

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – A regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 3:01 p.m. on Tuesday, March 19, 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

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

CLOSED MEETING

At 3:02 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to adopt Resolution CM24-08 to authorize closed session.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Resolution CM24-08 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for (1) discussion of recruitment for the County Administrator position and interviewing interim candidates; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 19th day of March, 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 4:02 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to adopt Resolution CM24-08(C) to certify the closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Nay: (0)

Resolution CM24-08 (C) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE
STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED
MEETING ON MARCH 19, 2024

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 19th of March, 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 19th day of March, 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.

CHAIR REMARKS

Ms. Bohmke said that March is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. She said that nearly one million people in the United States live with MS, which is double the previous estimate. She asked that everyone watch an informative video about MS to learn more about this condition. She said that if people have any questions or require further information, they should visit www.nationalmssociety.org.

Ms. Bohmke said that last week, Stafford County attended the Amazon Web Services Kickoff event at Germanna Workforce Center in Spotsylvania County. She said that Governor Youngkin and representatives from Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, and Louisa were all in attendance. She said that unfortunately, she could not attend due to being unwell; she was grateful to Supervisor English for stepping in for her. She said that Amazon was advancing a two-building data center campus to Old Potomac Church Road in Stafford County.

Ms. Bohmke said that for every dollar Stafford County invested in this project, \$13 would be returned through these data centers. She said that this broke down Amazon's investment of \$6

billion to include hundreds of high-paying jobs and projected net revenue of \$212 million through 2050. She said that this was a significant opportunity for Stafford County. She said that she would like to express her sincere appreciation to Amazon Web Services for their unwavering support and partnership throughout this process.

Ms. Bohmke said that Congresswoman Spanberger had notified the County that they had secured \$1.7 million in federal funding for crucial projects in the County. She said that approximately \$1 million would be used for widening and realigning a section of Onville Road, as well as other improvements. She said that \$500,000 would be allocated for enhancing Courthouse Road and Route 1.

Ms. Bohmke said that finally, the remaining \$246,000 would be utilized for implementing a state-of-the-art computerized dispatch system for the Sheriff's Office. She said that they were thrilled with these awards and genuinely expressed their appreciation to Congresswoman Spanberger for her support and advocacy for Stafford County.

Ms. Bohmke said that she also wanted to acknowledge that last week they had announced a new Director of Economic Development, Liz Barber. Ms. Barber had been serving as Interim Director and had previously been the Business Development Manager for Stafford's Department of Economic Development since 2023. She said that she welcomed Ms. Barber.

Ms. Bohmke said that they would like to offer their condolences to the family of the woman who tragically drowned in Lake Arrowhead in a kayak accident. She said that losing a loved one in such a sudden and heartbreaking manner was an immense burden to bear, and their thoughts were with the family during this incredibly difficult time.

Ms. Bohmke said that the County was fortunate to have courageous men and women in their Fire and Rescue Department, and they thanked them for their tireless efforts during this incident. She said that they recognized the emotional toil these situations could take on first responders, and they were grateful for their professionalism and compassion.

PRESENTATIONS

There were none.

ADDITIONS – DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

Mr. Vosburg noted that there was one add-on item to new business. He said that the Chairman could find this item in the folders in front of her, listed as item number 14. He said that this was an update on the Code of Performance/Amendment to the Bylaws, which was requested by Dr. Yeung to be added to the agenda.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to approve the addition to the agenda.

Ms. Bohmke said that they would take a voice vote due to technical difficulties. She called the vote to approve the addition to the agenda. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote (7-0).

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC – I (3 MINUTES EACH)

1. Anita Dodd, 149 Tackett's Mill Road, Stafford, VA 22556, said that she was the Vice-Chairman of the Stafford County Historical Preservation Commission. She said that she would like to address the Board regarding the decision to dissolve the Stafford County Historical Commission. She said that she would like to clarify the distinction between the Stafford County Historical Commission and the Stafford County Historical Society. She said that the Historical Society was a 501(c)3 service organization that focused on education, disseminating information about Stafford County's history to the general public, and aimed to establish a Stafford County museum and cultural center.

Ms. Dodd said that the Historical Commission was established in 1994 and she had been a member since its inception. She said that she had worked closely collaborated with the Planning Department and the County's Cultural Resource Specialist by providing institutional knowledge and information concerning Stafford County's cultural heritage, cultural resources, and the history of its built environment. She said that the Commission complemented and supported recommendations concerning cultural resources by conducting fieldwork to identify and record cultural resources through photographing and producing measured plans of the area's history.

Ms. Dodd said that this often allowed Stafford County to obtain information about their cultural heritage that was scheduled for demolition, at which time, their valuable information would be lost forever. She said that they had administered what was known as a 50-year ordinance in Section 28-35, Table 3.1 of the Stafford County Code, which allowed the preservation of dwellings 50 years or older that meet the criteria. She said that the eligibility was determined by the Historical Commission. She said that they had established a Stafford County Preservation Award Program.

Ms. Dodd said that this program annually acknowledged individuals, groups, organizations, and corporations that had contributed to preserving Stafford County's cultural resources or heritage. She said that this promotes historic preservation in the County. She said that their meetings were open to the public, allowing County residents to ask questions and express concerns regarding Stafford's cultural resources, providing a transparency that would no longer exist if the Commission is dissolved. She said that historic preservation involved numerous processes, and dissolving the Commission would result in the loss of a valuable support system for the preservation of cultural resources.

2. Michael Sheirich, 22 Tara Lane, Stafford, VA 22554, said that he had lived at his address in Stafford for more than 30 years. He said that his dilemma concerned a current and a vacated easement on Stafford County property, specifically Tax Map Parcel 30-182. He said that the current easement was marked in red, while the vacated easement was visible to the right. He said that the vacated easement was initially created to provide access to properties beside and behind his current home until 1990 when the old easement was abandoned. He said that the current easement, visible to the left, was established for direct access to plot B2, where his house was built.

Mr. Sheirich said that the plat description stated that the driveway location was used for ingress and egress to parcel B2. He said that the current easement directed vehicles towards his house, positioning them within 90 feet of his front door. He said that in the hours of darkness, the road's uphill grade cast vehicle headlights, illuminating the entire front of his house. He said that approaching vehicles also shone light into his living room and two front bedrooms.

Mr. Sheirich said that in the near future, these easements may become active due to new house construction behind his property. He said that he hoped this might resolve as these easements became active. He said that the current easement led up to his house, while the little road to the right was where it cut off the main driveway to navigate around his house to those lots. He said that this footage was taken from inside his living room, showing an approaching vehicle's proximity as if it were about to reach the small cutoff to the right of his house.

Mr. Sheirich said that observers should look at the house in the video; this demonstrated the impact that passing vehicles had on him. He said that also displayed was a poor photograph of the same scene, filmed from his living room. He said that the next slide illustrated the road layout if his proposal to restore the old easement was approved. He said that the top section represented the old easement, leading to the lots behind his property and no longer in direct alignment with his home. He said that this change would resolve the issue.

3. Martha Newton, 138 Green Bank Road, Falmouth, VA 22406, said that she was present to discuss the decision to dissolve the Historical Commission. She said that the Historical Commission was not the same as the Historical Society, and she was unsure if all Board members understood that. She said that some of the things that the Historical Commission did would not be done, or they would take longer to be completed. She said that she concurred with what Ms. Anita Dodd had stated. She said that she hoped that the appropriate decision would be made to retain the Historical Commission.
4. Robert Rowlette, 76 Clift Farm Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22405, said that he was there to speak on behalf of the Historical Commission. He said that last month, he had worked with them when they had a concern about a parcel property going up for development on Clift Farm Road. He said that the property held historical importance as the site of Stoneman Switch and

as winter campgrounds for the Third and Fifth Corps of the Union Army. He said that fortunately, due to the work of the Historical Commission and collaboration with the developer, a phase one archeological study would be conducted on that property.

Mr. Rowlette said that this highlighted the important role that the Historical Commission played. He said that he had had the great fortune of discussing in depth with Ms. Nancy Kotting while they were in closed session. He said that he was extremely impressed by her knowledge, expertise, passion, and energy, which she would bring to Stafford County as a cultural resource specialist. He said that she had numerous tools at her disposal to manage their valuable resources.

Mr. Rowlette said that the importance of history and culture in Stafford County was evident in the 2040 vision that they drafted and in the comprehensive plan, which included policies to protect their historical and cultural resources. He said that both parties played important roles in preserving Stafford County's history. He said that Ms. Kotting brought valuable knowledge and expertise to the table. He said that the Historical Commission also played its role as representatives for each district. He said that many Commission members had decades of experience living in Stafford County.

Mr. Rowlette said that they understood the area's history and could bring that knowledge to public meetings. He said that the Historic Commission served as an independent organization that listened to public input and could bring recommendations back for consideration or awareness to the Board. He said that to maximize benefits, they should consider finding ways for the Historical Commission and Cultural Resources Specialist to work more cohesively together.

5. Howard Rudat, 10 Hayes Street, Stafford, VA 22556 – (comments attached)
6. Kristin Maxson, 1816 Richmond Highway, Stafford, VA 22554, said that regarding point one, in the historical committees, they should understand that the standing committees had been on hold since January 24. She said that this fact was stated on page 360 of 361 in today's package. She said that point two was about short-term public commitments. She said that with that, she also mentioned that a short-term 16-month wait was considered short term for ordinance resolution changes and development plan acceptances that might not deter the conflict of interest involving departed staff.

Ms. Maxson said that point three was about the proposed resolution R24-140, which would confirm that the Board no longer wished to participate in the Potomac Watershed Roundtable with other counties. She said that on page 188 of 361 in today's packet, the public had not been briefed on the change as staff admitted in resolutions earlier. She asked them to please note section 8 concerning conflict of interest disclosures by the law, January 4, 2008. She said that

the public had only four days to review this change, no time to digest it, no transparency to the public, and no conformity.

Ms. Maxson said that point four was about the community and management team agenda for March 18 and 24, which was not posted until Monday. She said that a call was placed during the day of the meeting to confirm the non-agenda availability of staff members prior to the meeting. She said that all postings should be made by Friday of the week beforehand. She said that one should be aware that false liens and community ordinances have been placed on homeowners without their knowledge in the past, resulting in lawyers' fees and other taxpayers' expenses. She said that this was wasteful.

Ms. Maxson said that point five referred to the March 8, 2024 Board of Supervisors legislative agenda, which was six pages long, with pages three and six intentionally left empty. She said that point six concerned page 17 of 361 in today's package, which discussed minutes from March 5, 2024 in reverse in words. She said that this happened often in minutes. She said that one should review the videos for event accuracy.

Ms. Maxson said that also, the word "budget" should not be confused with "deficit," which had been misrepresented in the minutes. She said that point seven discussed the standing committees, which had been established. She said that point eight referred to today's Board suggesting the dissolution of the Stafford Historical Commission, a topic that had been discussed by these individuals.

7. Al Watkins, 12 England Run Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22406, said he would like to discuss an invitation for everyone in the room or anyone in the public watching for any reason. He said that there would be a meeting tomorrow at the VDOT auditorium between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., held by consultants regarding the Rappahannock River Bridge and Parkway. He said that this was an opportunity for citizens to speak directly with the consultants about their current findings and stress any opinions they had regarding that.

Mr. Watkins said that secondly, to reminisce a little bit, in 2019, he was a teacher and a proud member of the Stafford Education Association. He said that he was part of a campaign called "5% for All, No Ifs, Ands, or Buts." He said that it started with schools, aiming to secure a 5% raise for all employees. He was the first person to receive a raise for all staff members at the school.

Mr. Watkins said that when this proposal came before the Board at that time, which was Ms. Shelton, Mr. Cavalier, Mr. Coen, Ms. Bohmke, Ms. Mauer, Mr. Dudenhefer, and Mr. Snellings. He said that it was quite a Board, as they may recall. He that at that time, when the budget issue arose, the 5% proposed for schools was debated among everyone. He said that

they began discussing whether or not they could implement this change and whether it would have any impact on everything else.

Mr. Watkins said that the Board members would ask Mrs. Light, if they did this, could they do that. He said that often, her response was that if they did that, they could not provide something else to another area. He said that what transpired at that time was remarkable because that 5% for schools led to not just schools but also Fire and Rescue, the Sheriff's Department, and all County staff members receiving a 5% raise. He said that everyone was able to work it out and make it happen, and he hoped that they could achieve a similar situation this coming year.

8. Michele Wickman 205 Bentley Court, Stafford, VA 22554, said that she wanted to express her gratitude for the educational video about multiple sclerosis in honor of MS Awareness Month. She said that this topic was particularly significant to her because she was diagnosed with MS in 2007. She said that from personal experience, she could attest that it was a truly challenging disease that was not enjoyable at all.

Ms. Wickman said that approximately one million people in the United States had been diagnosed with MS, while globally, there were around three million individuals affected. She said that there was currently a Walk MS event taking place. She said that this event was organized by the National MS Society and would be held in Fredericksburg on May 5. She said that if any of the Board members were able to attend, it would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. Wickman said that for those watching or listening to the video right now, fundraising efforts for this event continued. She said that to contribute, they should simply conduct a Google search for "Walk MS Fredericksburg." She said that every donation would be directed towards crucial research aimed at enhancing the lives of those affected by this devastating disease and discovering a cure. She said that she truly appreciated their efforts and their presentation.

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Yeung – stated that she knew it was a bad deal; her niece also suffered from multiple sclerosis. She said that she had participated in several activities recently but would be brief because her previous update was lengthy. She said that she attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Crimson Coward, a chicken restaurant, on March 8. She said that on March 13, along with colleagues from Germanna, AWS, and Governor Youngkin. She said that she was sure her pictures were out there.

Dr. Yeung said that they had also attended an AWS presentation where they were presented with a flag that they would fly when they opened their first data center. She said that she appreciated Ms. Bohmke for mentioning that. She said that she wanted to express her gratitude to

Congresswoman Spanberger, Senator Kaine, Senator Warner, and President Biden for their assistance in securing funding for roads.

Dr. Yeung said that she had participated in the Housing Authority Regional Commission meeting where they discussed priority solutions such as incubating new entity powers, housing assistance programs, exploring density options for expanding housing and education, and creating an executive team that reports upwards to the Housing Regional Commission. She said that she attended Embury Mill's St. Patrick's Day celebration yesterday, wearing green, just like today. She said that she was also at the FAMPO meeting with her colleagues yesterday.

Ms. Allen – reported that recently, PRTC held a meeting to discuss presenting their budget to the County. She said that she believed Ms. Light had received a budget from them. She said that one of the key points from that meeting was that they would face challenging decisions regarding transportation needs, including not just meeting commuter needs but also addressing the gas tax implications and its impact on their own transportation requirements and declining funds. She said that as they proceeded with their budgeting process, they would see that the impacts of the gas tax and the rise of electric vehicles in their region had significantly reduced the funds available to them. She said that this would undoubtedly have an impact on their budget.

Ms. Allen said that the second topic she would like to address was her attendance at the community meeting with Amazon, where Amazon and Tim sought to engage with all partners in the region and Stafford County to outline their plans for becoming good neighbors and actively participating in causes important to both counties and local nonprofits. She said that she was grateful for their commitment not only to expand their business operations but also to contribute positively to the community. She said that they had definitely taken the first step in being a part of the community. She said that she looked forward to learning more about their plans and projects in the future.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to mention that she was unsure if their staff had posted information about Amazon's announcement regarding the acceptance of FRA applications from nonprofits in their region for grant funding towards community-promoting causes starting April 1 and ending in June. She said that she would post the link on her social media and kindly requested their staff to post this information on the Stafford page if they had not already done so.

Mr. Diggs – stated that it was an honor to sit in this seat, and he was so thankful to get to serve with his colleagues and have this opportunity as he reflected over time. He said that he would be holding his first town hall meeting on March 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at Stafford High School for the George Washington District, but all residents of Stafford County were welcome to attend and share their questions and concerns.

Mr. Diggs said that today, he would highlight a friend, colleague, and community servant: Sergeant Dale Colona, who had served the Stafford community as a deputy sheriff with the Sheriff's Office

for the past 16 years. He said that Sergeant Colona had been diagnosed with cancer approximately one year ago, and last week he received the devastating news that his condition was now terminal. He said that yesterday, Ms. Bohmke, Mr. English, Ms. Gary, and he attended his final swearing-in ceremony, which had been delayed due to his ongoing treatment.

Mr. Diggs said that yesterday, Ms. Bohmke had issued a proclamation on behalf of the Board of Supervisors acknowledging Sergeant Colona's service to the community and the County. He said that on behalf of the George Washington District, the Board, and the entire County, they thanked Sergeant Colona for his service. He said that they loved him and asked the community to keep him and his family lifted up in prayer during this difficult time.

Mr. English – thanked Mr. Diggs for his comments. He thanked Ms. Bohmke and Ms. Gary for attending. He said that it meant a lot to his family that they all were there. He said that the other thing he wanted to mention was that on Saturday, he was invited to attend the 105th birthday celebration for Post 290. He said that this event marked not only the milestone anniversary of Post 290 but also the 105th anniversary of the American Legion in general. He said that Ms. Gary, Mr. Diggs, Paul Milde, and Josh Cole were among those who attended the event. He said that the best part of the event was the recognition of three post members who have served for 50 years: Julia Dietz, Ralph Cooper, and Bob Gibbons, who was a Supervisor of the Rock Hill District. He said that their dedication and commitment to Post 290 were truly inspiring. He congratulated Ms. Liz Barber for her new appointment. He said that she would do a fine job and deserved congratulations. He said that he also went to 200 Centreport Avenue to meet with the Governor. He said that they had 500,000 square feet of warehouse space that was open right now. He said that they did a ribbon-cutting for that, which was a good event.

Ms. Gary – reported that over the past couple of weeks, she attended a lot of events with her colleagues, which had been enjoyable despite the fluctuating weather conditions. She said that she hoped everyone else was enjoying the ride, and hoped that the weather would stabilize soon. She said that since their last meeting, she attended the monthly PRTC meeting on March 7th. She said that PRTC was responsible for managing OmniRide, which was the commuter bus serving Stafford County and had recently expanded its services to Spotsylvania, with plans to expand further into Front Royal soon.

Ms. Gary said that she would not give an extensive recap but would echo Ms. Allen's statements regarding the budget. She said that the drying up of federal funds due to COVID-19 was affecting budgets across various sectors. She said that they were witnessing significant changes in budget allocations, shifting financial burdens back to normal levels after a period of relief. She said that this year's budgeting process was indeed challenging for everyone involved. She said this one was indeed challenging; however, they must navigate through it.

Ms. Gary said that most organizations, including PRTC, had provided a flight path out of this situation using those funds reasonably. She said she had hope that they would figure this out and move forward. She said that on March 8, she attended their Board's Legislative Committee meeting alongside Dr. Yeung and Ms. Vanuch, who participated virtually. She said they received a recap of the session from their lobbyists at Advantus, which was helpful.

Ms. Gary also said she attended the Legion's birthday celebration, where she sat together with Paul and had a chance to chat. She said that engaging in community events like these allowed them to connect with colleagues and maintain a sense of normalcy in their professional lives. She said that she attended their quarterly Library Trustee Board meeting on March 11. She said that for those interested, they had approved recordings of these meetings, which could be found on the CURL website.

Ms. Vanuch – reported that she attended the FAMPO Policy Committee meeting last night along with Ms. Bohmke, Dr. Yeung, and Ms. Gary. She said that they received a detailed presentation on OmniRide and FRED Transit, which provided insightful information. She said that they analyzed ridership numbers from pre-pandemic times until now, highlighting the instability of motor fuels tax for long-term funding. She said that they also learned about their fare-free program that utilized CARES funding and extended its benefits over several years to boost ridership.

Ms. Vanuch said that this tied into Ms. Gary's and Ms. Allen's comments from the PRTC perspective in that this raised concerns about the future of OmniRide and Fred Transit, as their funding sources were dwindling. She said that there would be significant changes in their operations, including potential fare adjustments and locality contributions. She said that although there would be no changes this year, future budget impacts would require challenging discussions about funding allocations.

Ms. Vanuch said that this was an important point to consider moving forward. She said that a FAMPO subcommittee meeting was upcoming this Thursday to discuss the regional transportation authority, taking place at 6:00 p.m. at 406 Princess Anne Street. She said that she had a couple more items to discuss. She said that one was on their Legislative Committee tracker, which they had discussed in the past. She said that the 1% sales tax did pass overwhelmingly in the House and the Senate and was currently awaiting the Governor's signature.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to request of constituents to send an email to the Governor's Office requesting that he sign the local option for localities to send to the ballot a 1% increase to sales tax to sunset after a certain period of time, such as 30 years, to build new school construction. She said that it was one of the only things they could have in their toolbelt if this passed in order to build massive school construction projects.

Ms. Vanuch said that if they were very strategic in the way that they do it and it passes on the ballot in November after the Governor signed it, they would be able to take a lot of capital funding they were spending now and allocate it towards per-pupil expenditures and teacher pay. She said that now, they could not do it because the money is tied up with building new schools. She said that if the members of the public would not mind sending the Governor's Office an email asking him to sign it, she would be very appreciative.

Ms. Vanuch said that lastly, Ms. Bohmke mentioned this her Chair remarks, but this incident occurred in her district so she would be remiss if she did not take a moment to extend her condolences to the family of the young woman who passed away in Lake Arrowhead when her kayak capsized. She said that she wanted to thank all of their first responders, including paid and volunteer Fire and Rescue staff as well as the Sheriff's Department. She said that they were out there for two days in the cold and wind all the way through the dark, and she wanted to thank them for taking the time for handling that situation with as much grace as they always did.

Ms. Bohmke – reported that she would like to inform the community about the annual Stafford Hospital half-mile run for children and 5K run for adults. She said that participants could walk or run, and the event took place on Saturday, April 13. She said that funds raised would benefit the hospital foundation, which supported community initiatives. She said that participants could select their district during registration, and there was even an option for those unsure of their district. She said that in previous years, Aquia District had typically won; this year, they aimed to give Ms. Gary some competition.

Ms. Bohmke said that the monthly VRE meeting discussed the long-range 2030 and 2050 plans. She said that for more information, one could visit the VRE website, and it was under their March 15 meeting. She said that Mr. Watkins already mentioned that tomorrow night was the Rappahannock River Crossing public meeting, and she would like to let the public know that it is a drop-in meeting, and they did not have to come at the beginning. She said that it was from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., but one could come at 6:30 p.m. or stay however long they wanted. She said that it would be at the VDOT Beacon Road Headquarters.

Ms. Bohmke said that this would be the first of a number of meetings they would host regarding the Rappahannock River Crossing. She said that they had a makeup meeting with the schools after their last meeting was canceled, which would take place this coming Tuesday, March 26, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. with their School Board. She said that it would be upstairs in the ABC conference room, followed by a budget work session from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. She said that she attended a ceremony that signed an Intergovernmental Support Agreement, or IGSA.

Ms. Bohmke said that this was between Stafford County and the Marine Corps Base Quantico with Base Commander Colonel Brooks , Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Greg Crenshaw, and their Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears. She said that the agreement would support

procurement of materials and supplies and support the operations and maintenance of the installation to enhance mission effectiveness, create efficiencies, and/or reduce costs through the use of the economies of scale.

Ms. Bohmke said that their entire Board was engaged in this through Mr. Vosburg, working with Quantico to create these efficiencies. She said that she attended that on behalf of the Board. She said that the rest of their day was interesting; it was spent on the REPI project. She said that they were looking at all of the military installations across Virginia and how they could make additional buffers to protect the bases. She said that Ms. Gary and she served on the Landfill Board, and she would like to announce that they approved their proposed budget.

Ms. Bohmke said that they discussed having a financial policy as it relates to the landfill reserves, so that if the landfill ever closes, they would have a way to pay the very expensive closure and post-closure costs as they related to the Department of Environmental Quality. She said that they changed the meeting date, which she would announce once the information was confirmed.

Ms. Bohmke said that lastly, she would like to thank the Sheriff's Department for solving a horrific homicide from 1986, which was 37 years ago. She said that she wanted to give sincere thanks to Detective Dave Wood for his relentless and unwavering pursuit of justice on this case. She said that techniques in genealogy and DNA analysis were used to solve this crime. She said that she would like to remind everyone that the next R-Board meeting was scheduled for May 15 at 1:00 p.m. in these Board chambers.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to briefly acknowledge the IGSA agreement by expressing gratitude towards the County Attorney's office, particularly their Deputy County Attorney, Janice Ewing, who played a crucial role as the primary attorney handling IGSA matters. She said that she would like to extend her appreciation to Ms. Ewing, Ms. McClendon, and the entire team for ensuring that the agreement was mutually beneficial for both parties.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Ms. McClendon said that she had no report for the Board this evening.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Vosburg said that he had two items of reference: the monthly expenditure listing report in the packet and the March 8, 2024 Legislative Committee action list. He said that last week he had attended a meeting in D.C. with Donna Krauss, Deputy County Administrator, and Anthony Toigo. He said that they went to D.C. as a part of the roadmap with Merchant McIntyre. He said that during their visit, they had met at a staff level with Congresswoman Spanberger's staff, Senator Warner's staff, and Senator Kaine's staff.

Mr. Vosburg said that they discussed their legislative, congressionally directed spending asks that the Board recently adopted for 2025 and expressed their gratitude for their assistance with the 2024 ask. He said that the interaction was beneficial and they anticipated engaging at the elected official level in the future. He said that this meeting was one step in their ongoing process with Merchant McIntyre. He said that they had productive discussions during their meetings in D.C., particularly with elected staff members.

Mr. Vosburg said that the final item he would discuss concerned an ask from OmniRide. He said that he had received a couple of emails regarding this matter from some of the supervisors. He said that the subject was House Bill 285, currently pending before the Governor for signature. He said that OmniRide had requested that they provide a letter of support for this bill. He said that he wanted to ensure that there were no reservations from the Board members about endorsing this legislation.

Mr. Vosburg said that according to his conversation with Mr. Toigo, House Bill 285 did not seem to be a contentious bill. He said that it aimed to ease some of the restrictions on placing bus stops along roadways by bypassing the state permitting process in favor of local jurisdiction approval. He said he wanted to confirm that there were no objections from the Board and that they could proceed with sending the letter of support if there were none.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to comment that she would support it. She said that being on PRTC, she acknowledged some of the complications they have faced in establishing those shelters. She said that she had no issue with this proposal.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to know what maintenance would be required as they began to deteriorate, and who would be responsible for ensuring they remained in good condition.

Anthony Toigo, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, said that this was a bill they were tracking but then explained that they were approached by PRTC, which requested their involvement. He said that to respond to Dr. Yeung's question, this legislation enabled local, state, or state transit organizations to construct bus shelters measuring up to 200 square feet on state-owned right-of-way. He said that the entity responsible for maintenance was the one that built the shelter, although it did not mandate Stafford County for this responsibility; instead, it provided them with the option to build these shelters if they chose to do so.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was unsure if Mr. Toigo had the answer to this question, but she was curious about the public notice prior to this bill and what changes it entailed. She asked if it was being constructed near a neighborhood, whether residents had been previously notified and given the opportunity to provide input. She said that in the past, they had successfully influenced location decisions based on community feedback. She said that as a result, she was interested in

understanding whether the bill allowed for shelters to be placed anywhere along state-maintained right-of-way without adhering to the previous public notification process.

Mr. Toigo said that upon reviewing the bill draft, he noticed that it did not address public notice requirements. He said that the draft stated that if a shelter was 256 square feet or less, it altered the permitting process from the Department of General Services, which was under the State Department, to a local building official. He said that this would require going through the County and adhering to its procedures.

Ms. Allen said that the process of managing transportation was shifted from state jurisdiction to local jurisdiction. She said that for example PRTC had a lot more local routes in the Prince William and Manassas area. She said that oftentimes, as they were looking to expand routes along certain lines, it was easier to go to a local jurisdiction to get that done than to go to the state. She said that instead of randomly constructing bus shelters, they were built along established bus lines to support local transportation needs. She said that they currently only had commuter buses from commuter lots, but this was in general in support of local transportation needs.

Ms. Vanuch asked what their current process was.

Ms. Vanuch said that was one of them, and they decided the location they were putting it at was not a good one, so they were trying to move it because they were made aware of it. She asked what their current process was in their Zoning Office. She asked if they had to create one because the state had previously handled this process.

Mr. Vosburg that he did not know the specifics of their current process; however, he could explain what that legislation did. He said that it removed the sunset clause, which means that local jurisdictions will continue handling the permitting process indefinitely. He said that the previous sunset date is no longer applicable due to this bill. He said that regarding zoning, he was unsure of their current process.

Mr. Toigo said that they could certainly find out the current process. He added that he had had some conversations with Mr. Santay regarding changes to work.

Ms. Bohmke said that Mr. Santay was present. She said that she believed the sunset was in July of 2025.

Paul Santay, Chief Director of Community Development, said that technically, yes, they would have to create a new permit process for bus shelters in particular. He said that this process would follow their existing commercial change permit application process. He said that they would review the details of what those bus shelters would look like, what specific features they would have.

Mr. Santay said that it would go through that review process, get reviewed, hopefully would be approved, and then go through an inspection process. He said that there was no public notification process with a building permit, so neighboring parcels would not know of the permit being submitted, reviewed, or approved. He said that it would still follow their normal permitting procedures, but they needed to create a different kind for bus shelters.

Dr. Yeung said that she had a correction. She said that they did have buses running; they had the FRED bus that runs in Garrisonville and Griffis-Widewater.

Ms. Allen said that she was not saying there wasn't, but she was saying that in relation to OmniRide.

Dr. Yeung said that she was going to talk about that too. She said that Ms. Allen was correct that they only had OmniRide. She said that one of her questions was when was the letter due.

Mr. Vosburg said that there was no due date. He said that it was pending approval before the Governor.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was a little bit of time to work this out.

Mr. Vosburg said that to it was kind of unknown. He said that there was no due date.

Dr. Yeung said that the reason for her inquiry was that they did not own buses or have specific routes; instead, they relied on Fredericksburg's services, which may include stops at the library, Stafford Market, or senior centers. She said that to determine how many buses to implement, she would like to know which routes they would be operating on specifically. She said that this information would provide guidance for their planning process. She said that some areas had community-based routes, such as Garrisonville on Hampton Road from the library to the community center, which could be considered private areas. She said that they needed to identify suitable locations for bus stops in order to establish an effective transportation system.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to ask if they could proceed with drafting the letter while also directing staff to examine and refine the process for notifying individuals when a bus shelter is installed. She said that it seems reasonable that people should be notified in such cases. She asked if the Board would be open to moving forward with the letter and having staff look into these procedures.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had a question for Mr. Santay. Ms. Vanuch said that he mentioned that the process involved regular permitting, so they would not have the authority to do so since their jurisdiction was limited to public notices based on specific authority. She asked whether they could draft an ordinance that would grant them the necessary authority in this case.

Mr. Santay said that he did not see why not.

Ms. Vanuch asked if he had reviewed the legislation.

Mr. Santay said that it was a brief, specific carve-out for bus shelters. He said that if it involved delegating the permitting process to local authorities, it was routine and inexpensive, as they had been petitioning for it. He said that however, the building permit process lacked an adjacent property owner notification procedure.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they would be able to implement that through an ordinance if they desired to.

Mr. Santay said that at the Board's discretion, he did not see why not.

Ms. McClendon said that she would recommend that staff be given time to investigate this matter further. She said that they had not yet examined the notice for that specific reason. She said that this issue had arisen today; therefore, they would require some time to ensure that the Board possessed the authority to undertake such actions.

Ms. Bohmke said that they received an email from the executive director of OmniRide last night. She said that she believed she had shared this information earlier but was unsure of the exact time of arrival, which was likely late in the evening. She said that they had not had a lot of time to thoroughly analyze this, but it seemed fairly innocuous.

Mr. Vosburg said that he had discussed the matter with Ms. McClendon. He said that to clarify, it would be a letter of support, but there is a specific ask related to the sunset clause that they passed. He said that the sunset clause was set to expire on July 1, 2025, and the concern was that all the effort put into creating this process would be for naught if it only lasted for a year. He said that it was also mentioned that he believed that the Governor supported removing the sunset clause. He said that their request from the Board would be a letter of support as well as encouragement for striking the sunset portion of the legislation.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would now poll the Board. She asked them to give her a thumbs up or a thumbs down.

Mr. English said that he was in support.

Dr. Yeung said that she was okay with it but would like additional time to review it. She said that she was understanding what was being said, but he just corrected the information she gave about the sunset clause. She said that she wanted to know exactly what it was that they were doing. She said that she was okay with it and was always okay with sending a letter of support, but wanted some more time.

Ms. Vanuch said that he discussed this topic at FAMPO last night, and she was trying to recall his specific comments. She said that he mentioned that it passed overwhelmingly in the General Assembly, but with the sunset clause. She said that there was uncertainty about whether the Governor would veto it, which was why they sought a letter of support. She said that she felt uneasy about approving the letter today without identifying the real issue.

Ms. Vanuch said that if Ms. McClendon could confirm that they had the authority to create an ordinance and require a public notice, she would fully support sending the letter. She said that she was supportive of it, but only if they could give that public notice requirement. She said that if Ms. McClendon could get back to them in a day or two and then they could send the letter, she would be fine with that.

Ms. Allen said that she heard everyone's concerns regarding the issue at hand. She said that she was in support because she was on OmniRide. She said that regarding the concerns, they could take two actions instead of combining them into one. She said that even if their letter of support was not included in the final decision, they could still create an ordinance to address the issue. She said that the letter should not be contingent upon the ordinance; if their support was not included in the final decision, they could still create an ordinance later to address the issue.

Ms. Gary said that she was supportive regardless; however, she believed that it was essential to have that information in order to create the ordinance and provide the necessary notification. She said that because of this, she would also be willing to wait until they had that information before providing her full support for the letter's distribution.

Mr. Diggs said that he supported it.

Ms. Bohmke said that she supported the proposal, but would appreciate receiving more details; however, she did not see any significant risks in supporting it based on the current information available. She said that if they proceeded to create an ordinance, there definitely should be notification to adjacent property owners. She said that she believed this was crucial for everyone involved.

Ms. Vanuch said that during the presentation at FAMPO last night, he mentioned that a locality had contacted the Governor's Office in opposition to the proposal, which raised this issue. She said that she had not yet had time to determine which locality is involved or what the specific issue is. She said that this uncertainty made her question the proposal's nature, particularly regarding public notice. She said that she felt hesitant due to the perceived lack of comprehensive information provided.

Mr. Vosburg said that they would draft the letter and would work in collaboration with Ms. McClendon to gather information about the ordinance. He said that after they had obtained the

necessary details, they would work with the Chair to finalize the letter when the Chair felt comfortable with the information provided.

Ms. Bohmke said that if there were any new matters requiring attention from the Board, she would either call or have staff send an email.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Bohmke said that Items 6 and 7 had been requested to be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, 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; APPROVE MARCH 5, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES.

ITEM 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE MARCH 5, 2024 JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES.

ITEM 3. APPROVE FEBRUARY 27, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES.

ITEM 4. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; RECEIVE CENTRAL RAPPAHANNOCK REGIONAL LIBRARY'S QUARTERLY REPORT.

ITEM 5. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPOINT MS. STEPHANIE DEMARCO TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION REPRESENTING THE GARRISONVILLE ELECTION DISTRICT FOR A TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025.

ITEM 6. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; RESOLUTION R24-126; DISSOLVE THE STAFFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND COMMEND THE COMMISSION FOR ITS SERVICE, AND REQUEST THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO DRAFT RELATED AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNTY CODE AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Gary would like to address Item 6, County Administration, dissolve the Stafford County Historical Commission and commend the Commission for its service, and request the Planning Commission to draft related amendments to the County Code and comprehensive plan.

Ms. Gary said that during their initial discussion at the retreat, they did not have all the necessary information, or at least that was how she felt. She said that she felt that this proposal to dissolve was moving too quickly. She said that she proposed that they defer this decision and revisit it later. She said there was a suggestion regarding improvements for the Historical Commission's operations. She said that she wanted to review those suggestions before making a decision.

Ms. Gary said that at this time, she was not in favor of dissolving the Commission. She said that considering the additional context provided about the services being provided and work done with cultural specialists, she wanted to postpone this decision to dissolve the Commission.

Mr. English said that he did not understand why they had discussed dissolving it in the first place. He said that he believed they were doing a great job. He said that they should simply remove this item and continue with their current efforts. He said that he did not know why they required additional information. He said that he was unaware of any unconventional or unreasonable actions they had taken. He said that they were doing fine work, so he did not understand why they needed to revisit this matter. He said that they were performing well, so he proposed that they continue supporting the committee.

Dr. Yeung said that she was there also. She said that she got a couple of emails about pulling it off of consent, so she thanked Ms. Gary for pulling it. She said that they should be seeking new individuals who possess interest and expertise in historic preservation so they can learn from current members of the Commission. She said that she believed that having new appointees would be beneficial in adding fresh perspectives to the existing ideas, as sharing these ideas among citizen volunteers is always advantageous. She said that there was no need to disrupt the group at this time; they were dedicated and long-serving historians who were suddenly informed that they would be removed. She said that she was also in support for keeping it as it is now.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to make a recommendation. She said that this initiative came about after reviewing all of their boards and commissions. She said that some were required by law, some by state statute, some had Board members from various constituencies, and so forth. She said that the purpose of this review was to address staff resource limitations and optimize staff time due to their busy schedule. She said that this discussion began during the retreat. She said that currently, they had one of their Deputy County Administrators assisting the Historical Commission. She asked Mr. Vosburg if it was correct that Mike Morris was staffing the Commission.

Mr. Vosburg said that it was under Mike Morris; however, it was actually Nancy Kotting's responsibility.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Ms. Kotting was staffing it. She said that her recommendation was based on the information from the retreat that senior staff would be staffing it. She said that she understood

that their Deputy County Administrator was assigned to this task, which raised concerns about tying him up with this responsibility. She said that she had planned to suggest that Ms. Kotting take charge instead. She said that if that had already been done, that was fine. She said that another concern from the Board was the frequency of meetings.

Ms. Vanuch said that they felt that having them monthly might not be necessary given the workload. She said that perhaps they could update the charter to schedule bi-monthly or quarterly meetings to better align with staff availability. She said that she was trying to find a balance between maintaining the Commission's necessity and ensuring that staff time was protected, especially during evening meetings.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated the valuable information provided. She said that it had significantly altered the current situation. She said that she would like to postpone this matter for now and invite Ms. Kotting to provide them with more details about the workload. She said that she would appreciate having that information before making any decisions.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to amend what was said previously by suggesting quarterly meetings instead of bi-monthly ones, and possibly ad hoc meetings if necessary. She said that also, she proposed that the Commission and the historic society collaborate to determine if there was alignment between their objectives. She said that she believed that the gentleman, Mr. Rowlette, should be appointed as an ad hoc member due to his ability to provide valuable information for this purpose. She said that she considered that combining the two entities might prevent duplication of effort. She said that if they could bring the two groups together and identify the unique contributions of each, they could streamline their operations more effectively.

Mr. English motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to not dissolve the Historical Commission.

Ms. Gary said that she would still like Ms. Kotting to share some information with the Board at a later date regarding what was going on with the Commission.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to know that as well, because the Board had received the message that it was overwhelming for staff to give their time to the Historical Commission. She said that she would like to hear from Ms. Kotting's perspective what was needed and that the Board was providing the appropriate resources.

Dr. Yeung asked if they were now doing Commissions one at a time and bringing them back in order.

Ms. Bohmke said that they were still in discussions about reorganization. She called the vote on the decision to not dissolve the Historical Commission.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Nay: (0)

ITEM 7. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; RESOLUTION R24-130; DISCONTINUE STAFFORD COUNTY'S MEMBERSHIP WITH THE POTOMAC WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Gary would like to address Item 7, County Administration, discontinue Stafford County's membership with the Potomac Watershed Roundtable.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to address this in the interest of fairness. She said that many supervisors may have received an email regarding this matter. She said that she had previously served on this committee, and Ms. Allen had as well. She asked if they wanted to move forward with leaving this group. She said that she just wanted to make sure.

Ms. Vanuch said that she did not know what was just said.

Ms. Gary said that Ms. Vanuch could serve on the roundtable if they chose to keep it.

Dr. Yeung said that she believed Ms. Gary was stating that in fairness, this group should be continued. She said that the Potomac Watershed Roundtable served as a government-citizen forum promoting collaboration and cooperation on environmental concerns, particularly water issues. She said that it was important for stakeholders and interest groups in Virginia to maintain support for water quality initiatives.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to not discontinue Stafford County's membership with the Potomac Watershed Roundtable.

Ms. Gary said that she had one additional comment. She said that she would like to share her experience regarding this roundtable discussion. She said that although she cared deeply about environmental preservation, her involvement in this particular forum had not been productive for the County or beneficial for furthering environmental efforts. She said that while there was valuable learning and diverse perspectives shared during these discussions, she believed that their Board should discontinue its participation in this roundtable from her point of view.

Ms. Bohmke said that she now understood Ms. Gary's perspective. She said that when Ms. Gary pulled it off of consent, she thought it was because she wanted to maintain it.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to consider it in fairness as they considered disbanding the other commission.

Dr. Yeung asked if this was receiving funding from the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 117 of the Chesapeake Bay. She asked where they were getting that funding from.

Ms. Bohmke said that perhaps she should ask Ms. Light.

Dr. Yeung asked how they were going to stop something if there was funding from another stream.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they made some sort of subsidy payment to this. She said that she did not think so.

Paul Santay, Chief Director of Community Development, said that Stafford County did not specifically contribute to the Potomac Watershed Roundtable. He said that the Potomac Council and the Watershed Roundtable received funding from DEQ, DCR, and other organizations for various purposes. He said that Stafford County did not specifically fund either of these organizations.

Dr. Yeung asked if it was something they needed to reorganize, identify the needs for, and determine why it existed. She asked if they could do it better rather than just dissolving it.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve proposed Resolution R24-130, to discontinue Stafford County's membership in the Potomac Watershed Roundtable.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (6) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch

Nay: (1) Yeung

ITEM 8. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; RESOLUTION R24-112 AND RESOLUTION R24-113; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPLY FOR RENEWAL OF A VIRGINIA OPIOID ABATEMENT AUTHORITY COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP GRANT AWARD FOR MOBILE MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT AND CRISIS STABILIZATION AND AUTHORIZE AN APPLICATION FOR THE VIRGINIA OPIOID ABATEMENT AUTHORITY'S GOLD STANDARD INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

ITEM 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-108 AUTHORIZE ADVERTISEMENT FOR A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A CABLE FRANCHISE RENEWAL AGREEMENT WITH VERIZON VIRGINIA LLC.

ITEM 10. PARKS, RECREATION, FACILITIES, AND TOURISM; RESOLUTION R24-121; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH ANIKE GROUP, INCORPORATED, TO BUILD A SKATEBOARD PARK AT ST. CLAIR

BROOKS MEMORIAL PARK AND BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE CAPITAL PROJECTS
RESERVE FUNDS.

ITEM 11. UTILITIES; RESOLUTION R24-117; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A WORK ORDER WITH SAGRES CONSTRUCTION
CORPORATION FOR WATERLINE REPLACEMENT AT AUSTIN RUN AND RICHMOND
HIGHWAY

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

FIRE AND RESCUE; DISCUSS ESTABLISHMENT OF RETIRED CANINE CARE
EMERGENCY FUND.

Acting Assistant Chief of Support Services Command Ben Gouldman said that he was presenting an important proposal regarding medical coverage for their retired canines who had dedicated their lives to serving and protecting their community in Stafford. He said that in October 2023, during the Board of Supervisors meeting, Ms. Allen had requested that staff investigate an insurance policy to cover retired canines' medical expenses. He said that currently, once a canine retired, its handler was responsible for paying for their medical care. He said that in November, the Public Safety Committee had approved bringing this proposal to the full Board for consideration.

Mr. Gouldman said that the public safety canines were dedicated to serving and protecting the community. He said that these hardworking animals had risked their lives to keep their citizens safe. He said that it was appropriate that they ensured the well-being of these loyal and hard-working canine animals by providing them with comprehensive medical coverage after their active service ended. He said that after conducting extensive research, he had prepared three options for the Board's consideration regarding medical coverage for retired canines.

Mr. Gouldman said that option one was a comprehensive plan that offered a wide range of benefits for the retired canines, which included regular checkups, preventative care, vaccinations, and specialized treatments. He said that it did have higher premiums but provided extensive coverage and cost approximately \$130 per month per canine. He said that currently, there were three retired canines in Stafford.

Mr. Gouldman said that option two was a medical fund that was dedicated to medical coverage of the retired canines, which would establish a specific amount for each canine under the coverage.

He said that this individual allocation would be based on estimates of medical expenses associated with retired canines, considering factors of age, breed, and health conditions.

Mr. Gouldman said that option 3 was a combination of option one and two together, obtaining a comprehensive insurance policy and allocating a specific sum of funds for each fiscal year. He said that providing a two-tier system would provide care for their retired canines and may be more cost-effective. He said that medical care should encompass a wide range of services to include routine check-ups, vaccinations, preventative treatments, and emergency care.

Mr. Gouldman said that for vet pricing for routine care, they contacted several local veterinarians in Stafford County. He said that they consulted with two veterinarians who provided a quote associated with routine wellness visits that included vaccines. He said that Veterinarian A provided a quote of \$227.60 for a healthy canine to come in for its yearly vaccinations and wellness visits, and Veterinarian B provided a quote of \$301.50.

Mr. Gouldman said that for emergency vet visits, Emergency Vet A gave a quote for an emergency visit fee of \$190, with no surgery consult fee but including an exam fee. He said that a standard 6 hour hospitalization was \$156. He said that in the public safety committee, they discussed the cost of bloat, and both veterinarians said that the cost of treatment would vary depending on the size of the dog and the stage of their illness at the time.

Mr. Gouldman said that overnight services and stay for 24 hours to 72 hours from Emergency Veterinarian A were estimated to be \$625 to \$1875. He said that Emergency Veterinarian B estimated that the emergency visit bill would be \$222, a surgery consult would be \$236, and there would be no standard hospitalization price. He said that bloat was also case-by-case depending on the size of the dog and stage of bloat. He said that overnight services and stay varied, and exam fees accrued every 6 hours.

Mr. Gouldman said that veterinarians were on a 6-hour rotation and each new rotation would include an exam for the dogs. He said that for option one, the insurance plan was a Nationwide insurance policy. He said that it was a reimbursement policy, so the canines could be taken to any veterinarian or hospital. He said that they would incur the out-of-pocket costs, but could submit the bill to insurance for reimbursement. He said that there were three different deductibles, \$100, \$250, and \$500, and a 10% discount per canine.

Mr. Gouldman said that another question that came up was if there were multiple canines on a policy, would there be a difference in pricing, and there was a 10% discount per canine. He said that optional coverages for medical conditions included illness, behavioral issues, prescription pet food and nutritional supplements, congenital and hereditary coverage, and joint coverage.

Mr. Gouldman said that exclusions to coverage included services and expenses for pre-existing conditions, services and expenses related to treatment performed to effective date of policy, diagnosis or treatment of any complication or progression of any conditions or procedures excluded by the policy, and limitations on veterinary expenses for prescriptions.

Mr. Gouldman said that the next slide displayed a table of what the insurance would cover. He said that at wellness level 2, a 12-month term would include two exams per term, or two exams every six months for the canine. He said that it would also cover the vaccinations or titers, and the list of vaccines and tests that were available. He said that it also included dental cleanings, x-rays, and EKGs. He said that the next slide was a breakdown of costs for the quotes. He said that the monthly total would be approximately \$130.04, with 10% savings for each additional canine. He said that the yearly total would be \$1560.48 per canine, and \$1404 for each additional canine.

Mr. Gouldman said that for breeds, they said that it was a mixed breed of large size, between 51 and 110 pounds. He said that the insurance required inclusion of the dog's birth year, as an older dog may have increased costs associated with care. He said that the plan was for customized coverage, and the total for three canines per year was \$4368. He said that the resources they used to gather this information were White Oak Animal Hospital, Hartwood Animal Hospital, Virginia Veterinary Center in Fredericksburg, MedVet Northern Virginia in Manassas, and Nationwide Insurance.

Ms. Vanuch asked to see the slide with the three options. She said that she would attempt to summarize her recollections from the public safety meeting. She said that she would like to express her gratitude to Ms. Allen for bringing this matter to their attention. She said that during her first year on the Board, they learned about a sheriff's office dog requiring a \$10,000 surgery, which was paid by the deputy.

Ms. Vanuch said that subsequently, they spoke to the sheriff who said they were fine, and they forgot about the issue until Fire and Rescue raised it with Ms. Allen. She said that this prompted them to consider the necessity of coverage for retired dogs in both Fire and Rescue and their Sheriff's Office. She said that she understood that this proposal primarily concerned Fire and Rescue, but that it also encompassed their Sheriff's Office for retired dogs.

Mr. Gouldman said that was correct.

Ms. Vanuch asked what dogs they had that would be included in this. She asked if Duchess was the only one.

Mr. Gouldman said yes, Duchess was the only Fire Rescue dog.

Ms. Vanuch said that Maui was now retired. She asked what other dogs were retired.

Mr. Gouldman said that he did not know. He said that the other two were on the Sheriff's Office side.

Ms. Vanuch said that regarding option three, which addressed major medical expenses, during their discussion at the public safety committee, she brought up the example of bloat or cruciate surgery, which can cost around \$10,000. She said that retired dogs often face numerous surgeries due to stomach issues, arthritis, and leg problems. She asked how the deductible options of \$100, \$250, or \$500 related to the annual costs.

Mr. Gouldman said that the annual cost includes the \$100 deductible.

Ms. Vanuch asked if that would be from the County coffers or if that would be the responsibility of the owner.

Mr. Gouldman said that it would come from the County.

Ms. Vanuch said that in that case, they would likely need to proceed with option three due to its comprehensive medical coverage, plus they were budgeting for other expenses. She said that this option did not cover the full surgery cost; instead, it paid for a portion of the surgeries.

Mr. Gouldman said that was correct. He said that it paid for a portion of the surgery.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was important for Board members to understand this. She said that even if they chose option one, they would not be providing total medical coverage.

Ms. Vanuch said that Board members must fully understand the importance of this matter. She said that even if they chose option one, they would not offer complete medical coverage. She said that vet bills for surgeries would likely amount to thousands of dollars, which owners would still need to pay. She said that she wanted to clarify this point, as they had discussed it extensively in their committee meeting.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had recommended option three to the full Board; however, she was unsure if this was clear in the presentation. She said that she would support moving forward with option three. She said that although this was new business, she appreciated their hard work. She said that they were currently working on their budget, so they needed to determine how they could incorporate this into their financial plan. She said that the insurance cost was \$4,000, but as a Board, they must decide on an initial investment amount for the out-of-pocket costs.

Mr. English asked if that would be included in the Sheriff's budget and in the Fire Rescue's budget. He asked if they would have added it in their budget. He asked why they would not have put it in their budget.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was because they were retired dogs.

Mr. English said that he understood the situation but suggested that they should include it in their budget.

Dr. Yeung said she was unsure about the names of retired dogs. She asked if this was group insurance. She asked if these insurances were applicable for both departments. She said that there appeared to be a few in Fire and Rescue and in the Sheriff's Office.

Mr. Gouldman said that there was one retired K-9 in Fire Rescue and another in the Sheriff's Office. He said that they could put all three retired K-9s under one insurance group policy.

Dr. Yeung said that this was only for retired dogs. She asked what happened to the ones who were healthy and not retired.

Mr. Gouldman said that currently, they were covered by the County. He said that the department paid for their expenses; they were County employees.

Dr. Yeung asked if when they were not County employees and were retired, they were taken over by individuals.

Mr. Gouldman said yes. He said that once they were retired, it was up to the handler.

Dr. Yeung asked if the handlers were usually employees.

Mr. Gouldman said yes, they were employees of the County.

Mr. Diggs said that his support for this proposal was based on his belief that handlers should not be required to cover medical expenses for these canines using their personal funds. He said that he would like to emphasize that he did not own any animals; however, he would consistently advocate for their employees. He said that he viewed these canines as employees themselves.

Mr. Diggs said that given that they were entering budget season, he proposed that they advocate for their canine employees in the same manner that they advocated for their human employees. He said that this perspective was driven by his observation that society often prioritized animals over people. He said that he endorsed option three, the combination.

Ms. Gary said that she recalled that option three was their decision in committee, and she still supported that choice. She said that when discussing these dogs and their service, they should aim to ensure their well-being without causing a burden to their owners. She said that she hoped they could secure additional funding for their schools and children as well.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to thank the Public Safety Committee for doing this. She said that Ms. Vanuch had been a strong advocate for their public safety dogs since joining the Board. She said that she was surprised when she discovered that, as a County, they did not take care of retired dogs. She said that this realization came during a ride-along with a deputy a few years ago when she witnessed one of their dogs capturing someone. She said that these dogs put their lives at risk during their service, whether it's rescuing people from fires or detecting substances or apprehending criminals.

Ms. Allen said that it was essential that they received proper care after their service, so they did not suffer and so their staff did not have to spend their own money. She said that as a dog owner, she wondered what they could do as a County to support their non-human employees. She said that she appreciated that this issue had progressed quickly through the committee and had gained consensus from the Board. She said that she looked forward to them taking care of their four-legged friends.

Ms. Bohmke said that she echoed all the comments made by her colleagues. She said that she thanked Mr. Gouldman for their presentation and that they would discuss it further at the April 2 meeting.

Ms. Vanuch said that since they would be voting on the budget that same day, she would ask that they direct the County Administrator to include the budget item in question for tax option consideration. She said that this would allow them to determine the necessary adjustments based on their final decision as a Board. She said that they knew they needed the \$4,300 for the insurance fund, and she would also recommend an initial one-time allocation of \$10,000 with future budget season reviews dependent on surgical expenses. She said that she knew that Maui had sustained several broken bones over her tenure at the County and likely was a very costly dog to maintain.

Ms. Bohmke said that there appeared to be consensus from the Board to move forward with that recommendation. She said that Mr. Vosburg indicated that he had received adequate direction.

DISCUSSION ON ADDITIONAL EARLY VOTING SITE

Ms. Gary said that she would like to ask if the Board had interest in exploring the possibility of establishing additional early voting locations. She said that several individuals had approached her to inquire if this was possible. She said that currently, they had only one early voting location at the County office. She said that to determine whether they could set up additional locations, they needed to consult Ms. Hash for her input and guidance. She asked if she could provide information on what would be required for the Board's due consideration in order to proceed.

Anna Hash, Registrar, said that she was uncertain where the conversation was going, but she did have some relevant information. She asked what specifically Ms. Gary was requesting.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to establish a starting point for inquiring about a potential plan. She asked where the ideal location would be if they were to proceed. She said that the most important aspect was determining the requirements for them and their staff to establish an additional early voting site.

Ms. Hash said that to start, the Board would have to create an ordinance to establish this, similar to when they established one during the redistricting process and the relocation of her office. She said that the ordinance would then be followed by the Electoral Board determining the hours of operation. She said that depending on the number of days the office is staffed, the Board may decide whether to staff it for the entire 45 days or just the last 10 days. She said that this decision determines the cost.

Ms. Hash said that there were certain costs incurred regardless of the duration of operation. She said that they would have to purchase specific equipment regardless of whether it was open for the last two Saturdays, as required by code for a satellite location, or for an extended period. She said that these essential items include ballot-on-demand printers. She said that the cost of staffing the office for 45 days is approximately \$50,000 per election. She said that this amount includes additional equipment, which costs around \$10,000.

Ms. Hash said that after accounting for these expenses, the total cost would likely be closer to \$43,000, depending on various factors such as staffing requirements and equipment needs. She said that the staffing level is what really determines that. She said that it depends on various factors such as additional security measures at the location and whether it is a County-owned facility or leased. She said that there are limited options for public or County-owned facilities.

Ms. Hash said that the hours of operation for the polling location are covered under preclearance, similar to any other precinct. She said that steps must be taken to ensure compliance with existing ordinances. She said that if the location were to change every time, it would likely require a new ordinance. She said that to establish a permanent location for the polling place, it should be in a location where it can be used for every general election or primary, as determined by the Board of Supervisors. She said that the Electoral Board would set the hours.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated hearing from Ms. Hash in order to better understand her position and the work required. She said that she was curious if the Board would be interested in investigating what it would entail if they could find a County-owned space for this purpose. She said that she believed that would be important if they attempted this endeavor. She said that it would essentially serve as a pilot project. She said that they could then consider the costs associated with conducting this activity over a couple of Saturdays. She said that they could present these costs at a future meeting for further discussion. She asked if the Board would be open to exploring this possibility.

Ms. Allen said that she was not against increasing the number of early voting locations. She said that she believed that residents in the southern part of the County would benefit from having a nearby polling station. She said that considering the long distances people in George Washington and deep Hartwood areas would have to travel to reach the courthouse, it seemed inefficient and unfair. She said that she understood this concern, but was unsure where they could find a suitable location within this budget cycle for the current election cycle. She said that perhaps they could investigate this matter for next year's election.

Ms. Hash said that she had a timeline for this November's general election. She said that there must be a meeting on May 21 to authorize actions for November's general election. She said that she collaborated with Ms. McClendon's office to establish this timeline, which she believed was accurate. She said that she would not claim to be able to achieve this without their assistance. She said that on May 21, the Board must authorize an advertisement for a public hearing.

Ms. Hash said that June 4 would be the meeting to authorize the advertisement of the public hearing to amend the ordinance. She said that the hearing would run from June 18 to 25. She said that the last meeting would be either July 1 or July 2, but July 2 was not recommended. She said that if submitted on July 2, the certificate of no objection must be sent to the Attorney General's office, which takes 60 days. She said that everything must happen quickly for November's election. She said that a location must be found, a decision made by the Board, and the location finalized before submitting the ordinance.

Ms. Allen said that it seemed aggressive.

Ms. Hash said that it was aggressive.

Ms. Allen asked if the \$50,000 was for one-time purchases of equipment.

Ms. Hash said that the equipment was a one-time purchase. She said that if it operated for 45 days, it would approximately cost around \$30,000 to staff for each election. She said that during busier elections, the cost may increase; however, this was the lowest estimate.

Ms. Allen asked if that included primary elections.

Ms. Hash said that general elections would require additional staffing, which would likely exceed \$30,000. She said that staffing for a primary election would cost \$30,000.

Ms. Allen asked if the Electoral Board needed to agree to conduct this process.

Ms. Hash said that they do not have to agree to carry out the task. She said that the Board was responsible for creating the ordinance and determining when they wanted to implement it. She said

that the Electoral Board would set the specific hours for execution, such as choosing to do it during the final two hours or two Saturdays, or during the final ten days, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. She said that they would establish these hours. She said that if there was a request for a satellite location, the Electoral Board could approach them for consideration, but the Board of Supervisors ultimately made that decision.

Mr. Diggs said that he was unsure if this was the appropriate forum for his question; however, he asked for clarification regarding the poll workers' restroom access during the recent election cycle. He said that he was aware that there were some issues and wanted to know how they could address these concerns moving forward. He asked if this matter was currently being considered or if it would remain unresolved.

Ms. Bohmke said that they did not fix it. She said that it was specified in the Code of Virginia, related to election law, and that it had been in place for quite some time.

Ms. Hash said that Mr. Diggs could discuss this matter with her at another time. She said that it was in the code who could be in the precinct. She said that yes, it did cause issues at some precincts when people outside campaigning could not go into the restroom, but it was the code.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was the code and they were upholding the code. She said that a lot of people did not like it, but it did not matter. She said that unfortunately, there were years where the code was not upheld.

Ms. Vanuch said that there was a trick to allow people in. She said that every year, the elected official on the ballot was allowed to place poll watchers inside the voting location. She said that to do this, they needed to provide certification for each volunteer. She said that if they were certified as volunteers, they could show the certification papers at the polls and this enabled them to enter the voting location and use the restroom facilities.

Dr. Yeung said that her questions had already been asked, but she did have one other. She said that Ms. Hash mentioned primary and general elections. She asked if the satellite location would be for early voting or not.

Ms. Hash said that it would be early voting for a primary election or a general election or both.

Dr. Yeung asked if it was for early voting.

Ms. Hash said yes.

Dr. Yeung asked if, for example, in the ABC room, they shut it down. She asked how long it took to dismantle the machines. She said that Ms. Hash mentioned that buying the machines was \$10,000 each.

Ms. Hash said that they possessed spare machines that could be utilized for this purpose. She said that these were ballot-on-demand printers that printed ballots when voters checked in and received them for voting. She said that they needed to acquire these printers. She said that the other equipment required was already available; the initial cost was approximately \$10,000, followed by \$4,000 annually for licensing and maintenance fees.

Dr. Yeung said that she agreed with Ms. Allen's concern regarding the location being distant for the south. She said that regardless of where it is placed, her primary concern is the security of the poll workers, particularly those working inside the polling station. She said that if they can ensure their safety, she would support having an additional polling location. She said that her other question pertained to the specific location in the south. She asked if considering having one in each district, similar to their redistricting process, this require them to consult the state and inform them of their decision.

Ms. Hash said that it goes to the Attorney General's Office for pre-clearance. She said that they either approve or disapprove the location, determining whether it meets the necessary criteria. She said that the location must satisfy a list of requirements, and it took 60 days for the office to provide their decision.

Ms. Allen said that in conclusion, she believed this idea had merit; however, she would advocate for postponing its implementation until next year. She said that given time constraints and funding issues, it would not be in the County's or Ms. Hash's office's best interest to proceed at that time, especially considering the critical election approaching and the need to allocate resources accordingly. She said that she was unsure if the Board or Ms. Gary would be open to considering this proposal for next year; at least then, they could provide a more realistic timeline for completion and ensure that all necessary resources were available.

Ms. Hash said that the bills currently on the governor's desk had not yet been signed or acted upon. She said that one bill proposed guidelines for satellite offices, including their locations, hours, and other details. She noted that these guidelines were not set in stone and did not specify a deadline for their creation. She said that if signed into law, this bill may introduce new requirements for satellite locations.

Ms. Hash said that another bill focused on the hours of operation for satellite locations and required preclearance from the attorney general's office for any changes. She said that to explore the feasibility of conducting a trial under these potential new laws, she would consult with the County

attorney's office. She said that once the governor signed or rejected these bills, their impact on their operations would become clearer.

Ms. Vanuch said that she agreed with Ms. Allen that this was a challenging time for them. She said that they were currently focusing on budget preparations and that soon they would be entering a presidential election period, during which Ms. Hash's office would be opening in its new location across the street. She said that they had not yet experienced early voting or primary and general elections at this location. She said that once they had data from these events, they could better assess whether the location was more accessible for voters.

Ms. Vanuch said that until then, they should postpone discussing potential changes in voter turnout between northern and southern Stafford areas. She said that after experiencing a major election in the Registrar's new office, they could analyze the results and determine if there were any disparities in voter turnout between different parts of Stafford County. She said that she knew the case to be that northern Stafford did not vote as much as southern Stafford, so they should consider those precinct numbers.

Ms. Hash said that they must also consider that many voters in George Washington preferred to cast their ballots on Election Day. She said that this preference was evident as individuals expressed their firm desire to vote in person on that specific day. She said that some voters also indicated their interest in voting early or by mail. She said that while the proportion of voters choosing these methods may be lower in George Washington, it was essential to consider the diverse preferences of the constituency in this area.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was trying to round out the discussion as they had a lot to get through, but she believed they needed to push it down.

Ms. Gary thanked Ms. Hash for being present to provide such important information. She said that being an independent candidate and present in multiple locations during early voting could be challenging. She said that since this was what people had requested, she had decided to present this idea. She said that she was looking forward to obtaining more information about potentially implementing it next year if it was feasible.

UPDATE OF CODE OF PERFORMANCE/AMENDMENT TO BY-LAWS

Ms. Bohmke asked if Dr. Yeung would like to address this add-on item.

Dr. Yeung said that she added this to the agenda to request that it be referred or assigned to the Bylaws Committee to review their Code of Conduct, which they signed annually. She said that she proposed including specific language to serve as a reminder of their expected behavior. She said that Section 6-1 stated that individuals holding positions of trust and under constant observation

must maintain the integrity and dignity of public office to secure a high level of public confidence in order to conduct business in a dignified manner.

Ms. Bohmke said that they discussed at the retreat returning to update their bylaws in light of their restructuring. She asked if Dr. Yeung would be amenable to their plan of addressing these changes at the next meeting.

Dr. Yeung said yes. She asked if her colleague who served on the Bylaws Committee would be supportive of that.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Gary was amenable to that.

Ms. Gary said that she was in agreement. She said that she would like to propose discussing additional adjustments during that meeting as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed there would be many.

RECESS

At 5:58 p.m., the Board recessed its meeting.

At 7:02 p.m. Chairman Bohmke called the evening session to order. Mr. English gave the invocation. Ms. Gary led the Board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF A PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE MARCH AS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to invite Ms. Gloria Chittum to the dais. She said that Ms. Chittum has worked tirelessly on their Electoral Board for years to ensure everyone can exercise their right to vote. She said that they invited Ms. Chittum to accept the Women's History Month proclamation on behalf of the women of Stafford County because this year's theme is Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. She said that Ms. Chittum's work has ensured that all people, regardless of race or sex, can vote. She said that Ms. Chittum's actions embody advocating for everyone. She welcomed Ms. Chittum.

Ms. Bohmke said that Gloria Chittum has been a familiar figure in Stafford County for 85 years. She said that she grew up north of the intersection at Falmouth and Route 1, in a section called

Cambridge Street. She said that Ms. Chittum no longer resides there; however, that is where she grew up. She said that Ms. Chittum was initially appointed to the Electoral Board 15 years ago. She said that during her first year, she served as the chair, and since then, she has held the position of secretary annually, which is an immense amount of work.

Ms. Bohmke said that if someone wishes to discuss elections with Ms. Chittum, she could write a book, detailing the good, the bad, and the ugly. She said that she would like to emphasize that Ms. Chittum takes her responsibilities as an Electoral Board member very seriously. She said that Ms. Chittum would not hesitate to stand alone in a crowd, even if she were the sole individual disagreeing with others in Stafford County, asserting that a particular action does not adhere to the Code of Virginia for elections.

Ms. Bohmke said that Ms. Chittum would carry her election manual with her, frequently referencing specific sections of the election code. She said that her peers in the Commonwealth hold her in high regard due to her extensive knowledge and experience in this field. She said that they are fortunate to have Ms. Chittum in Stafford County. Ms. Bohmke read the proclamation.

Ms. Chittum said that although the love of her life is elections, she just got back from the homestead, where she had been since Saturday because she taught election laws to other Electoral Board members. She said that she had been doing that for the state for three years. She said that one year, they were all over the state, but now they visited three different places. She said that she had recently been elected as a district chair, overseeing 22 counties and cities under her that she must meet with and assist. She said that in earlier life, she was a nurse, and that was her love also. She said that now, this is her life.

Ms. Chittum said that she had seen so many changes in Stafford. She said that she had seen Route 1 go from two lanes to four, seen 17, where she lived now, go from two lanes to four as well. She said that when they purchased their house, it was situated where Servicetown was, which was now Target. She said that they brought it across two lanes of road, and they had a state trooper there for when a car would occasionally drive by.

Ms. Chittum said that they had to get on top of the house and lift the lines up to bring the house under the lines. She said that she had seen a lot of changes in this County, a lot of bad and a lot of good. She said that she could not thank the Board enough for recognizing her. She said that it was an honor. She said that with her tonight was her Bible study group from church, her family, and she had invited DP, Paul, Scott, and Mike, who were all here. She thanked everyone.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Connie Smith, 201 Larkspur Lane, Stafford, VA 22554, asked about what was happening in Stafford County. She asked if it was normal for someone who was not from the state to obtain

a Stafford County Administrator position but then to start interviewing for their next job in another state just two years later. She questioned if they timed their resignation in such a way that it appeared to be due to the Board of Supervisors' opposition to School Board funding.

Ms. Smith said that those who had been paying attention knew that this individual likely began interviewing long before the Board of Supervisors meeting, especially considering they were one of 50 applicants and interviews concluded at the end of February. She asked if it was common for a County Administrator to have someone who reports directly to them in Florida fulfill a position in Stafford County, then after the Economic Development Director, who had been with the County for a short time to leave, and then be selected for the director role.

Ms. Smith said that she was sure she was a well-qualified and the best candidate in Stafford County. She asked if it was also normal for a Stafford County employee to leave the County, work for a private engineering firm for a year or so, and then return to a different role within Stafford County, where they would be responsible for several multi-million dollar taxpayer-funded projects. She said that this new role allowed them to collaborate closely with their previous employer on several of those multi-million dollar projects.

Ms. Smith said that she had not studied every vendor Stafford County had used, but it was likely that their previous employer was relatively new to Stafford County procurement. She asked if newly hired employees underwent any type of ethics training. She asked if there was annual training for Stafford County employees to ensure they adhered to the highest standards in Stafford County, especially when dealing with taxpayer monies.

Ms. Smith asked who was really watching over these multi-million dollar projects and ensuring that employees were following County finance procedures, not starting projects before they are approved, or telling a vendor to proceed before a PO is cut, and ultimately using the best-qualified and cost-efficient vendor as possible. She said that St. Patrick's Day was over and the shenanigans needed to end, or at least the illusion of them.

Ms. Smith said that she said at the last Board of Supervisors meeting, and she would say again tonight, that things are interesting and alarming here in Stafford County. She said that it was time that Stafford County rises up, holds people accountable, stops wasting time, and ultimately taxpayer money.

Ms. Smith said that the residents of Stafford County are paying attention. She said that if there is not currently a County ethics committee in place, she would like to strongly encourage that one be implemented. She said that if one is in place, she hoped that situations like these are thoroughly vetted as the average County resident sees things as being questionable.

2. Kristin Maxson, 1816 Richmond Highway, Stafford, VA 22554, said that she agreed with speaker number one. She said that point one, during the 3:00 p.m. meeting, it was called by their Administrator to vote on number 14, and she believed it said 14, but it could have been 13. She said that it definitely was 13 or 14, and she thought it was 14. She said that 14 was the budget and management, so she questioned what they voted on.

Ms. Maxson asked what they saw to be voted on. She said that when they see the vote up there, it does not really list what they are voting on, so people are very confused. She said that what they have is this agenda amended today that is different than what they have given at the door. She said that they would have to wait another week and a half to figure out through the minutes what was going on. She said that there was a lot of confusion. She said that that was her first point. She asked what was number 14 and what did they vote on.

Ms. Maxson said that point two was that June 30, 2024 would be 16 months from the short-term wait of their director administer that retired the end of March. She said that this would allow development to happen, and this is the same date that the public hearing of amendments for the Historical Commission would meet about R24-126, which is in their packet today. She said that this would be followed by December 31, 2024, which is New Year's Eve. She said that this is in their packet today.

Ms. Maxson said that she thought that December was a rest month. She said that it was New Year's Eve. She asked if the citizens should come into the Board for New Year's Eve. She said that it must be a typo. She said that regarding bylaws, they needed to adhere to bylaws. She said please, the public is extremely confused. She said that she would go to her notes here. She said that the BACC, Board Authority Committee Commission was created in 2018 and the file has not changed since. She said that there are 19 committees, but now there are no committees.

Ms. Maxson said that it was not being held, and they could see that in the packet on the last page. She said that it was on hold. She asked how the public could ensure that they were represented by the supervisor-elect. She said that they had elections in November, and she did not think that people swore in to their positions this year. She said that normally they could find that.

3. Bart Randall, 7 Dorchester Court, Stafford, VA 22554, said that along with their conversation they would have a little later, the question he had was regarding that this was their leadership group for the County. He said that they put out, hopefully, where they want the County to be in ten or fifteen years and what they want it to look like. He said that all he ever sees is a piece of paper. He said that he never could see a report or see accountability for that piece of paper.

Mr. Randall said that he could never see what they were doing or what progress they were making. He said that if they really want Stafford to look differently ten years from now than it

does today, they must ask what they were doing differently. He said that he did not see that. He said that he sees a lot of managerial stuff going on. He said that he sees a lot of keeping lights on. He said that he did not see a lot of how they would do things differently to make Stafford County look better ten years from now, five years from now, two years from now, than it did today.

Mr. Randall said that that was what he thought their mantra should be. He said that they should ask where they were going and how they were getting there. He said that it could not simply be to continue to do the same thing they had always done. He said that they all knew where that got them. He said that they had to do something differently. He said that he was interested to hear what they were doing differently to make Stafford better. He asked what they were doing to increase businesses and make businesses want to come to Stafford.

Mr. Randall said that if they talked to businesses, they would tell them that it was hard, and that they had roadblocks and issues. He asked what they were doing to fix those. He asked if there was something they should be doing or reporting back to this group of people that explained what they were doing differently to make businesses want to be here. He said that he did not know. He said that he had not heard anything. He said that they had to do something better if they wanted better.

Mr. Randall said that there was not a person in here who goes to their business or their job and said they would just do the status quo or bare minimum and they would be fine. He said that they all said they should do the best they can do so that they can be better and move forward and make Stafford County a better County.

Mr. Randall said that they should not just keep the status quo. He said that he would ask that they think a little about where they were going and how they were going to get there, and what they would do differently tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year to ensure their future looks brighter than it does right now.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM 14. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-71; PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 2024 TAX RATES.

Andrea Light, Chief Director of Financial Services, said that the public hearing focused on the tax rates and budget for the current fiscal year, as well as the CIP. She said the purpose of this hearing was to allow public comments before adoption. She said that the adoption of these items was anticipated for April 2, 2024 during the 7 p.m. Board of Supervisors meeting.

Ms. Light said that she would start with the tax rates. She said that the list presented provided a comparison between calendar year 2020 and the proposed tax rates for 2023-2024 across various service districts and personal property tax rates. She said that they had also finalized the assessment for personal property during the budget work session earlier that day. She said that the Commissioner of the Revenue's office had expressed increased confidence in these numbers in relation to their projected revenues. She said they anticipated approximately \$4 million more in personal property tax revenue this fiscal year.

Ms. Light said that they believed that increasing the price by 40 cents from the current \$5.49 would generate enough revenue to meet projections. She said that after discussing with the County Attorney, she advised that if the Board wished to re-advertise after this public hearing, they could authorize staff to do so. She said that the notice could be sent to the newspaper in the morning. She said that the advertisement would take place next week, followed by another public hearing regarding only the personal property tax on April 2. She said that the Board could still adopt a rate on April 2, and the Commissioner of the Revenue's office believed they would have updated, final data by April 2.

Ms. Allen asked if the \$5.49 rate included the 40 cent increase.

Ms. Light said that the \$5.49 did not include the 40 cents. She said that the advertised rate would be \$5.89.

Dr. Yeung said that she attended a meeting with the County's new Director of Economic Development, Liz Barber. She said that she was excited what Ms. Barber would do for the County, and they had already had several meetings. She said that during their discussion about the Garrisonville Service District, they addressed various concerns from local business owners. She said that one issue raised was the \$0.068 service tax affecting businesses on Route 610. She said that Ms. Barber committed to providing more information about this tax and addressing other concerns of business owners. She asked if there was any way to address the \$0.068 tax.

Ms. Light said that the Garrisonville Service District tax was projected to decrease from 6.8 cents to 5.5 cents. She said that this reduction was partly due to the ongoing decrease in debt service. She said that the Garrisonville Service District primarily covered the debt service for the road widening project. She said that until this debt service was fully paid off, she anticipated that there would be some form of tax, either through the Garrisonville Service District or the Board, which may need to be addressed in a different manner, possibly by applying it Countywide in the real estate tax or through another method.

Dr. Yeung asked if Route 17 funding was reduced to 0 because everything was finished and completed for the project.

Ms. Light said that the initial plan for Route 17 involved issuing debt for the project. She said that VDOT completed the project without incurring any costs to the County. She said that no debt was incurred, and there was no need for a service district to repay any debt.

Dr. Yeung asked about the status of the Truslow Road service district.

Ms. Light said that it was not included in the FY 25 budget. She said that she would consult Mr. Vosburg, but she did not believe that staff had received solid direction to proceed with that.

Ms. Vanuch said that regarding Lynhaven Lane, at the previous meeting, they were informed of challenges and difficulties in securing the three parcels of land within the Lynhaven Lane service district. She asked if they could collaborate with staff to determine why there was a proposed increase in the tax rate if this project may be at risk of stalling due to land allocation concerns. She asked what this would mean for the service district if they maintained the tax rate at 12 cents.

Ms. Light said that they had maintained Lynhaven Lane's annual revenue at approximately \$5,500. She said that between calendar years 23 and 24, one or more of their homes became exempt from taxes. She said that this caused the need for an increase in taxes. She said that in contrast, all other service districts experienced decreased rates; however, Lynhaven Lane required an increase to account for the change in properties.

Ms. Vanuch said that she wanted a follow-up related to the property impacts because residents should be notified of the issues. She said that she understood that the public may be confused by their recent discussions about rate adjustments. She said that it was brought to their attention that the Commissioner of Revenue's office had not yet secured data regarding car property values. She said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, used car values skyrocketed, with individuals paying more than the worth of new cars when purchasing them. She said that they had requested assistance from Commissioner Mayausky to explain this situation, as they failed to account for significant car vehicle depreciation at the last meeting when advertising the tax rate.

Mr. Mayausky said that was mostly correct. He said that dealing with business property and personal property projections presented numerous challenges. He said these projections differed significantly from real estate assessments. He said they had a clear understanding of the real estate base after holding hearings and making necessary adjustments. He said that they continued working on car values and business property assessments until the tax rate was set because all changes became effective from January 1. He said that they could not send out business property forms or obtain NADA values before January 1.

Mr. Mayausky said that from February until the tax rate was set, they assessed 6,000 business property returns. He said that they constantly reviewed DMV files weekly, which helped improve their base's value. He said that their calendars did not align perfectly. He said that while he

followed a calendar year, they operated on a fiscal year. He said that this timing discrepancy created difficulties in obtaining necessary data for tax rate setting. He said that moving the tax rate setting date forward by two weeks exacerbated this problem.

Mr. Mayausky said that ideally, they would have this discussion two weeks later, allowing for more refined data. He said that if they decided to readvertise the tax rate, they would have much clearer data. He said that this had been a problem, and they had previously studied the calendar alignment issue to try and find a solution. He said that they could not find a way to realign the calendars without creating a one-time revenue shortfall. He said that he was willing to take another look at the problem with fresh eyes.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board planned to add an item to the agenda and re-advertise due to a \$4 million difference.

Mr. Mayausky said that by the time they voted on that rate, they would have good data available.

Ms. Allen asked, when discussing a suitable medium for collaboration in determining what worked best for both parties, if there was a cutoff date independent from setting a tax rate. She said that considering this, she suggested that in future budget years as they progressed, they might need to think about adjusting their budget process to accommodate for this, so they could avoid such issues.

Mr. Mayausky said that they discussed several potential solutions, one of which involved separating real estate rates from personal property taxes. He said that this decision was made because they could set the real estate value by April 2. He said that by separating these two categories, they would have more time to provide accurate information for both types of taxes. He said that following this discussion, they planned to meet again and develop strategies to prevent similar issues in the future.

Mr. English asked whether the 40 cent increase was because car values were going down.

Ms. Light said that approximately two years ago, their personal property rate for vehicles was \$6.10. She said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, vehicle values significantly increased. She said that the Board decided to maintain the financial burden on citizens by reducing the rate. She said that this approach enabled setting the rate in a manner that ensured revenue projections can be met.

Dr. Yeung asked which option was simpler, adjusting the calendar rate or the fiscal rate.

Mr. Mayausky said that he was unsure which option was easiest. He said that upon examining the issue, they discovered that it resulted in a six-month revenue shortfall that required covering taxes

amounting to approximately \$150 million. He said that once they overcame that obstacle, they had them aligned. He said that after discussing borrowing funds from the reserve, they realized there was no ideal solution available. He said that he was more than willing to review the situation together with the Board and the budget team in order to explore alternative options.

Ms. Vanuch said that Commissioner Mayausky mentioned that they had moved the schedule forward by two weeks. She asked Mr. Vosburg to explain why this was the case.

Mr. Vosburg said that due to unexpected changes in their budget calendar, the reassessment was moved up by a couple of weeks during the process.

Ms. Light said that this year, they aimed to complete the budget earlier than usual. She said that it was a reassessment year, which increased workload for both staff and Board members. She said that they moved the calendar forward. She said that traditionally, they had conducted this process during the second meeting in April, but this year, they held it during the first meeting instead.

Ms. Vanuch clarified that Commissioner Mayausky proposed separating the tax rate for real estate and personal property, at least temporarily.

Mr. Mayausky said that they should discuss that further, but it could significantly contribute to accomplishing both objectives, specifically, completing the real estate transactions earlier and providing more accurate information to the Board.

Ms. Vanuch said that typically, when the County Administrator presented his budget, they typically had a good idea of the projections for personal property values. She said that COVID disrupted this process. She asked if this contributed to the issue or if there were other data issues.

Mr. Mayausky said that personal property was driven by vehicle values. He said that the car market was stable until supply chain issues and COVID disrupted this equilibrium. He said that traditionally, used vehicles would depreciate at a predictable rate of six to seven percent annually, allowing for consistent tax rate adjustments. He said that the unstable used car market was now causing instability in their projections and tax rates. He said that they must adopt a different approach to address this issue, as they may not return to the previous normal conditions.

Ms. Bohmke said that in January, during the conversation with the Board, there were issues brought up about the data. She asked if the reason there were issues was because they had not been able to get the numbers in time.

Mr. Mayausky said that was part of it, and another part of the issue was that they had changed their formula, which would have increased everyone's values by 20%. He said that they had put a stop to that. He said that despite being delayed in January when uploading data, by mid-February,

during their meeting with the Budget Office, they had caught up. He said that as of today, their NADA values were current. He said that they were up-to-date as of today. He said that they would receive new values next week, which they would add to the tax roll. He said that the concern was refining the tax base, and the more weeks they had, the better the data would become.

Dr. Yeung asked, when Mr. Mayausky mentioned that the data would improve, if that meant that they would be receiving more data from businesses that they had not yet obtained.

Mr. Mayausky said that last year, their team processed 6,000 business returns. He said that currently, they had approximately 2,000 remaining for this year. He said that comparing their tax base now to last year's revealed that they were generating less revenue. He said that this was due to not having completed work on all businesses and new vehicles received. He said that daily, they worked on these businesses, increasing their tax base and making it more dependable. He said that they had not had sufficient time to complete all the required work. He said that they still had a month to finish these tasks.

Ms. Allen asked what projects would be impacted in the CIP with a \$4 million shortfall. She said that this information was not provided when they initially reviewed the CIP, specifically regarding transportation or structural projects that could be affected.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to conclude the discussion by emphasizing that raising the advertised rate served as a safeguard against potential shortfalls. She said that it did not guarantee that the rate would remain at that level; rather, they required further data to make an informed decision.

Ms. Light said that regarding real estate tax rates and the fire levy, the Board advertised the real estate rate lower than the proposed budget. She said that the proposed budget was set at 91.75 cents for real estate rate alone, excluding the fire and emergency services levy. She said that the Board advertised this rate at \$0.8969. She said that similar to personal property tax, it was advertised without advertising again. She said that their revenue was expected to decrease from the proposed by about \$5.4 million. She said that the fire and emergency services levy was advertised at 1.31 cents.

Ms. Light said that regarding the budget and capital improvement program for FY 2025, the proposed general fund was approximately \$460 million, of which \$28 million was one-time funding for one-time projects—such as proffers or fund balance. She said that this budget will decrease by about \$5.4 million. She said that the proposed budget included a school operating transfer of \$15 million for schools and school-related expenses, such as increases for debt service of \$2.2 million and increases for capital funding of \$750 thousand. She said that public safety provided for five new sheriff positions and 14 fire and rescue positions along with a step increase median of 2.75% and a scale adjustment of 2.25%.

Ms. Light said that general government saw a reduction in debt service of under \$600 thousand. She said that there was a 5% raise comprised of a 3% scale adjustment and a 2% merit increase.

Ms. Gary said that she was confused concerning the \$15 million school operating transfer, which was not for the advertised rate but rather for the previously proposed rate.

Ms. Light said that that was what had been proposed in the budget.

Ms. Gary clarified that the presentation was not showing the impacts of the advertised rate.

Ms. Light said no. She said that there was a \$5.4 million reduction that will be made in the general fund budget.

Ms. Gary clarified that some of the presented funds would be impacted.

Ms. Light said yes.

Ms. Light said that in the FY 25 budget, other funds were discussed, such as the Board advertising an equalized tax rate of 1.31 cents for the fire and emergency services levy. She said that these funds were used for planning and executing all capital needs for fire and rescue services. She said that transportation continued efforts on roadway improvements, and utilities continued years two of three of a 6.5% rate increase, focusing on infrastructure and other capital needs.

Ms. Light said that the FY 2025 through 2034 CIP balanced debt funding with debt capacities. She said that school projects totaled \$644 million over the 10-year period, primarily funded by debt of \$620 million. She said that the majority of debt capacity supported school projects. She said that transportation projects amounted to \$520 million, funded mainly with \$75 million in debt, while the remaining amount came from state and federal money, along with local support like personal property tax and proffers. She said that the new courthouse and annex renovation cost \$83.4 million, primarily funded through debt services. She said that there was support for fire rescue rebuild projects and a new fire station.

Ms. Light said that regarding the transportation fund, the Board currently allocated approximately \$8 million from personal property funding towards transportation projects. She said that projects which may be impacted included Stefaniga, Courthouse Road, Route 1 and Telegraph, Woodstock improvements, road wedge widening improvements, Berea Church, and providing a 5% contingency to account for fluctuating costs.

Ms. Light said that the Board had been committed to advancing bond-funded projects over recent years. She said that with the budget for FY 2025, planned spending in the CIP, and revenue sources from the general fund primarily through personal property tax, all bond projects supported by

citizens had been funded. She said that the anticipated adoption of tax rates, budget, and CIP was scheduled for April 2.

Ms. Bohmke said that she thought that the Berea Church project had already been bid and it came in 20% under budget. She asked if there was another component to that project that she was not familiar with that would be included in this upcoming budget year.

Ms. Light said that this project had \$3.5 million of County revenue allocated for fiscal year 2025. She said that the project was bid, construction was let, and the contract was awarded, understanding that some of the revenue would be available in FY 24 and the remainder in FY 25, as the construction project spanned between those years, possibly extending into 2026. She said that by outlining the cash flow, they avoided front-loading projects that did not require all of the funds upfront.

Ms. Allen asked if allocating more funds towards transportation projects would reduce their capacity to finance school projects.

Ms. Light said yes.

Ms. Allen said that 96% of school debt capacity was funded while only 14.4% of transportation debt capacity was funded.

Ms. Light said that was pretty close to correct. She said that transportation had significantly more revenue sources than school projects; consequently, school projects primarily relied on funding from the County. She said that unfortunately, the state did not have a VDOT program specifically for schools.

Ms. Gary asked how they would get to the funding outlined on slide 8 since the Board had already voted for an advertised rate below all of the projected revenues. She asked if there was a slide demonstrating what they would actually be able to cover since it would appear quite different from what was shown. She said that this discrepancy might not be helpful for those viewing it.

Ms. Light said that they had not received sufficient guidance from the Board regarding where the \$5.4 million would be cut from the budget. She said that the budget was \$460 million, and there were numerous potential areas for reduction. She said that they had discussed with the Board the implications of the property tax rate decreasing by more than two pennies from 0.9175 to 0.8969. She said that this change would have an impact on the general fund. She said that depending on the Board's decision, there may be consequences for the schools' funding.

Ms. Gary said that the Board's discussion had settled on less than \$15 million for schools, somewhere around \$13 million.

Ms. Light said that hypothetically, yes; however, this is what was proposed and advertised.

Ms. Gary asked whether the items presented could be covered by the advertised rate.

Ms. Light said that the budget advertisement followed the County Administrator's proposed budget because they did not assume that the Board had made changes to the proposed budget until they adopted a change in that.

Dr. Yeung said that was one of her concerns when they discussed the 94 cent rate initially provided by the County Administrator. She said that they had reduced it to \$13 million. She said she thought they had discussed that they were not considering the five positions. She said that was a decision they made, and she was confused to see the positions presented. She said that for the audience's clarity, this funding was based on 94 cents, not the 91 advertised tax rate.

Ms. Light said that was correct.

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing for the proposed tax rates. She said that some of the speaker cards did not differentiate which item they would like to speak on, so she would introduce all public speakers during this item.

1. Michele Wickman, Garrisonville District, said that she had been an educator in the County for ten years. She said that as a homeowner, mother of children in Stafford schools, and educator, she found it exhausting to continually advocate for recognition of her profession's value. She said that over the past decade, she could recall only two instances where the Board fully funded the School Board's request. She said that this year, the School Board requested an additional \$15 million, which Mr. Vosburg recommended in his County budget proposal.

Ms. Wickman said that she struggled to understand why fully funding the School Board's request was not even considered when advertising the tax rate. She said that the highest amount considered was still \$2 million short of what was needed, which she considered a mere lip service gesture. She said that when Board members claimed to prioritize education, their actions should align with this value. She said that the level of pettiness and finger pointing between the School Board and Board of Supervisors was concerning, as they seemed to be acting like feuding spouses who could not agree on child support, putting the children in the middle of their conflict.

Ms. Wickman said that both parties should take the high road and prioritize the well-being of the students. She said that while there was potential for state funding to alleviate CIP expenditures, she remained skeptical due to their history of fighting for funding like COCA for over ten years. She said that they could not rely solely on state funding and then shift

blame towards them when they made irresponsible decisions here, such as using one-time funds for recurring costs or accumulating debt service for maintenance funds that should be budgeted.

Ms. Wickman said that as a homeowner, she was willing to pay fair property taxes to contribute towards funding schools and other County needs; however, she was flabbergasted by the fact that they spent so much time discussing raising property taxes and so little time discussing reinstating a [B-Poll] tax. She said that Prince William educators had the right to collectively bargain, and Spotsylvania County had a fully functioning School Board, and both spent significantly more per pupil than Stafford.

Ms. Wickman said that Stafford continued to hover in the bottom 15%, putting them at risk of being the least desirable school division from an educator perspective. She said that they could not afford losing people to the north and south because students deserved quality educators locally. She said that they needed to be kept in and recruited from the County. She requested that the Board does its job, so long as it truly prioritized education.

2. Molly Denham, Hartwood District, said that she was requesting that the Board set the combined tax rate at 91 cents. She said that although she believed this was still insufficient for funding their County's infrastructure requirements, it was the limit they had set for themselves, so she must adjust accordingly. She said that each of them had previously expressed that schools were a priority. She said that the large number of people present today in support of their schools demonstrated that this was also a priority for their constituents. She said that in a few weeks, they would have the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment by voting accordingly.

Ms. Denham said that their County could not continue to underfund itself. She said that over the past two years, the School Board had done its job by cutting as much from their budget as possible. She said that school staff were tired of being underpaid while being expected to do more with less each year. She said that every budget season, the School Board prepared briefings, charts, figures, and historical data for their consideration. She said that this year had been no different. She said that Dr. Taylor had already informed them multiple times that should the Board not fully fund the school's request, the only option left was to make cuts within the personnel department, including significant and needed pay raises.

Ms. Denham said that the County Administrator told the Board and the public that 94 cents was the lowest the County could set the combined rate and still provide funding for the schools. She said that the Board chose not to advertise at that rate. She said that the Board knowing and willingly chose to cut much needed raises and effectively told the school staff that it was not a priority. She said that the Board should look at those in attendance in green

that they were not a priority to support a tax rate that staff said was necessary. She said that other revenue options were considered, but the potential 1% sales tax for schools was earmarked for school construction only, not personnel costs.

Ms. Denham said that the County had requested an increase in COCA salary adjustments, as it had done for the past few years without success. She said that an increase in COCA would impact the County's ability to increase school personnel pay, however, the County was unsure whether they would be successful. She said that they could not count on the state to bail them out of historically bad decisions. She asked the Board to support the combined tax rate of 91 cents and fully fund the School Board's request of \$15 million.

3. Susan Depp, Hartwood District, said that she had previously spoken to the Board about a townhouse she owned in the George Washington District approximately two years ago. She said that the townhouse, now 50 years old, had experienced a 67% increase in assessment compared to the median assessment. She said that she brought this information to their attention because she noticed that many older townhouses had experienced similar increases due to the pandemic and people trying to move out of apartments.

Ms. Depp said that typically, the advertised tax rate presentation just stated the median assessment and tax bill. She said that last year, Mrs. Light provided data on seven different types of houses and their assessments. She said that this year, there was a clearer chart displaying four or five different categories. She said that she was curious about the reason behind this change.

Ms. Depp said she had been following the Cliff Farm development proposal, and she saw the tax bills for that property. She said that her house was on 0.29 acres, and last year's assessment was \$483,100. She said that her house was a typical, two-story colonial house in Stafford. She said that her real estate tax bill last year was \$4,565. She said that in contrast, in the Cliff Farm development, there were three lots totaling 57 acres.

Ms. Depp said that the combined assessment for these lots amounted to \$986,300. She said that their real estate tax bill last year was \$4,219. She said that the difference in assessment was from the land use plan, which she was glad the County had. She asked whether the assessment amount was before or after the land use factors were taken into account. She said that most of the 20 or more acre lots were not owned by County residents.

ITEM 15. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-74 AND RESOLUTION R24-76; PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FY2025 BUDGET AND PROPOSED FY2025-FY2035 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP).

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing on the budget and CIP.

1. Howard Rudat, 10 Hayes Street, Stafford, VA 22556, said that during the last meeting, during the advertised tax rate discussion, one supervisor presented numbers and percentages regarding the total number of homeowners in the County and assessment rate disparity, promising to support the 34% of homeowners who had an assessment above the County average. He said that upon closer examination of the figures, one discovered that the majority of those homeowners possessed houses valued below the County average.

Mr. Rudat said that if they conduct a thorough calculation, the actual percentage of homeowners adversely affected by a higher assessment was 15%, not 34%. He asked the Board if they will stand with 85% of Stafford residents or the other 15%. He asked if they will stand with over 31,000 students in the Stafford County Public Schools, more than 14,000 of whom faced economic disadvantages, to ensure they have a secure, positive, and productive learning environment.

Mr. Rudat asked if the Board will stand with the 4,300-plus teachers and support staff, most of fell into a low-income category due to their salaries. He asked whether the Board will provide these individuals who dedicated their daily efforts to Stafford County's future generations with the basic necessities they need to put food on their tables and roofs over their heads.

Mr. Rudat asked if they will make the right choice, or they will join Stafford's own Thelma and Louise in driving the County and its staff off a cliff. He said that he urged them to make the right decision and fully fund the County public schools now. He said that the Board should not perpetuate a false narrative that data centers will be a panacea for all County budget issues, that schools will be fine if they simply wait. He said they were done waiting, and they cannot wait any longer.

2. Kathleen Meade, 25 Wiltshire Drive, Stafford, VA 22554, said that she was there to request that they fully fund their schools. She said that she was a PTA president who had observed various aspects of their educational system during School Board advisory meetings. She said that she was often shocked by the facts presented about the poor state of their schools and the poor compensation for their dedicated staff members.

Ms. Meade said that she was not just shocked; she was heartbroken. She said that many parents may not be aware of the limited support their schools received from the Board. She said that they had busy lives and may not have time to delve deeper into these issues. She asked if the Board knew how far behind their schools were in terms of maintenance.

Ms. Meade asked if they were aware of how much less they paid their staff compared to neighboring counties. She asked if they knew that many students were forced to share classrooms due to overcrowding. She asked if they simply listened without taking action.

She said that she believed that out of sight and out of mind was what happened to many of them when it came to school funding issues.

Ms. Meade said that many of the supervisors had likely had a teacher who made a positive impact during their K-12 school years. She said that they may remember their name or not, but what they remembered was likely their impact on their life, their fun nature, or their patience and support when they needed them most.

Ms. Meade said Board members should imagine that that teacher was beside her, where they would have to say to the teacher's face that they voted not to fund the schools. She said it would mean that salaries would not be competitive, they would have to teach through overcrowding, and they would have to teach in poorly maintained schools. She said supervisors explained that they appreciated the teachers and that what the teachers did mattered, but she questioned how they were showing that the teachers mattered.

Ms. Meade said she wanted to thank the Stafford County School staff and everything they did for students. She thanked them for continuing to show up when they were asked to do more with less. She said that everyone who was part of the school district was amazing. She said that children were the future, and staff was part of creating that future.

3. Shannon Fingerholz, 19 Cardinal Forest Drive, 19 Cardinal Forest Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22406, said that they all shared responsibility for their school system's progress. She said she gave each of the supervisors a can, explaining that it symbolized their ability to pick it up at any time. She said that the cans contained examples of the positive impacts that could be achieved if their school system had been adequately funded over the past decade. She said that the positive impacts could start being realized during the 2025 budget season.

Ms. Fingerholz said that some examples of these improvements included adhering to IEPs and Section 504 plans, budgeting for maintenance repairs instead of relying on credit cards, and proactively addressing large replacement needs based on life cycle rather than reacting to emergencies.

Ms. Fingerholz said that other benefits of proper funding included educator retention, cost savings through training, a higher ratio of students to adults, improved behavior outcomes, a more consistent and supportive learning and working culture, and a healthier learning environment. She said that adequate funding would prevent having to choose which group of children's learning experience would be sacrificed due to budget constraints.

Ms. Fingerholz said that she fell in love with choose-your-own adventure series through her school library, where decisions altered every characters' path. She said that her favorite

was when characters came back from behind to win in the end. She said that the Board's votes altered the path of all 31,000 students and 4,500 employees in the school system. She said that the ripple effect on the community was greater. She said that next year was often used as an excuse, but thankfully, it was already next year.

Ms. Fingerholz said that the Board had the power and responsibility to choose the adventure for students, staff, and the community. She said that Stafford could be an example for the rest of the region, and she asked that they approve the funding for the School Board's budget as presented and approve the tax rate to enable the funding. She said that the Board should work to help disabled and fixed income residents by expanding tax relief criteria by lobbying the state for age-in-place tax credits.

4. Don Gray, 35 Denison Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22406, said that he was resident and taxpayer committed to providing quality education for Stafford County students. He asked that the Board set a tax rate that achieved three objectives: one, to provide competitive salaries for school employees to attract, retain, and stabilize the educational workforce; two, to construct new schools promptly to accommodate population growth and minimize modular classrooms; three, to maintain existing school facilities in a cost-effective manner to ensure they support a conducive learning environment.
5. Bart Randall, 7 Dorchester Court, said he was speaking regarding Resolution R24-74 that previously mentioned the debt service they had. He said that for those in the audience or online, they should consider the \$620 million debt service they had discussed. He said that it would be insightful to examine when this debt was incurred, how long it had been on their records, and the amount spent on paying it down. He said that most of this debt was accumulated 10, 15, or 20 years ago and remained unpaid. He said that this year's debt service was \$50 million before constructing two elementary schools and a high school.

Mr. Randall said that in five years, when they budgeted for these expenses and received bond money, the debt service could reach \$70-\$75 million. He said that they must consider how they funded capital expenses for schools. He said that according to the budget, they wrote a check for \$1.4 million and used a credit card for an additional \$7 million annually. He said that each year, they used their credit card to provide schools with \$7 million in extra funding without paying from cash or personal funds; instead, they relied on credit. He asked how that was good fiscal management.

Mr. Randall said that he questioned how being fiscally conservative was being achieved, stating that it was not even close. He said that it was disingenuous to say they were only giving them \$12 million when they wanted \$15 million. He said that they required \$15 million plus the \$7.5 million in addition to \$20 million for 3R projects. He said that there

was an \$11 million shortfall every year for capital improvement projects, which had gone on for 15 years.

Mr. Randall said that they had accumulated \$150 million in debt for school repairs and maintenance of their assets. He said that this situation showed no signs of improvement, and there was no effort to make it better. He said that they lived in a world where they accepted the continued status quo because they liked it.

Mr. Randall said that unlike the federal government, they could not print their own money; however, they found themselves in the same debt and condition as them. He said that their debt service was so high that they would need to take everyone's money to pay it off. He said that the 94 cent tax rate was not implemented without their vote, but it should have been the first vote taken.

6. Matt Pruitt, Garrisonville District, said that he advocated against constructing Elementary School 19 at Brook Point High School, believing that the site was illogical and not worth further investment. He said that the budget should prioritize education, finding it unreasonable that they lived in one of the wealthiest counties in the country yet paid teachers and support staff comparatively low salaries. He said that educators should receive raises aligned with their contributions to children's education.
7. Cliff Heinzer, 316 Ironside Cove, Stafford, VA 22554, said that he wanted to discuss budget priorities, specifically focusing on fully funding schools. He said that words alone were insufficient; action was required to allocate resources towards education. He said that he wanted to provide examples of other counties that prioritized school funding. He said that Wythe County spent about \$11,796 per pupil with a median income of about \$52,000. He said that Mecklenburg spent \$11,977 per pupil with a median income level of \$46,000. He said that Smith County spent \$12,177 per pupil and had a median income of \$42,500.

Mr. Heinzer said that Stafford spent \$11,793 per pupil with a median income level of \$119,818. He asked why Stafford's priorities differed from less prosperous counties. He said that they cannot mortgage the children's education. He said that solutions which would take a decade to be implemented were not a solution. He said that if the solution did not match the compensation of neighboring jurisdictions, then it was not a solution. He said that he wanted to remind everyone that the supervisors were not being paid what they should be paid based on what other jurisdictions paid their supervisors or based on the work they put in.

8. Jessica Pierce, 360 Pepperidge Drive, Stafford, VA 22554, said that while she still believed Embrey Mill deserved an elementary school, she would like to take this opportunity to discuss commonalities among them that may have been overlooked. She said that upon

reviewing their bios and conducting research, she could confirm that each of them valued education highly, as evidenced by their campaign statements. She said that all of them possessed advanced college degrees or had attended schools in Stafford County at some point in their lives.

Ms. Pierce said that resolving overcrowding issues was a priority for each of them. She said that one supervisor emphasized during his campaign that Stafford County Public Schools deserved world-class education, which she wholeheartedly agreed with. She said that as a former flight attendant, she must stress that providing first-class education required adequate funding. She said that she supported funding for schools, school staff, and teachers. She said that they were the hardest working people in the entire world.

Ms. Pierce said that she could not support funding Elementary 19 at Brook Point; thus, she was somewhat conflicted. She said that she also understood that they needed seats at schools for students because the schools were overcrowded. She said that teacher safety was at risk because they could not afford the appropriate number of teachers. She said that it was concerning to her as a tax payer, mom, and human to think about the way teachers and educators had to live every single day.

Ms. Pierce asked what they were doing for the teachers and who was paying attention to what they wanted. She said that they were paying attention, and everyone before the Board was deserving of more. She said that she wanted what was best for the children. She said that some of the supervisors worked in the schools or had spouses who worked in the schools. She said that they were paying attention, and no one worked as hard as the educators.

9. Kristin Maxson, 1816 Richmond Highway, Stafford, VA 22554, said that she wanted to read number 15 since it was available on that page: "Budget and Management Public Hearing on the proposed FY2025 Budget and proposed FY2025-FY2035 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Proposed Resolution R24-74 Budget, Proposed Resolution R24-76 CIP, Background Summary: Receive Public Testimony on the FY25 Budget and FY2025-FY2034 CIP."

Ms. Maxson said that to try to visualize it, she was having a hard time. She said that in the packet, it quoted \$1,500,665,338, which was extended to the FY2035 CIP. She said that it was not all schools. She said that they had maybe three or four projects that had been grandfathered in, but it was unsure whether they would go through. She said that on page 300 of 361, there was an example of an open check. She said she did not know if it would be used.

Ms. Maxson said there was a wastewater system and water system that would be provided for the capital projects. She said that it may not be related to schools. She said one might be. She said that it said supervise controlled data acquisition, or SCADA, and she did not know what it was. She said that it did not sound good. She said that fees for service were either greater or equal to 150% of the senior debt service. She asked why the senior debt service was higher. She said that it was 100% of debt service. She asked for that to be explained.

10. Joshua Meade, 25 Wiltshire Drive, Stafford, VA 22554, said that everyone could tell when it was campaign season in Stafford because each of them would list education as a top priority. He said that for most of them, those were just promises. He said that it was worth considering how supportive they would be of fully funding Stafford County Public Schools if they had to conduct business in the same manner their students were forced to learn. He said that for their next work session, they could simulate this experience by sitting on the ground in the hallway because there was not space for them in a classroom.

Mr. Meade said that they could hold these meetings in a trailer in the parking lot that didn't have access to running water or restrooms. He said that when their meeting was over and they were ready to go home after a long day, they had to wait 30 minutes for a bus to pick them up. He said that in the wintertime, they could conduct meetings in the cold because the heating system was severely behind on maintenance. He said that Stafford County Public Schools staff and students deserved better than the funding they had been providing.

Mr. Meade said that it was shameful that the 19th wealthiest county in the U.S. made their school system fight on a yearly basis for enough funding to keep the lights on. He said that in the past 10 years, their population had grown, County tax revenue had increased, but the County's investment in education had decreased by more than 8%. He said that this did not align with their strategic plan vision statement which said that Stafford County was a flourishing community that continued to achieve all that their residents and businesses had come to imagine.

Mr. Meade asked if they thought their teachers imagined teaching in overcrowded classrooms for an uncompetitive salary. He asked if they thought their students imagined going to school and having to learn in a trailer because of overcrowding. He asked if support staff imagined watching others get a raise while not receiving one themselves. He asked if any County school employee imagined continually having to do more with less. He said that they could not continue to run the County schools on fumes.

Mr. Meade said that he hoped the supervisors would fulfill their campaign promises and prioritize education. He said that he wanted to inform them that the years of using education as a campaign strategy were gone. He said he intended to ensure that all residents knew

who did and who did not vote to fully fund the schools. He asked that the Board fully fund the schools. He said that the cries from staff and students would only grow louder.

11. Clarissa Quinn, 7 Grace Court, Stafford, VA 22556, said that she would like to acknowledge that she saw two of her favorite teachers from Barrett Elementary in attendance today. She said that they had a beautiful family; she had witnessed their engagement, marriage, and the birth of their two children. She said that these children were the future. She said they will likely attend Barrett Elementary in a few years.

Ms. Quinn said that one of them was her daughter's third-grade teacher, while the other was now a fourth-grade teacher at Barrett. She said that she commended them for attending this event on a school night when they must be tired and eager to go home. She said that she was the schools' biggest cheerleader, and Dr. Taylor knew that.

Ms. Quinn said that she appreciated Ms. Gary for attending one of their town hall meetings representing her district. She said that she would love to see more of this participation from all of them in future events so that they could engage with their families more often. She said that many of their families spoke Spanish, other languages, or American Sign Language.

Ms. Quinn said that if they needed an interpreter, she was willing to help. She asked how they can do better and make the schools better so the community can be a lot better with less crying and more positivity for the community and students. She said that she would love for her children to see the positive changes and differences they made for their community one day.

Ms. Bohmke closed the public hearing and brought the matter back before the Board.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they had the information for readvertisement.

Ms. McClendon said that it could be accomplished through a motion.

Ms. Light said that she believed that they were seeking a motion to readvertise the personal property vehicle tax at \$5.89.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to readvertise the personal property tax at \$5.89.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Nay: (0)

CLOSED MEETING

At 8:44 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to adopt Resolution CM24-09 to authorize closed session.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Nay: (0)

Resolution CM24-09 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting to discuss recruitment for the County Administrator position and interview interim candidates; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 19th day of March, 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 9:51 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt Resolution CM24-09(C) to certify the closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Nay: (0)

Resolution CM24-09 (C) reads as follows:

**A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE
STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED
MEETING ON MARCH 19, 2024**

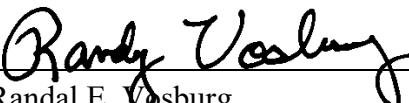
WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 19th day of March, 2024, adjourned into a Closed Meeting in accordance with a formal vote of the Board and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

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

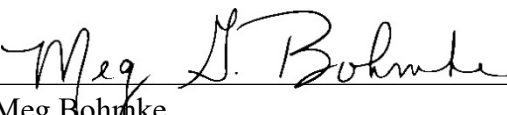
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors does hereby certify, on this the 19th day of March, 2024, that to the best of each member's knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information 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.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:52 p.m., Chairman Bohmke adjourned the March 19, 2024 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's meeting.



Randal E. Vosburg
County Administrator



Meg Bohmke
Chairman

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#40]
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 6:02:47 PM

Name * Sharon Siepel

Address * ☐ 40 Fife St
STAFFORD, VA 22554
United States

Email * sharonsiepel@yahoo.com

Election District Garrisonville

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Budget Y25

Online Comments: *

I write to emphasize the importance of fully funding our county's schools for the upcoming academic year. Our community's strength and future prosperity depend on the quality of education we provide to our children. Full funding for our schools is a strategic investment that will lead to higher academic achievements, economic growth, and a well-informed, engaged community. Allocating sufficient resources to education ensures that all students have access to the necessary tools and opportunities for success. I respectfully request your support in this critical matter, urging you to prioritize our children's education in your budget considerations. Your commitment to fully funding our schools will serve as a testament to your dedication to our community's well-being and future.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#41]
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 7:55:33 PM

Name * Dawn Davis

Address * ☐ 1 York Ct
stafford, VA 22554
United States

Email * davisfamily2006@gmail.com

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * NO BUC-EES!

Online Comments: * Please do not build a Buc-Ees near Austin Ridge. We do not need more traffic in our neighborhood. There are so many schools in the area that adding more traffic would be such a nightmare in the mornings and afternoons. There are better options building it a little further south off 95 with less housing and development.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#42]
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 8:19:36 PM

Name *	Sarah Bloom
Address *	☐ 12 Francis Ct Stafford, VA 22554 United States
Email *	sarahmbloom@gmail.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Buccees
Online Comments: *	Please do not build Bucces in Embrey Mill. It is redundant to have a big gas station where there is already a new Wawa and a new Sheetz. It is inviting more traffic and greater danger for our young people near I 95. It really is an unwise and unsafe decision.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#43]
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 8:51:50 PM

Name * Gregory Goldstein

Address * ☐ 4 Dewitt Road
Stafford, VA 22554
United States

Email * gregontad@gmail.com

Election District Garrisonville

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Bucees

Online Comments: *

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Buc-ee's Gas Station Near Elementary Schools and Residential Areas

Dear County Representatives,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposal to approve the construction of a Buc-ee's gas station with 120 pumps near elementary schools and housing areas within our community. While I understand the potential economic benefits such a development may bring, I urge you to carefully consider the significant negative impacts it could have on the well-being and safety of our residents, particularly our children.

First and foremost, the proximity of such a large gas station to elementary schools raises serious safety concerns. Increased traffic congestion around the area poses a risk to the safety of children and families commuting to and from school. Additionally, the potential for accidents involving hazardous materials, such as fuel spills or fires, is heightened in such a densely populated area.

Furthermore, the environmental impact of such a large-scale development cannot be ignored. Air, noise, and light pollution from increased traffic and the operation of 120 gas pumps would adversely affect the health and quality of life of nearby residents. Moreover, the potential for groundwater contamination and other environmental hazards associated with fuel storage and distribution must be thoroughly evaluated before any approval is granted.

In addition to safety and environmental concerns, the proposed gas station could have negative effects on property values and the overall aesthetic appeal of our community. The presence of such a large commercial development could detract from the character of our neighborhood and diminish the desirability of living in the area.

I urge you to prioritize the well-being and safety of our community over short-term economic gains. I respectfully request that you reconsider approving the construction of a Buc-ee's gas station near elementary schools and housing areas. Instead, I encourage you to explore alternative locations that are less densely populated and pose fewer risks to residents.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I trust that you will make the right decision for the benefit

of our community.

Sincerely,
Gregory Goldstein
4 Dewitt Road
Stafford, VA 22554
540-729-7303

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#44]
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 8:56:53 PM

Name * Jena Haycock

Address * ☐ 18 Basket Ct
Stafford, Va 22554
United States

Email * haycock.jena@gmail.com

Election District Garrisonville

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Buc-ees

Online Comments: *

Please do not build Buc-ees anywhere near residential areas. They are chaotic and clog up the area. Austin ridge already has a problem with speeders (they'll pass me going 50+ using the turning lane, and this happens regularly). We don't want the extra congestion and speeders. That is not an appropriate location for it.

Stafford used to have such a beauty to it that brought us here. The spots of nature throughout the county really complimented the beauty of Virginia life. You all keep tearing nature down instead of building in places that are already empty. And for the love of all that is holy, stop building homes and finally catch up with the student population and build some schools!

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#45]
Date: Saturday, March 16, 2024 7:18:24 PM

Name * Edie Evans

Address * ☐ 17 Banbury Court
FREDERICKSBURG, VA 22406
United States

Email * gatorddie@yahoo.com

Election District George Washington

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * FY25 Budget -- Partner Agency Funding

Online Comments: *

I am a Stafford resident and the director of Rappahannock CASA, a nonprofit that for more than 30 years has trained caring adults to serve as volunteer advocates for children who have been abused and neglected. At the request of the judges who appoint us, CASA volunteers meet regularly with the children at the heart of these cases, conduct independent investigations into the children's circumstances, make recommendations about services that would help them heal from their trauma, and ultimately, make recommendations about where it's safest for these children to live: with parents who have complied with the court's orders, with other loving relatives or with adoptive families.

I respectfully request that Stafford provide \$3,920 in funding for FY25, the same amount given to us in fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023; the current proposed budget recommends only \$2,744, the same amount as the current budget year. So far this year, our volunteers have provided nearly 400 hours of service to 16 Stafford children, a value to the county of nearly \$13,000, based on data analyzed by philanthropic research organization Independent Sector.

Those 16 children represent about 14% of our caseload so far this year, while Stafford's contribution to our budget is closer to 7% of our locality funding. Returning Stafford's contribution to its traditional amount of \$3,920 provides a little more parity for the other localities we serve and who fund us, and helps us ensure we have enough volunteers trained and ready to advocate for any Stafford child a judge appoints us to serve.

Judges have told us time and again that the information we provide to the court helps them make key decisions in these cases. Furthermore, our volunteers who live in Stafford – 17 of our current 39 volunteers call Stafford home – love being able to serve children in their own back yard.

The children we have served in Stafford this year have experienced physical abuse and abandonment, witnessed domestic violence and been exposed to parental substance abuse and incarceration. These are our community's most vulnerable children who deserve as much love and support as our county can provide them. So I would ask the county to restore its baseline funding for our program of \$3,920 for the coming fiscal year. Thank you for your time.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#46]
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 2:45:25 PM

Name * Diana Pointon

Address * ☐ 64 BOULDER DR
STAFFORD, VA 22554-8829
United States

Email * diana86@comcast.net

Election District Garrisonville

Topic (please see the Public Hearings Budget
page for specific topics coming up) *

Online Comments: *

I am a Stafford resident and have been volunteering with Rappahannock CASA for over 13 years. CASA is a nonprofit that for more than 30 years has trained volunteers to advocate for foster care children who have been abused and neglected. At the request of the family court judges who appoint us, CASA volunteers meet regularly with the children at the heart of these cases, conduct independent investigations into the children's circumstances, make recommendations about services that would help them heal from their trauma, and ultimately, make recommendations about where it's safest for these children to live: with parents who have complied with the court's orders, with other loving relatives or with adoptive families.

I respectfully request that Stafford provide \$3,920 in funding for FY25, the same amount given to us in fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023; the current proposed budget recommends only \$2,744, the same amount as the current budget year. So far this year, our volunteers have provided nearly 400 hours of service to 16 Stafford children, a value to the county of nearly \$13,000, based on data analyzed by philanthropic research organization Independent Sector.

Those 16 children represent about 14% of our caseload so far this year, while Stafford's contribution to our budget is closer to 7% of our locality funding. Returning Stafford's contribution to its traditional amount of \$3,920 will help ensure we have enough volunteers trained and ready to advocate for any Stafford child a judge appoints us to serve.

Judges have told us time and again that the work CASA's ensures the children receive the care they need and the judge can make decisions based on a thorough investigation of the case.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#47]
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 5:50:29 PM

Name * Angela Glidden

Address * ☐ 603 Hatchers Run Ct
Stafford, VA 22554
United States

Email * angiecasa135@gmail.com

Election District Aquia

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * 2025 Funding for CASA

Online Comments: *

I am a Stafford resident who volunteers for CASA. It was recently brought to my attention that the Board reduced the CASA funding for 2024 and plans to continue with that reduced amount for 2025. I am requesting the Board reconsiders and returns the 2025 budget to the previous amount of \$3920.

As a CASA volunteer, I see first hand the impact CASA has for Stafford County and keeping it funded is of the utmost importance. I am currently involved with a Stafford County case and without CASA there would not be as much continuity. DSS does everything they can, but the DSS workers handle many cases at one time, whereas CASA volunteers only have one or two, so we are able to be more involved with the children we service to ensure the court has all information needed to make a decision on the case. CASA reports make a big impact and are taken very seriously by judges when reviewing a case. DSS uses them to help make decisions with regards to CHINS cases and Foster Care Service Plans.

I feel the board would be remiss if they do not return the 2025 funding to the previous amount, as it is important to maintain CASA involvement in Stafford County cases.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Very Respectfully,

Angie Glidden

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#48]
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 10:23:05 PM

Name * Anne Gregory

Address * ☐ 500 Stefaniga Rd
Stafford, VA 22556
United States

Email * nihonanne@gmail.com

Election District Rock Hill

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Proposed FY25 Budget

Online Comments: *

I am a Stafford county resident and a current volunteer for Rappahannock CASA, a nonprofit that serves children in the Rappahannock region who have been abused and neglected. As a highly trained volunteer, presiding judges will appoint me to abuse and neglect cases to help ensure that the children of our county have a voice.

I am proud to live in Stafford and serve children in my local community. I am currently assigned to a case involving a Stafford County child. On average, I commit 25 hours per month per child that I serve. I am responsible for investigating the circumstances of the case, I make recommendations about services that would benefit the child to help them heal and I submit reports to the court making recommendations to help the judge make decisions about where it is safest for the child to live and that are in the best interest of the child.

I am concerned that the FY25 budget for Stafford County currently proposes only \$2,744 for Rappahannock CASA. I would respectfully ask the board to return funding to prior years' level of \$3,920. It seems like such a small amount when considering the overall county budget, but for a program such as ours, each dollar helps us to continue serving our local community and the children that call Stafford home.

The children that I serve in my county have experienced trauma in the form of physical abuse, neglect, witnessed domestic violence and/or have been exposed to substance abuse. Rappahannock CASA offers the ability for children to experience the love and support of someone who truly cares and wants what is best for them and to help each child have a voice within a scary and hard to understand judicial process.

Therefore, I ask that the county restore funding for Rappahannock CASA to the previous level of \$3,920 for the next fiscal year. Thank you for your consideration and for supporting our community and its children.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#49]
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 10:52:49 PM

Name * Anne Gregory

Address * ☐ 500 Stefaniga Rd
Stafford, VA 22556
United States

Email * nihonanne@gmail.com

Election District Rock Hill

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Proposed Real Property Tax Increase

Online Comments: *

I understand the need to balance attracting new businesses to Stafford, but I've been saying for years that it's time to bring back the BPOL tax in this county. We are the only county in NOVA that doesn't have a BPOL tax and I am tired of funding the county on the backs of residents with increasing personal and property taxes when we could be bringing in more from local businesses. And yes, I know small businesses are very much against this, but something has to give in order to fund county services and schools at appropriate levels.

It seems to me that the out of control residential growth in Stafford is a vicious cycle. Developers build new communities on smaller and smaller lots bringing in greater numbers of residents and also more taxes on those newly built homes, but then more people put greater stress on our infrastructure and schools causing a need for more funding for county services. Because we do not have a BPOL tax, more funding means a higher tax burden for residents in the form of higher property and personal taxes. In order to increase the tax base, the board approves more residential development....we need to get off the hamster wheel and ask businesses to share in the funding of county schools and services.

It is ridiculous to say that a BPOL tax with an appropriate threshold will keep new businesses from coming to Stafford and cause existing businesses to shutter. If that were true, we (as Stafford County residents) would not be driving to Fredericksburg and Woodbridge to shop and spend our recreational dollars. Every county around us from Richmond to D.C. has appropriate BPOL taxes and yet their business communities are healthy and thriving. Besides, when appropriate, reasonable reprieve can be used as an incentive as other counties in the area offer.

Stop expecting residents to bear the burden with ever increasing property taxes and continued residential sprawl! Bring back the BPOL tax!

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#50]
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 1:53:22 PM

Name * Deborah Cook

Address * ☐ 120 Oaklawn Road Suite 107
Stafford, VA 22554
United States

Email * dlcook4@comcast.net

Election District Rock Hill

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Board of Supervisors Proposed FY 2025 Budget

Online Comments: *

Dear Stafford Board of Supervisors

As a long-time resident of Stafford and a dedicated volunteer with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), I am writing to respectfully request your support for our program through the budget approval process for Fiscal Year 2025.

CASA, a nonprofit organization with over 30 years of service, trains compassionate adults to serve as volunteer advocates for children who have experienced abuse and neglect. At the behest of the judges who appoint us, CASA volunteers engage directly with these children, conducting thorough investigations into their circumstances and making crucial recommendations regarding their well-being and future living arrangements.

Over the years, Stafford County has been a steadfast supporter of our mission, providing funding that has enabled us to serve our community's most vulnerable children effectively. However, I have noticed a discrepancy in the proposed budget for FY25. The recommended funding allocation of \$2,744 falls short of the \$3,920 provided in previous fiscal years.

Restoring Stafford's funding to its traditional level of \$3,920 would not only ensure parity among the localities we serve but also guarantee that we have the resources to train and mobilize volunteers to advocate for every child entrusted to our care by the court.

The children we serve in Stafford County have faced unimaginable hardships, from physical abuse to parental substance abuse and incarceration. As members of this community, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that these vulnerable children receive the support and protection they deserve.

Therefore, I urge you to restore the baseline funding of \$3,920 for the CASA program in Stafford County for the upcoming fiscal year. Your continued support will enable us to fulfill our mission of advocating for the best interests of every child, right here in our own backyard.

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [Mark A. Kaminski](#); [Andrew L. Spence](#); [Cheryl D. Giles](#); [Julia E. Holmes](#)
Subject: Public Comment Form [#51]
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 2:24:38 PM

Name * David Abbou

Address * ☐ 12 Lakeside Drive
Stafford, VA 22554
United States

Email * dabbou@comcast.net

Election District Garrisonville

Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) * Proposed Resolution R24-71 Proposed Real Estate Tax Increase

Online Comments: *

Board of Supervisors, I am writing to support a final 2024 real estate tax rate below the advertised rate of 0.91 to offset the enormous increase in real estate assessments this year.

While you deliberate what the final real estate tax rate will be, keep in mind not all homeowners earn the median income, and not all homeowners can easily absorb the impending tax increases. My real estate taxes have increased by an astronomical 25% over the last two years which has caused serious financial impact, especially since I am retired on a fixed income and receive no tax breaks.

I know there are many homeowners who want to pay more taxes towards schools and other departments. You need to afford a method for these residents to contribute more than what the final tax rate will be. Add a section to the semiannual tax bills for this purpose.

In closing, please consider adopting a real estate tax rate below the advertised rate of 0.91.

Thank you.

David Abbou
12 Lakeside Dr.
Stafford, VA 22554
Garrisonville District
