that they would be located at Embrey Mill based on the information provided while she was on the School Board.

Dr. Yeung said that Chris Fulmer mentioned that to her. She said that he mentioned it was Embrey Mill. She said that suddenly, there was no communication with Brooke Point constituents or Embrey Mill constituents. She asked if that was acceptable. She said that they must move forward; however, she found this unacceptable from her perspective. She said that from where they were standing, she would pivot so they would save \$2 million dollars and would also save \$5 million dollars.

Dr. Yeung said that considering the numerous failed issues and reviews that have occurred, she did not believe that they would be able to address them all within the given time frame. She said that if they had two phases that needed to be completed, one phase may take between four and six months, while the second phase was not consecutive but subsequent. She said that they had one year to attempt reviews and changes. She said that if something went wrong, she did not want blood on her hands. She said that therefore, she would pivot.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would begin by paraphrasing a comment from an individual who spoke at the podium today regarding intriguing and concerning aspects. She said that it was funny that the most conservative Board member and the most liberal Board member seemed to agree on something. She said that she found this both intriguing and possibly alarming in relation to the location of Embrey Mill. She said that in all seriousness, she would like to address a few points. She said that the first was that Leming and Healy Law Firm recorded the deed transferring the 33-acre parcel of land that could potentially be Elementary School 19 within Embrey Mill today over to the County.

Ms. Vanuch said that this meant that the property was now deeded to the County. She said that residents who wished to look up this information could refer to tax map parcel 29-53K. She said that the deed was recorded on February 20, 2024. She said that perhaps now that the School Board had this property in their remittance, they may be able to reassess the location of Embrey Mill and no longer use not having that property in their possession or in the County's possession as an excuse.

Ms. Vanuch said that the second item she said she would like to discuss is that she has obtained an email written by school staff, which was sent to several School Board members. She said that she found it both interesting and alarming that some of this guidance was not covered. She said that she requested a little bit of grace from her fellow Board members because this information was crucial not only for them to hear but also for the residents of Stafford County to hear. She said that the email stated that there were five schools with attendance zones that crossed to the east of I-95 Route 1 corridor: Moncure, Winding Creek, Falmouth, Anthony Burns, and Hampton Oaks. She said that Hampton Oaks, Winding Creek, and Falmouth Elementary were scheduled to receive four modular units.

Ms. Vanuch said that the latest 10-year projections prepared in the fall of 2022 suggested that enrollment at Anthony Burns Elementary would not exceed its program capacity in the next 10 years. She said that Anthony Burns had a compact and evenly drawn attendance zone. She said that the students between I-95 and Highway 1 attending Anthony Burns disproportionately represented the free and reduced lunch eligible students at that school. She said that due to Anthony Burns' location, students east of I-95 would not benefit from a new school in the Courthouse Road area because Anthony Burns would be their closest school.

Ms. Vanuch said that they could not redistrict Aquia Harbor Elementary School without either splitting those students into multiple schools or increasing their transportation time. She said that redistricting Aquia Harbor could also result in an island and other unfavorable options and was not optimal at this time. She said that Aquia Harbor was restricted by a single entry so all students would have to be transported to Highway 1 and either turn left or right, which meant that Hampton Oaks Elementary was technically their closest school.

Ms. Vanuch said that a site east of I-95, Highway 1 on the Courthouse Road section could move enough students out of Anthony Burns, for example 500 plus or minus students from the sliver east of I-95, to decompress Park Ridge Elementary by reassigning a large portion of the Embrey Mill community from Park Ridge to Anthony Burns, which would have 12 modular units by the end of next year. She said that at present, the infrastructure did not exist east of Interstate 95 and Highway 1. She said that there were fewer connecting roads in this area, resulting in limited alternate routes and often requiring the use of Highway 1 or Interstate 95 when moving from one end of the County to another.

Ms. Vanuch said that the urban services corridor was less robust than its counterpart on the west side of the highway. She said that Germanna had proposed forming a joint work group to evaluate the site in collaboration with the County. She said that this process may take up to six months or potentially longer before receiving approval from the Board of Supervisors; however, Germanna had indicated that they wanted to utilize the site. She said this information was for those who were concerned about the Germanna site. She said that the Embrey Mill site was the sole site that met the timeline requirements.

Ms. Vanuch said that the implementation would unify the construction schedules of elementary schools 18 and 19 and alleviated the compression in the most populated areas of their County. She said that failing to utilize Embrey Mill would result in an additional $5 million minimum cost and a one-year delay in opening. She said that this information was sent to the School Board members, some of whom voted against the Embrey Mill site. She said that they had information in their possession that brought some transparency to the situation, and it was the Board's responsibility to call it out and ask the School Board to make those adjustments as soon as possible.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would request the Board vote tonight to draft a letter to the School Board to ask them to stop spending money toward the Brooke Point site and take a revote. She said that all of this information should be shared with every School Board member equally. She said that the author of this email was one of the most trusted Stafford County Public School employees when it came to enrollment numbers, which was Lionel White. She said that the School Board voted against his recommendations was unbelievable to her.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, for the Board to draft a letter requesting the schools cease spending money on Elementary School 19 at Brooke Point and instead consider relocating it to Embrey Mill.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to know the specific time frame between May and October, which she believed was when they made their decision and cast their vote. She asked what occurred during those five months. She said that she was seeking clarification regarding changes in numbers or projections that might have affected votes. She said that she understood that due to the absence of the Embrey Mill site and the Germanna site, their decision was impacted based on scheduling. She said that she acknowledged that maintaining the schedule was important but expressed her concern about being informed throughout the process.

Ms. Allen said that she was wondering what to say after hearing Mr. White’s email read out loud. She asked if they were permitted to entertain the School Board staff since they had not officially invited them in that capacity. She said that she would like know how having the Embrey Mill site changed their nexus with their timeline compared to the Brooke Point timeline and the cost estimate. She said that she wanted to know the difference between the current situation and the previous one when Embrey Mill was not included.

Mr. Towery said that a significant portion of the projected additional funds required would result from delaying by a year. He said that they would need to push back at least one year if they were to relocate the site at that point.

Ms. Allen said that her primary issue was understanding the impact of selecting Embrey Mill now, assuming this was the chosen site, rather than Brooke Point three months ago. She said that she was unsure how this decision could result in a one-year delay in construction.

Mr. Towery said that the site plan process typically took a year for a school of this size. He said that attempting to deliver a site plan within less than that time frame was challenging, especially starting in September or October of the past year.

Ms. Gary said that she asked a question of her colleagues on the Board. She said that for those who supported moving the site to Embrey Mill and would vote for the letter to the School Board or the resolution, she also wanted to know if they supported providing the necessary funds for the relocation of the school. She said that she needed an answer because she could not support something if people wanted to do something but would not back it up with the required tax rate increase.

Ms. Gary said that this was highly significant because they could be incurring massive additional expenses that would ultimately be shouldered by the taxpayers. She asked if there was a commitment from those who would support moving the school by increasing taxes as necessary to fund that move. She said that she did not want to say that this happens and then it falls back on other Supervisors who did not support it, expecting them to fund the school because some of them would do it anyway. She said that she wanted to clarify her position now and was seeking a commitment regarding this matter.

Ms. Vanuch said that she remembered sitting in a work session last year while they were working on the CIP. She said that she questioned moving elementary schools 18 and 19 together and how they would feasibly deliver on a high school and two elementary schools. She said that she recalled stating that she would support this initiative but believed that they would not be able to build it. She said that she then read Mr. White's email stating that delivering elementary schools 18 and 19 on time would be impossible without using the Embrey Mill site, which would result in an additional cost of $5 million.

Ms. Vanuch said that if, for some reason, the Embrey Mill site could not be completed by 2026, as Mr. Towery mentioned, it was not the doing of the Board of Supervisors; rather, it was due to the School Board not heeding their own staff's advice and making what she perceived as a poor decision. She said that she would inform them that Brooke Point would not happen by 2026 because their County Administrator shared with the Board that they must appear before both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors for conditional use permits. She said that they need to address height restrictions or alleviations at the site.

Ms. Vanuch said that as a former Planning Commission member and Board member, she could tell them that this process would take six to 12 months. She said that it required public hearings, during which the public from Aquia would have the opportunity to weigh in on the school's location near their houses in that area. She said that their Board meetings had been busy; however, this issue would attract even more attention due to the broad notice and numerous people attending the public hearings to voice their concerns.

Ms. Vanuch said that she urged her colleagues to consider sending a letter to the School Board, stating that Brooke Point's location would not happen by 2026. She said they should focus on finding the best location for the school based on the information provided by staff, which was completely unbiased and not influenced by political factors. She said she would like to send this letter to the School Board for their consideration, while clarifying the timeline aspects and funding requirements.

Ms. Bohmke said that the email from Mr. White was in May, which must have been right before the School Board voted for the second time, as they had already voted once . She said that the first vote was on April 11, and the second vote was on May 9.

Ms. Vanuch said that to clarify, Mr. White’s email was dated May 15.

Mr. Diggs asked for clarification regarding the timeline.

Ms. Bohmke said that the email had been sent after the vote was taken. She said that although Mr. White shared this information after that vote, the School Board waited another six months. She said that they had violated their Resolution R19-183, dated June 4, 2019. She said that she remembered that Wendy Maurer was upset about certain issues in the school division at that time. She said that as a result, they had created a policy stating that the School Board must consult them before changing the prototype, size, or square footage of a school and involve the public. She said that this policy had not been followed.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had concern that the school division had not been accountable for taxpayers' dollars or forthcoming in their actions. She said that they recently received their budget from Mr. Vosburg, and this situation added complexity. She said that they had previously agreed in the fall of 2022 to approve moving forward with two schools because they would save $7 to $14 million dollars. She said that they did not have the courtesy to return to their own community and their board, as well as hers, based on this policy and inform them that they had changed the prototype of the school.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had to spend five hours of her weekend reading all of their minutes from 2023. She said that she was sorry, but this was not transparency; this was not how their Board operated. She said that their community deserved better. She said that she believed that they could construct a school over on that side of the interstate at some point. She said that she believed that the easement on this piece of property in Embrey Mill was a Dominion Power easement, not one that would hinder them from constructing over there. She said that this was a straightforward decision. She said that this was not the property they had a dispute regarding.

Mr. Diggs said that his first point was regarding the email that Ms. Vanuch read. He asked who it was sent to.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would share that information with him. She said that she did not want to publicly expose the School Board members.

Mr. Diggs asked if it was sent to the entire School Board or only select members of the School Board.

Ms. Vanuch said that there were two School Board members who were on that copy. She said that she was unsure if the information was shared subsequently.

Mr. Diggs said that Ms. Gary had raised concerns regarding financial costs for the project multiple times. He said that as they approached the budget season, it was crucial that they discuss these costs in detail. He said that it was about $1 million they would be out based off of the work they had done at the Brooke Point site. He said that however, if the project was moved to Embrey Mill next week, they would be committing to additional costs of $5 to $8 million. He said that if the Supervisors were directing the School Board to put it at Embrey Mill regardless of what the cost was going to be in terms of inflation and other factors, they would still support it.

Ms. Vanuch said that they encountered a problem due to the policy that Ms. Bohmke just read, which they violated by changing the design of the school to increase its capacity. She said that they violated that policy, resulting in additional funding for that school beyond their allocated amount in the Capital Improvement Plan. She said that they must reassess the funding aspects of that school. She said that she could not recall the specific details about Elementary School 18 at that moment.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to clarify a point about Mr. Towery's statement that the site plan took one year. She said that the Brooke Point site plan did not seem like it took one year, and this part was not connecting for her. She asked, if they voted in October, how were they ready to start clearing trees in February. She said that if site plans took six to 12 months it appeared that this decision might have been made prior to October, whether it was formal or informal communication. She said that if it was informal, then the School Board needed to address this issue because conducting business in such a manner could be questionable. She said that she was merely analyzing the information and attempting to piece it together at this point.

Mr. Towery said that regarding the current concept of timbering trees referred to by Ms. Allen, it did not require a grading permit. He said that nine months to a year was dedicated to completing the site plan process and obtaining the grading permit. He said that this allowed them to install silt fences and proceed with grubbing trees; however, timbering trees alone did not necessitate a grading permit. He said that the increased focus on this matter was due to concerns related to fish and wildlife, endangered species, and bats. He said that he could provide more information on this topic if desired but would prefer not to at this time.

Mr. Towery said that to clarify for the Board, based on their recent discussions with Planning and Zoning staff, they had submitted pre-applications for the CUP. He said that in the past, there were two distinct processes that required attention for elementary schools 18 and 19. He said that both schools underwent a 22-32 comprehensive plan compliance review process, which was standard for all school sites. He said that Elementary School 18 had already completed this review. He said that Elementary School 19 still needed to go through this process. He said that since both schools had three stories that exceeded the 30-foot maximum elevation allowed in the A1 zoning district, they required a conditional use permit process.

Mr. Towery said that this process involved the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and a public process for both schools. He said that their feelings among school staff and the understandings they had gained from their discussions with Planning and Zoning were that there may be challenges but not insurmountable ones. He said that they proposed building a three-story elementary school adjacent to a three-story high school. He said that in terms of building height and the concept of being denied due to height restrictions, they never felt that this was a significant risk because they always believed that having two three-story schools next to each other would not pose any major issues.

Mr. Towery said that they required an effectively conditional use permit for one school and believed that the other would not face such restrictions. He said that the 22-32 proposal aimed to allow a school to be built on the property, which already had an existing school. He said that their feelings regarding these two elements were that there would not be any particular hurdles along the way; however, if these processes were to take much longer than expected, they could obviously affect construction plans.

Ms. Allen said that her final question was regarding Ms. Bohmke's provided timeline. She said that if the two votes were done in April and May, followed by the email sent after the second vote, the School Board consciously knew that moving the site anyway would cost them money. She said that to now ask to move it again would cost even more. She said that she was even more confused and had even more questions now. She said that she was very disappointed.

Dr. Taylor said that he believed that the School Board member colleagues indeed experienced pressure to deliver a school on time, which limited their options when they had ruled out the Embrey Mill site. He said that this was certainly a conversation that one could have with their School Board members regarding why they chose to do so. He said that the limitation did indeed restrict some options, and at that point, the only available alternatives were property in hand, and Brooke Point was a property in hand. He said that they had some limited options to develop a school on time without having to go through land procurement or face significant grading or additional hurdles.

Dr. Taylor said that while suboptimal, no one could argue that there was a perfect piece of land out there that would make the process easier, such as one that was perfectly flat and required no additional utility hookups. He said that that piece of land did not exist in Stafford County. He said that consequently, they had a limited scope of options to consider. He said that the Board evaluated its options and made a decision. He said that this Board was not satisfied with that decision. He said that they certainly had recourse and factors that they should consider when discussing with the School Board where they would go from here. He said that nevertheless, the design of the school remained the same at 18 as it was at 19.

Dr. Taylor said that design modifications based on the topography of different sites must be made. He said that the originally adopted prototype was modified when Moncure was rebuilt and again when the standards update from the Virginia Department of Education occurred. He said that the adopted school site had not changed since it was adopted in October and first shown to the School Board in July. He said that in terms of significant change since July, there had not been much change in terms of the size of the school, square footage, number of classrooms, or what was procured. He said that it was fine that the Board was not satisfied with the location, and there was certainly a course of action.

Dr. Taylor said that there was a motion on the table to move forward in a different direction and have the School Board consider something else. He said that it was certainly the Supervisors' prerogative. He said that in terms of other aspects, it was essential to recognize that some of what the Board had mentioned was accurate and reflected the in-the-moment staff recommendations. He said that some of the other points required attending meetings to see presentations or reviewing online materials. He said that he did not think there was a lack of transparency regarding the building's size or what was presented and adopted in the October CIP, which was then shared with County government in mid-October. He said that this was not a new conversation point.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to respectfully request additional time if there was a commitment from the Board members who wish for the school to be moved to provide funding for whatever would be required when that time comes to build it. She said that she had not received an answer regarding that matter. She said that she had heard various other things, but she had not heard that specific detail, which was crucial for assisting her in making this decision. She said that her question pertained to the rationale behind proposing to relocate a school and attaching a price tag of $0.045 on the tax rate for taxpayers to bear, without any commitment to fund it. She said that she was seeking clarification on this matter.

Dr. Yeung said that she could say with certainty that the numbers she received, not disclosing the name of the School Board member, were not accurate. She said that she would adhere to her one-point proposal while Supervisor Gary followed her eight-point plan. She said that there was $14 million in savings that she had yet to see. She said that the initial projection stated that there would be $5 million in losses if Embrey Mill was not used. She said that her other point was that Dr. Taylor mentioned that design was design. She said that she questioned this because there were two different designs, both costing $4 million.

Dr. Yeung said that she was unsure why, if both of them were similar to Moncure and used the same prototype, they cost the same amount. She said that her other question was regarding the construction of a three-story building because it would not fit otherwise. She said that she wanted to clarify that this was not about endangering the children on the first or second floor because there were four or five-year-olds present. She said that the focus was not on endangering situations at Brooke Point. She said that based on her knowledge, when visiting Embrey Mill, one could utilize the developer-provided CAD from engineering, which saved time.

Dr. Yeung said that there was $3 million plus in proffers available for assistance. She said that the developer was accommodating in helping to achieve these savings. She said that by applying these savings, they could potentially price the property at $8 million, which would balance out the costs. She said that she would not manipulate numbers or speculate about potential outcomes.

Dr. Taylor said that from a design perspective, the procured design differed from the Moncure design. He said that it featured fewer bells and whistles, making it an efficient design. He said that the building was three stories tall and was not their only three-story elementary school; Moncure was also a three-story elementary school. He said that the design was optimized for efficiency and size compactness to save money. He said that the high cost of this school was due to its accommodating 1,000 children and having increased square footage due to changes in guidelines from the Virginia Department of Education.

Dr. Taylor said that these points were valuable and could be incorporated into the Board's letter if adopted. He said that in the past, they could not directly speak for the School Board regarding their designs. He said that the design elements for 18 and 19 were not different. He said that they aspired for this design to become their enduring prototype for future elementary school designs.

Dr. Taylor said that two of their School Board members, the Chair and Dr. Chase, had previously toured the site. He said that they knew that this design had high fidelity and had been useful in the past for other prototype designs in the County. He said that currently, they had several elementary prototype designs that had been longstanding in the County, and they hoped that this design would be one of them in the future.

Mr. English said that he was confused about the mention of 2026, because he thought 2027 was when the schools would be opening.

Ms. Bohmke said that was right. She said that she asked Dr. Taylor if there was a pause and a delay while moving everything over to Embrey Mill, could they get by for a year. She said that she acknowledged that her question may not have been well-phrased, and Dr. Taylor's response was much more eloquent than her initial inquiry.

Dr. Taylor said that they were targeting a fall opening of 2026, which would be Fiscal Year 27. He said that this was still the target range. He said that any costs and movements involved some sunk costs in terms of design fit. He said that the original design of Elementary School 18 represented the most significant design costs, and the design costs associated with Elementary School 19 were primarily focused on fitting that design to a specific piece of land, which involved design modification costs. He said that was where they would see those sunk costs.

Dr. Taylor said that anything that they had already spent on 19 in its current location amounted to a sunk cost, which was just north of $1 million. He said that any additional costs beyond that for relocation were future escalations that were projected; they were not real numbers. He said that they could go up or down. He said that these projections were based on inflationary factors that had been built into an assumption model and cost escalation due to construction costs that had been built into a construction model.

Mr. English that he would like to request the School Board take a pause and redo it, but if they did not, there was nothing the Board of Supervisors could do about it.

Ms. Vanuch said that her motion was to draft a letter from the Board of Supervisors to the School Board requesting that they cease further expenditure on the Brooke Point site and share the new deed easement with them. She said that one of the School Board members was also the attorney for the developer, so she likely already knew that they have access to that land as well. She said that the letter should ensure that they understood they can build the school on that particular property because the County had access to it, and request that they take another vote on Embrey Mill.

Ms. Vanuch said that if they declined to do so, then it was up to this Board to determine the next steps, as the only other option was withholding funding. She said that she aimed to provide the School Board with every opportunity to rectify their mistake without resorting to the drastic measure of unfunding the school, which no one there wished to do. She said that they would not build a school on suboptimal land.

Mr. Diggs said that this answered the question that Ms. Gary had, as they aimed to ultimately relocate the school to Embrey Mill, which they would support. He said that he believed that was what she had been inquiring about, and Ms. Vanuch had essentially answered it.
Ms. Vanuch said that they had heard from Dr. Taylor that there were projected increases. She said that if they were trying to work with them and move things along quickly, the inflation should not be $8 million. She said that those were projected costs. She said that she was still stuck on Mr. White's message, because he was the least political person she knew, and he acknowledged they would save $5 million at Embrey Mill.

Mr. Diggs said that the message was very disappointing and alarming to him. He said that if he understood correctly, they had that conversation at the seven-on-seven, where they discussed racism and related issues. He said that everyone was shocked and could not believe they brought up such topics. He said that in this email, it seemed that the focus was on socioeconomic status. He said that if he had interpreted the email correctly, this was problematic. He said that he was looking forward to exploring some serious matters regarding that with Ms. Randall.

Ms. Gary said that she would make one last appeal. She said that no one had answered her question.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was not in a position to answer her question.

Ms. Bohmke said that Ms. Allen had asked when the site plan was submitted. She asked if that was in December.

Mr. Vosburg said that the major site plan was submitted in December.

Mr. Towery said that the total time required for preparing and obtaining site plan approvals was between nine months and one year. He said that they initiated this process in October, immediately following the Board's vote.

Ms. Allen said that they stated they wanted the school to open during Calendar Year 26. She asked if, with all of FY24 being used for site plan, this school would be built in a year and a half.

Mr. Towery said that they were currently tracking and anticipating that site plans would be approved and ready for bidding this summer.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would unequivocally state that, as someone who came from the Planning Commission, it was physically impossible to complete the CUP process with the Planning Commission and the Board in less than nine months. She said that it was impossible.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote for the motion to draft a letter to the School Board.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(6)	Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(1)	Gary
Abstain:	(1)	Allen

Ms. Allen said that to clarify her reason for abstaining, she did not want to send a letter to the School Board before getting answers to some of the questions she had. She said that she would like to understand the School Board’s thought process. She said that her abstention did not reflect that she agreed or disagreed; she just needed more time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:56 p.m., Chairman Bohmke adjourned the February 20, 2024 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's meeting.

Randy Vosburg	Meg G. Bohmke
Randal E. Vosburg	Meg Bohmke
County Administrator	Chairman